

## George Elser Artist's Statement

Sometimes it's color. Or maybe it's a shape. Often it's both. I may get an idea, or I will be out walking, looking up or looking down, but always looking. And I will see something that strikes me and will store it in my mind to mull on.

Then before I start I have a vision of how I want the collage to look. If I end up there, though, I'm usually not satisfied because it never looks or feels the way I thought it would. Sometimes whatever I put down might just sit there, awkwardly like they are at a middle school dance. Then, I need to push ahead to get the pieces moving together. I have learned that along the way I will come to a point where something is happening - say a blue in one place is fooling around with the orange in another. Or a shape in the upper left is starting to dance with another shape in the lower right. If I get them to behave so I can get where I thought we should be going I lose the effect. If I take advantage of that fooling around and encourage more if it, I end up in a place I wasn't planning on going, but one that likely works better.

To go along with the challenge of seeing my way to the end is the pleasure in the physical process of creating the work. With collage, the satisfaction comes from first ripping paper into the pieces then laying them down to see how they react to each other and I react to them. Then, when I think I have it, slopping adhesive on the pieces - acrylic medium for lighter paper and acrylic gel for heavier paper - and pasting them down. Cutting papers has its place - an orderliness or clearness that sometimes is needed - but tearing paper adds a sense of randomness to a piece that cutting doesn't. Tearing also adds elements of texture to what might otherwise be a smooth, predictable surface. Sometimes I get lost in the process, ending up putting on more than I intended, whether it's paint or paper. Then I can step back and see if that leads me in a different direction. I may decide to keep going, or decide that I have to go back. Often the challenge is that if I think a particular area of a piece is special, I need to be sure it works with everything else, reminding myself that I don't want it to be about one particular area, but about the entire collage. That process of removing or covering is as important as the simply laying down papers and the paint.

However it ends up, I hope it reflects some of the enjoyment I get in thinking about and creating the piece. A bonus is when others pick up on my sense of satisfaction and take away something of their own.

George Elser  
610-256-3771  
[elsergh@gmail.com](mailto:elsergh@gmail.com)