"The landscape of your journal" is an idea Raw Art Journaling author Quinn McDonald has played with for years, after spending most of her life writing tidy, but slightly uneven, lines on unlined pages. In this tutorial you’ll explore lines of words and lines as designs.

You will learn how your emotions can color a landscape and how you might go about crafting your landscapes on a page. If you give yourself permission to write what needs to be said and give your hands permission to move across the page intuitively, you will find new worlds to discover and explore.

To learn more about or purchase Raw Art Journaling by Quinn McDonald, click here.

www.CreateMixedMedia.com

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Confined Landscape Spaces

Just because you are drawing doesn't mean you have to fill the page. Leaving spaces empty says as much as filling them up. Use the technique of creating a small space on the page and put your landscape in a rectangle, then write around the edge of the small space. Try a spiral. If you have a lot to say, start at the upper left-hand corner of the page and spiral inward. Again, you don't need to fill the page. Three spiral lines of handwriting surrounding a personal landscape makes a meaningful page.

Another way to use lines to your advantage is to create a grid on your page and work within the lines in unusual ways. Three-column pages are attractive and easy if your page is taller than it is wide. Try dividing the page with two evenly spaced vertical lines, creating three columns. You do not need to be exact, but a ruler helps in making the lines straight. You can work within the three columns, perhaps writing words vertically along the lines. Once you've tried that, take it one step further and divide the page horizontally into thirds, with two horizontal lines in addition to the two vertical lines, to create a nine-section grid. If you are comfortable just eyeing this—great! But if the thought of working in thirds causes anxiety, here is a great trick. I learned this trick from Michelle Ward's website GPP Street Team (Crusade 41, July 2010). It lets you make an accurate grid on any sheet of paper.

What You Need
- your journal or blank paper
- ruler
- T-square or right-angle triangle (optional)
- pencil

Where to Find the Right Words to Add

Writing your own words is wonderful for your soul. But there are days when you can't write. You want someone else to say it for you. Finding the right phrase, sentence, poem or fragment can be as surprising as finding an opal in your breakfast granola.

Sure, you can Google "poems" or "quotes." It's great if you are looking for something you already know. But don't deprive yourself of the joy of discovery. Start with the usual places—books you already have. Then expand to the library. Copy poems or paragraphs from books as you browse; don't think you'll remember where that page was. Another wonderful place to look is used bookstores. If the store is a little untidy and you find piles of unsorted books, all the better. Look for books of poetry, particularly from authors you don't know. Self-published or small-press collections of unknown authors are hidden treasures. Page through the books looking for a word or a line that speaks to you.

Find a phrase or a short poem you love and write it into the landscape. Try writing it on one side of the page. Try it again, on a new page, following the line of the mountains. Try it again on the river road that runs to the front of the image. Each time it will look different. Each time it will mean something different to you.

(From Raw Art Journaling by Quinn McDonald, 2011; courtesy of CreateMixedMedia.com)
To create an even grid, lay a ruler diagonally across the page so one edge of the ruler lines up with the edge of the paper at the 0 and the other end at a number that divides well by 3 (you are making a grid that’s 3 columns wide by 3 columns long). Let’s say on the longer direction of the paper, you use 6” (15cm). So your ruler crosses the page at 0 and 6” (15cm). If you divide 6 by 3 you get 2, so put a mark at the 2” (5cm) spot. You can see the example on the dark line in the illustration. Now turn the ruler the other way (the red line) and repeat. Create horizontal lines through those marks. (A T-square ruler or a right-angle triangle helps and you won’t need to measure again.)

Now that you have the grid, fill it in interesting ways. Draw your landscape in one space and fill the others with small writing. Use a prompt from earlier sections of this book, or simply answer the question: “How do I feel when I work in small spaces?”

Draw the same landscape in each square, altering one detail. For example, draw a landscape in the first square. In the next one, add a sun peeking out. In the third, make the sun show a bit more. By the last one, the sun is the dominant element.

You don’t have to stick to landscapes in the grid. Here are some other ideas:

• Use gel pens to write and Pitt pens for the design. Then do it the other way around.

• Fill all the spaces with a different design.

• Choose a word with nine letters or fewer. Print a big letter in each space. Short word? Use every other space and draw in the others.

For the lines that will cross the ones you just drew, repeat the process. Use 0 and 6 as the numbers on the ruler again, even though the page is narrower this way. Put the mark at 2 again, turn the ruler, repeat the mark at 2” (5cm), and draw the lines. Easy peasy! You have a 9-space grid.

(From Raw Art Journaling by Quinn McDonald, 2011; courtesy of CreateMixedMedia.com)
Knowing your daily emotional range is a useful tool to discover what makes you happy, stressed or calm. You can use grids to list your emotions in the course of a day, or the ones you have felt most often this week. Noticing your dominant mood gives you clues to the rise and fall of your emotional landscape.

Write one emotion in each space. Use a big range but use YOUR emotions—thoughtful, dreamy, unfocused, cranky, content, at peace, seeking, hopeful, wondering—for example. Look at one emotion word. Close your eyes and think about a time you felt that emotion strongly. What color comes to mind? Don’t rush, don’t text a friend for the answer. Just sit with your eyes closed until you know. Add that color to the space in some way. For example, write the word with a watercolor pencil and then wash over it. Or use gel pens to put dots of color in the space. Make the grid lines with pastels or chalk and rub over them before you fill them in. Choose a color for each word and add it in the space in some way.

(From Raw Art Journaling by Quinn McDonald, 2011; courtesy of CreateMixedMedia.com)
You don’t have to stick with traditional color-emotion associations. Blue doesn’t have to be sad or green envious. It’s your journal; you get to decide the ground rules. If you associate being thoughtful with blue and being cranky with pink, that’s yours to treasure. Get in touch with the colors of your emotions.

You can create grids in unusual ways, too. Using the idea of the grid, you can create a background (I used black) and cut out shapes from decorative papers or papers you’ve made for other projects. You can write on them or leave them plain. Arrange the pieces on the page in a pattern that creates a grid. In the illustration here, I used the 3-column by 3-row grid from before.

Rather than place one piece of paper in each box, I created a pattern with eight pieces—three circles, a square and several rectangles. Being careful to place pieces in the grid areas, but allowing some to cross into two areas, the piece’s composition uses the grid, but not in an obvious way. I could have used rubber stamps to write the words, but using my own handwriting gave the piece a more organic feel. The red Chinese-writing square says “ink spirit,” which I added in handwriting along one edge. Writing words by hand allows you to spend time with your work in a very heartfelt way. In this piece, “ink spirit” indicates the power of words, whether written, spoken or read. The soft, warm watercolors add meaning to “inspiration” and “dream,” both true ink spirits.

(From Raw Art Journaling by Quinn McDonald, 2011; courtesy of CreateMixedMedia.com)
The Emotional Landscape

Give yourself permission to let your emotions choose the curve for your landscapes. They don’t have to contain rivers or mountains, a sun or a path. They can be about the colors you chose for your emotions earlier in this section. They can be soft and gentle or harsh and angular, depending on how you feel. Work intuitively. Let your heart guide your hands.

Start by drawing the first line that gets your emotion on the page. Use a pencil the first few times. A pencil allows you to erase when you want to cross lines or if you change your mind about the design.

Now draw another line that follows the first. You can follow it closely, or you can suddenly move away from it, rejoining your original line a little later. That geography in itself is an interesting comment on your life—moving away from what came before and returning. Of course, you can choose to strike out in a different direction entirely. Keep adding lines that go over and under the original ones until you are satisfied.

Try not to overfill the page. An emotional landscape does not have to be big; it has to mean much.

You can add words between the lines. Write about what caused you to feel the way you did. Or finish these sentences:

1. The place I think about when I want to be deeply happy is . . .
2. If I could go to that place right now, I’d take these three things . . .
3. The best part of the last movie I saw was when . . .
4. My new favorite color would look great on . . .

What You Need

your journal
favorite pen for writing words
colored pencils or other coloring tools

(From Raw Art Journaling by Quinn McDonald, 2011; courtesy of CreateMixedMedia.com)
The Imagined Landscape

Like emotional landscapes, imagined landscapes come from your dreams or daydreams. With imagined landscapes you can combine elements from “real” landscapes and emotional landscapes to create a world you designed yourself.

Enjoy drawing the sun? No reason your landscape can’t have three of them—and they don’t have to be in the sky or behind a mountain. Put them in the foreground if you like. Prefer the dark of night and how stars glow in the sky? No one can stop you from drawing star-trees or filling the roads or rivers with stars. This is your landscape, and you can invent what pleases you. There is no right and wrong, just interesting art. All of it is right for you. Don’t be shy; be extravagant. If you aren’t an extravagant person, be spare and simple. Make yourself happy or thoughtful. It doesn’t have to look real, and no one will make you build it, so it doesn’t have to be an engineering marvel.

What You Need

- your journal
- favorite pen for writing words
- colored pencils or other coloring tools

Your art can remind you of a song or a photograph. It can be a close-up of one part. Fill some spaces with color, leave other spaces empty. Put in dots or tiny circles in one part and bold lines in another. Draw a big curve and a line following the curve, then fill it with straight lines.

When you are done, think, “This is the world I imagine” or “This is the world the way I found it. Now I need to change it.” You are in the world to change it, one page at a time.

The landscape I drew in the image here doesn’t look like a traditional landscape at all—it’s an emotional landscape. I call it “Who’s Watching?” That’s a question I often ask my creativity coaching-clients when they don’t seem to be working from their own heart, but for someone else's approval. It’s a powerful question for your journal.