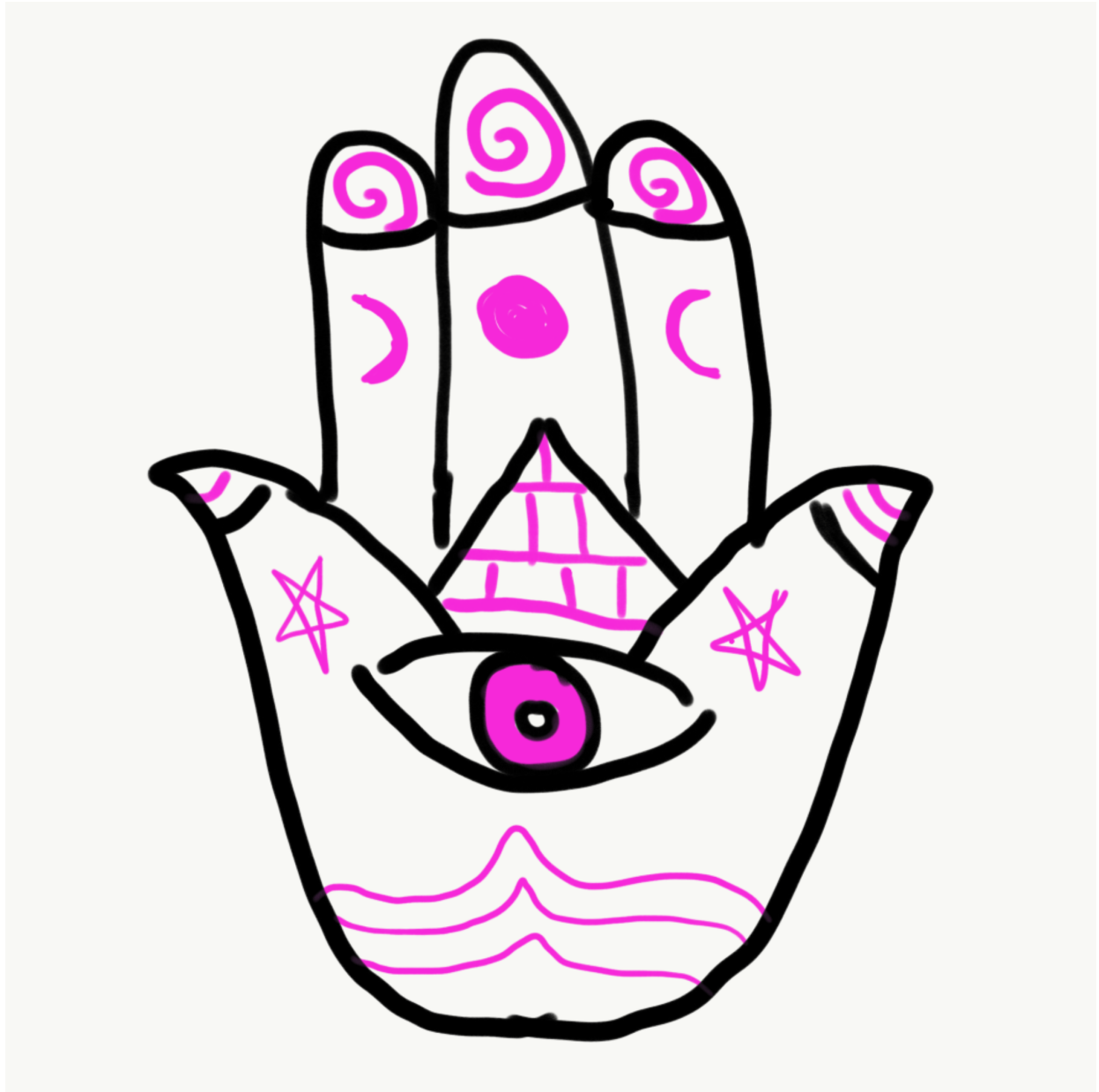


Art Magick For Witches



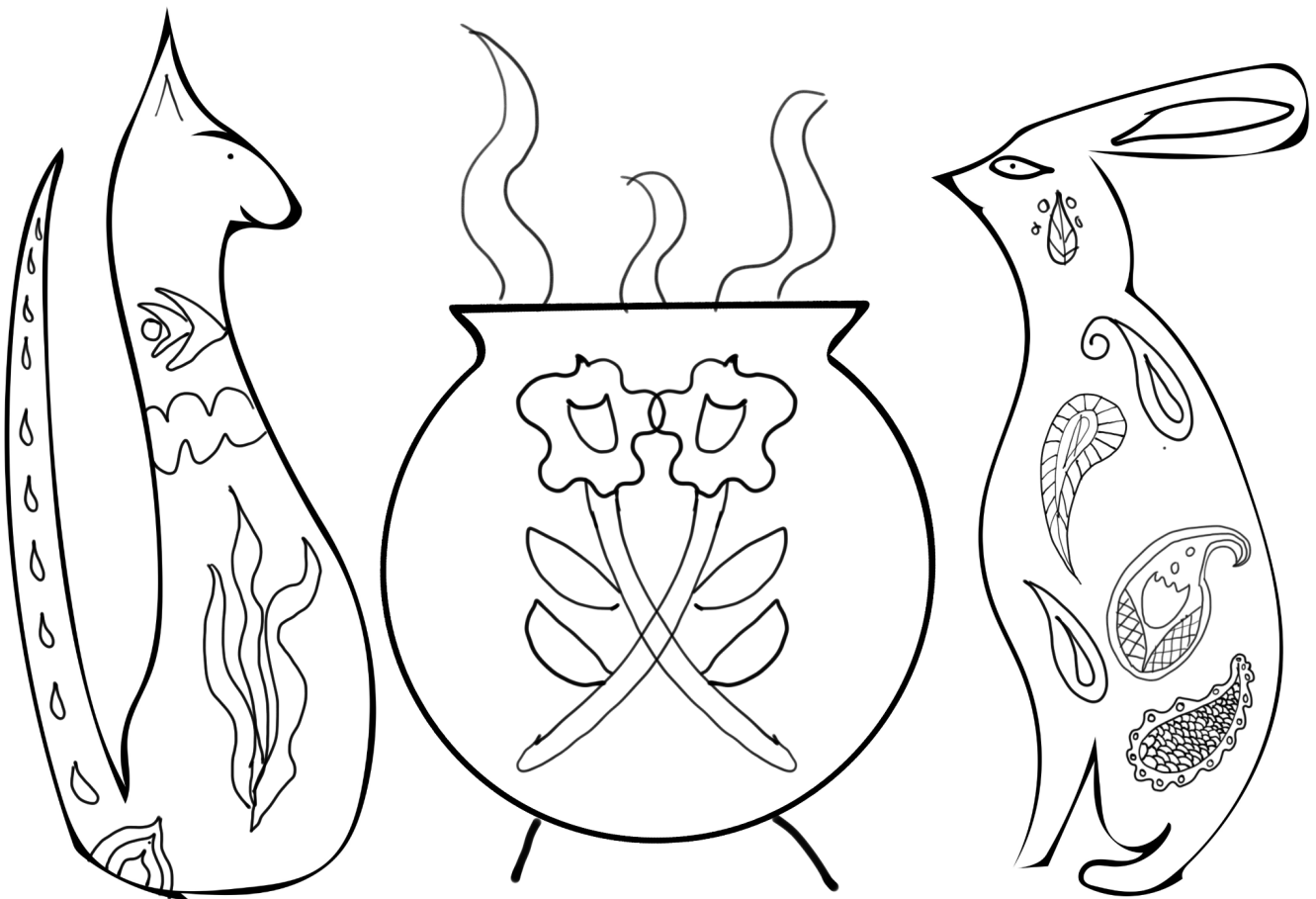
Liz Watkin

Participating in artistic practice is often thought of as an escape; a means of relief from the rigors of modern life. But what if the opposite were true? What if participating in art is forging a channel to our higher selves and the divine that resides in all of us? Could it be an arrival, rather than an escape?

I hope this little guide helps you find the deep connection between your creativity and intuition.

In my own exploration of art magick, I have identified three broad tenets for using the artistic process for spiritual purposes.

Exploration, Invocation and Devotion. There is always overlap and the information I offer is by no means exhaustive. I hope you will spend time delving into these ideas, expanding and problematizing them as you see fit. All witches practice their craft in a way that is unique to them and so the art magick process you develop will also be unique.



Exploration

This is perhaps the most experimental form of art magick. When exploring through art we are using the visual medium to guide our hand and offer us messages. This practice is quite spontaneous and the results can be purely abstract or more representative of recognizable forms.

We may not understand what is being communicated at the time. This is a wonderful advantage of art-making, we can record the cryptic and then return to it time and again for clarification.

Pieces created can be used as meditative foci incorporating patterns that can help us go into a trance state. Consequently they can be used for divination.

Artistic Context

This type of art practice became popular during the earlier period of the twentieth century. Many artists at this time were also interested in the rising popularity of mysticism and esoteric activities. It is perhaps no surprise that many abstract artists grew from this time. Wassily Kandinsky and Hilma Af Klint were both driven in their work by connections between spirituality and creativity.

Mandalas are a well known visual method of meditation in Buddhist culture. These complex and beautiful patterns are traditionally made from colored sand and are not intended to be permanent.

The above are the more obvious contexts, however many secular artists have described at great length the trance or spiritual transformations that they have experienced through their work.



Artists

Emma Kunz, Agnes Martin, Mark Rothko, Hilma Af Klint, Wassily Kandinsky, the Dadaists, Eve Hesse, Marjorie Cameron.

Spiritual Practices

Divination, meditation, visualization, shamanic journeying

Art Methods

Automatic drawing, doodling, pattern making and abstract painting all lend themselves well to exploration. Cut up poetry was used by the Dadaists and has huge potential for divinatory exploration.

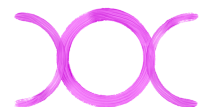
Activity - Meditation and Meaning

Choose a word or phrase on which you would like to meditate. Here are some possibilities:

- Gratitude
- Power
- Fertility
- Death
- Rebirth
- Transcendence

Write the word on a page in your book of shadows or journal. Read the word, perhaps aloud to yourself. Meditate on it and start to embellish the word with patterns and doodles, you might cover the word itself. Allow your hand to take over, if it helps with disengaging your brain, say the word over and over. Stop when you feel compelled to.

Come back to the page at another time, what do you see in the patterns and marks on the page?



Invocation

This where spell work and making magick for specific purposes comes in. I use the term invocation to mean tapping into our power to effect change. This visual spell work has no limits, from creating talismans to embedding a spell into a painting, from making poppets to pieces that will live on your altar.

Artistic Context

There are many contemporary artists using art as spells. Jesse Bransford designs sigils as well as installations that are spells. Rebecca Artimisia is an illustrator of indigenous heritage who uses witchcraft in her pictures, imbuing them with magick.

The aborigines of Australia are famous for their stunning artwork including paintings that are sacred items. One could argue that these are also a kind of spell work.

Some conceptual artists have married spell casting with performance.

Artists

Rebecca Artimisia, Jesse Bransford, Elizabeth Insogna.

Spiritual Practices

Manifestation, visualizing desires, healing work, ritual.

Art Methods

Painting, pattern making, collage (vision boards are a common use), talismans, poppets, sculptures, installations. Anything!!!

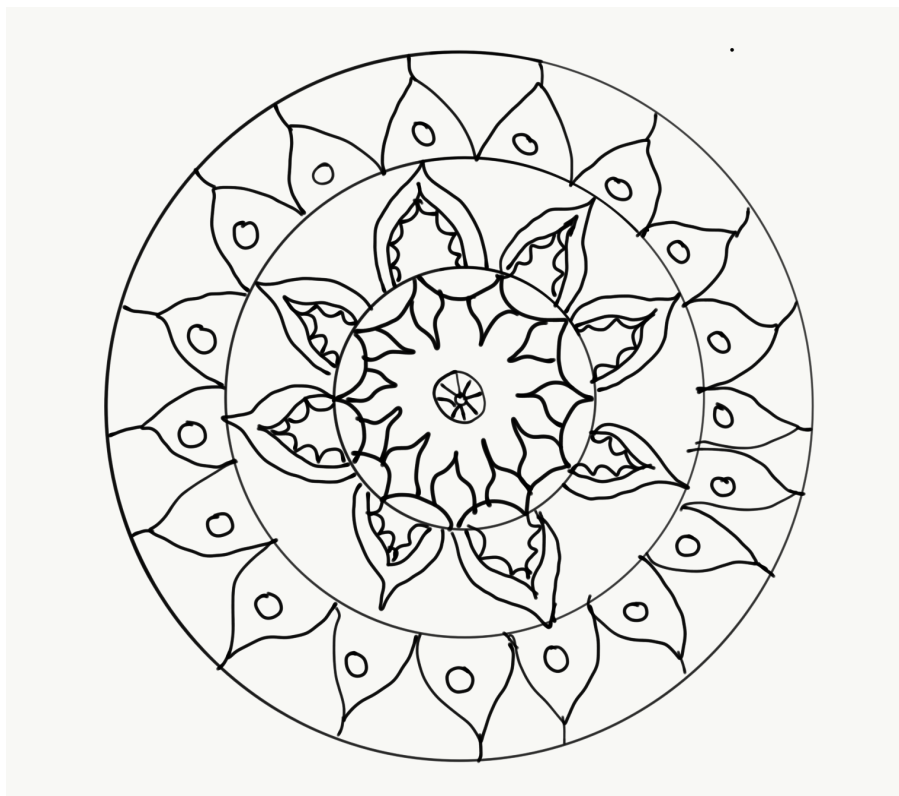


Activity - A Healing Spell

On a piece of paper draw a large heart to represent the person for whom you wish healing (it could be yourself). Breathe deeply and ground yourself. Drip some thin paint onto the heart - choose a color that feels appropriate (blue, yellow and green are common choices). Start to breathe out onto the heart healing breath - you can visualize this energy as a color that is appropriate to you. Do this several times, filling the heart with healing breaths. Blow the paint so that it fills the heart with tendrils of color. You can use more than one color if you like.

You may choose to stop after this or decorate the heart with pictures, patterns, collage, stickers etc. while doing this stay focused on your intent, maybe talk or sing to the heart.

When the heart is finished, cut it out and give it to the person you are working for or keep it on your altar.



Devotion

In a sense, this is the most accessible and familiar form of religious art. I use the word devotion to mean expressing our joy and love, commitment to and wonder of the divine and our connection to it.

I also use it to mean scholarly practice like learning the tarot for This is more a record of what we are learning and experiencing, rather than a spiritual practice in itself. Though we can feel the transformative effects of creativity here too.

Artistic Context

From the paintings and statues of the renaissance, to the complex patterns of Islamic art, to standing circles, there are endless examples of devotional art. It is arguably the most common form of spiritual art. Ironically there is a wealth of devotional art without known executors. Artists from a variety of religious backgrounds including Pagan are long forgotten, perhaps because revering individual artists and singling them out from the community for praise is a relatively modern practice.

Artists

Michaelangelo, Da Vinci, Manjit Bawa (Hindu artist), Ravi Varma (Hindu artist), Abdur Rahman Chughtai (Islamic artist)

Spiritual Practices

Recording of the seasons or lunar cycles, studies of deities, tarot cards etc. illustrating favorite myths, general joy in nature and the divine!

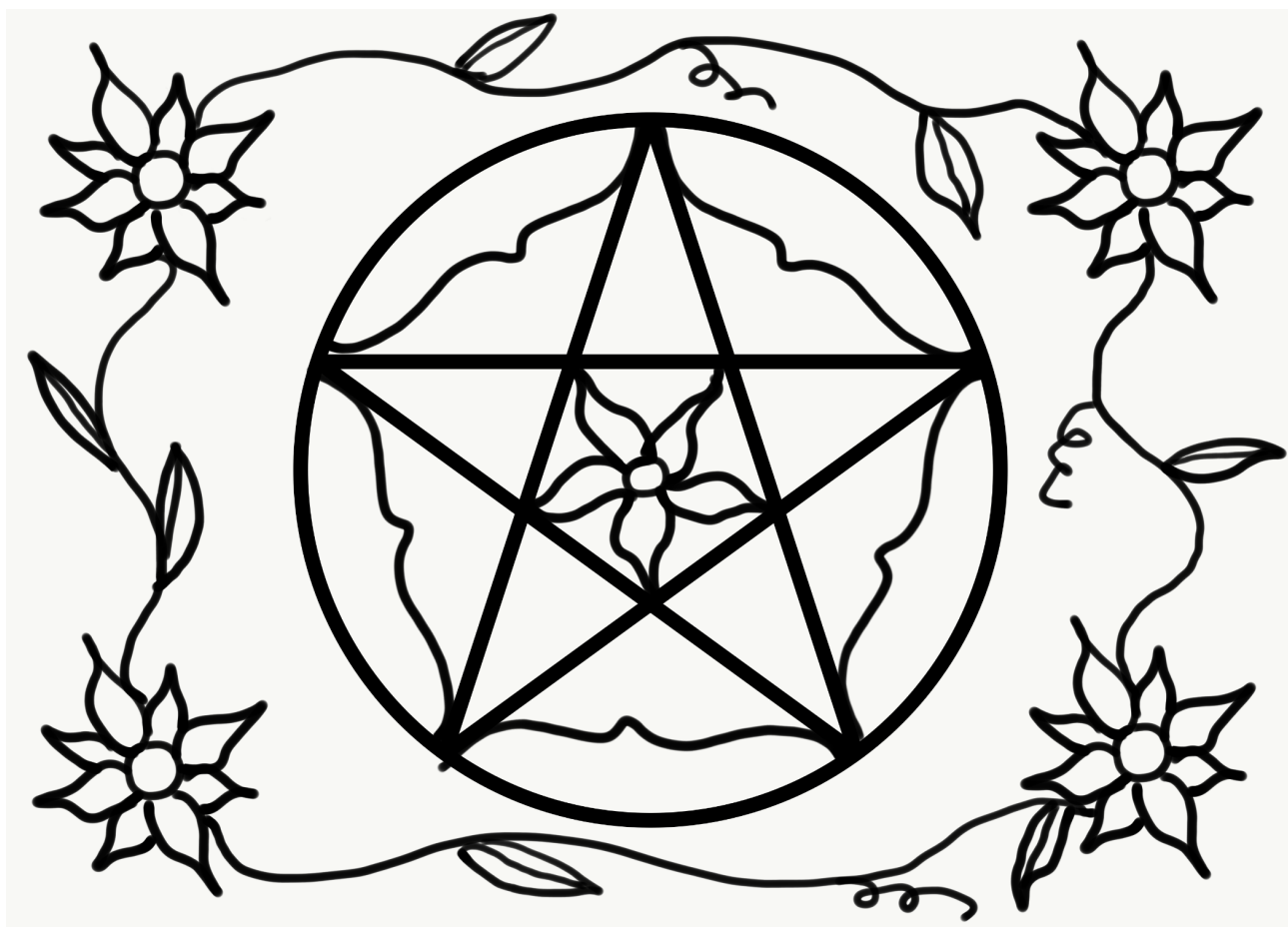
Art Methods

Illustration, drawing, collage, sculpture, altar building, anything!

Activity - Devotion to a Deity: An Installation

Research a deity that interests you. On a large piece of card draw a figure or even just a simple paper doll shape and cut it out. The shape should be at least 25 cms/ 12 inches high. Paint it, add collaged pieces or leave it blank for now. Place this form on your altar or a place that has been carefully selected for this paper deity. If you have no suitable physical space, keep it in your book of shadows or journal. Everyday attend your deity and offer it a 'gift', something to adorn it - a bead to glue on it, feathers, flowers etc. Give careful thought to what you believe the deity would like. Do this for as long as you enjoy working with this deity. Pay attention to dreams or signs you may receive at this time.

When you want to break ties with the deity, thank it for its lessons and either put it away in a discreet place, burn it, bury it, but dispose of it with respect.



From Art to Art Magick

Magickal Art Journaling

How do we begin this practice? One very helpful way to start is through art journaling. Journaling is an opportunity to invoke, devote and explore your spirituality without being bound by words and if you are willing to, you can bow to a process that is fully instinctive. Tapping into that visual side and into activity that is less intellectual allows your intuition to thrive and speak. Many of you probably already have a book of shadows and this would be a perfect place in which to work, or you might choose to start a separate journal.

A journal or book of shadows is discreet, mobile and is meant for you alone. There should be no worries about a perfect end result, if it looks ugly or messy that is perfectly ok. Close that book and put it out of your mind. Come back later and the likelihood is that you will see things you didn't realize were there before.

If you would like to learn more about magickal art journaling, there is a mini online course available on opencoven.com.

Materials

To begin with I recommend using your book of shadows or buying a sketchbook with quite thick pages that will hold materials for collage and to prevent ink and/or paint from bleeding through. I like to use a book with sewn binding rather than ring binding for my book of shadows. Dick Blick has a great selection of these. Try Daler Rowney's line or Strathmore.

Apart from a journal, a pen and some glue is plenty. Buying lots of fancy materials can often freeze us because we don't want to waste them.

The more you develop your art magick, the more you will know what materials to buy. I enjoy using paints, crayons and pens that are meant for children. They are usually cheap and I feel liberated and playful using them. Working with what you have can yield fascinating results.



Habit and Ritual

If you have a ritual space then this can also be where you work on your art magick. Try practicing outside with what you find - collage with fallen leaves, rub dirt into the page, let your instincts take over. The most important thing is to start and get your hands dirty, the divine in you knows what to do.

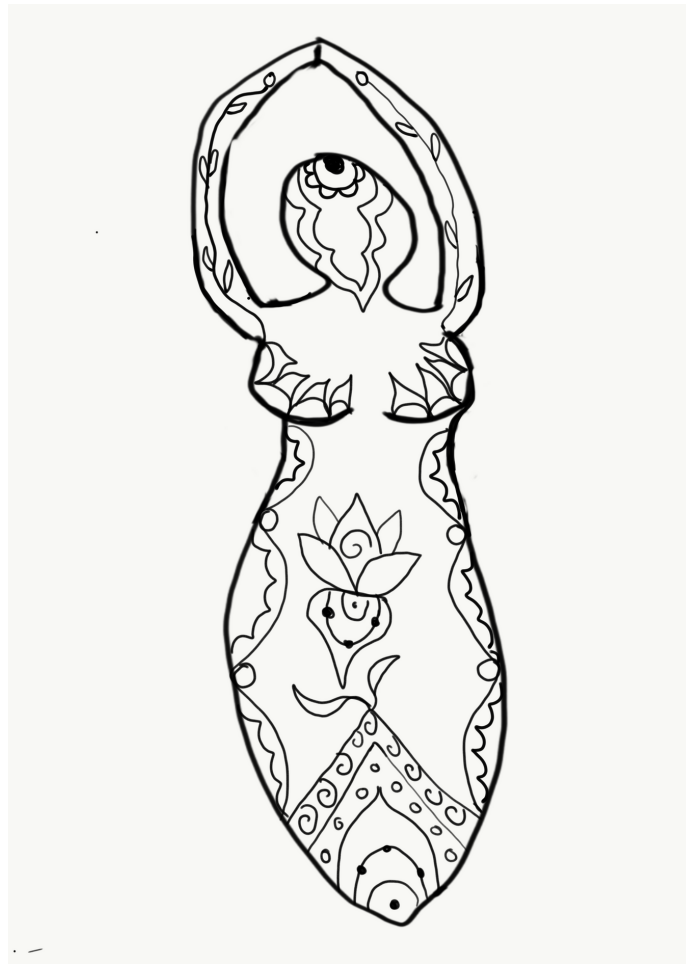
I hope this zine has inspired you to push the boundaries of your creativity and spiritual practice.

We are all capable of creating and in so doing we can develop an intimate relationship with our intuition, the subconscious and the divine.

So Mote it Be!

Liz Watkin Summer 2018

Opencoven.com



Resources

<https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-why-witchcraft-is-making-a-comeback-in-art>

<http://elizabethinsogna.com/home.html>

https://creators.vice.com/en_uk/article/d74qnx/harry-potter-spell-female-magic-exhibition

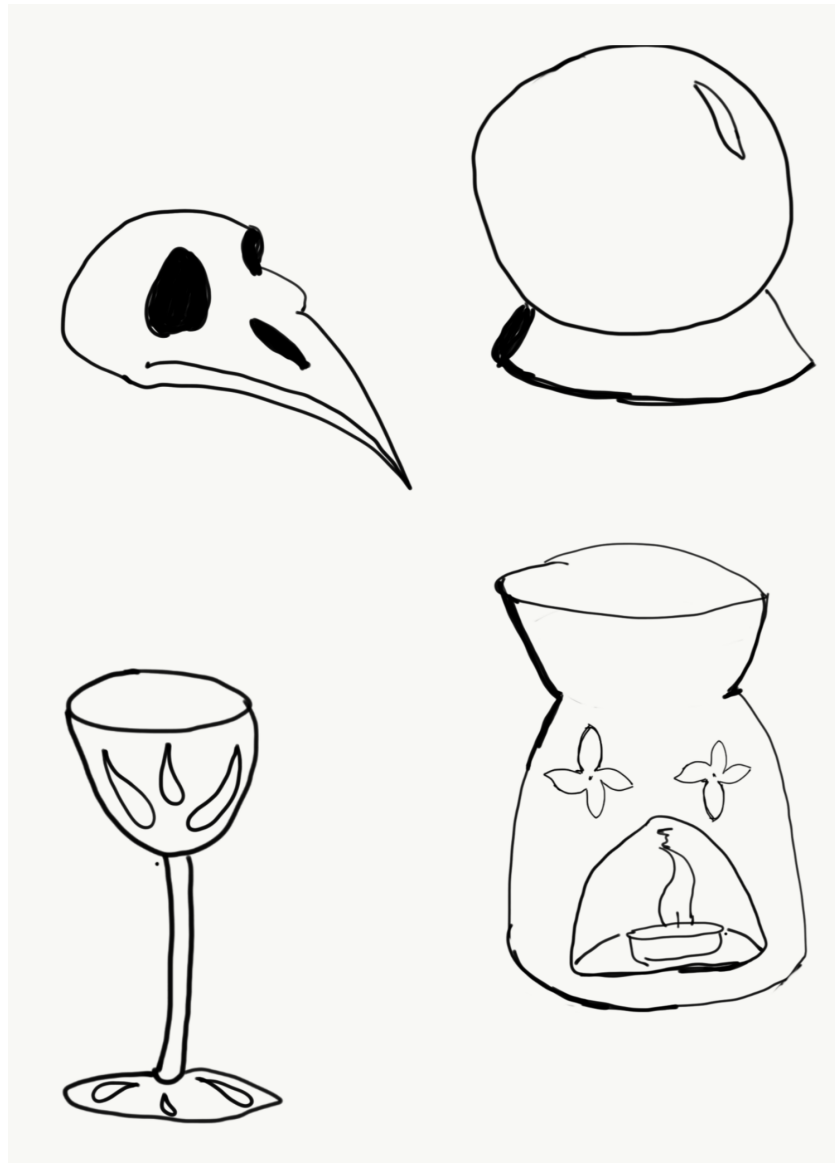
https://creators.vice.com/en_us/article/4xqqjn/the-trippy-art-and-trippier-life-of-occult-artist-marjorie-cameron

<http://www.phantasmaphile.com/>

<http://www.languageofthebirds.org/>

<https://www.hilmaafklint.se/hilma-af-klint-foundation/>

<https://www.emma-kunz.com/>



The mission of Open Coven is to help people find their own magic and spiritual emancipation by fostering creativity and inner guidance.

It was founded by artist and witch Liz Watkin to share her experiences of using art in magick. For information about workshops, online courses, publications and more on art magick:

<http://opencoven.com>

<http://instagram.com/opencoven>

<http://facebook.com/opencoven>

All illustrations and content

© Elizabeth Watkin 2018

