You can find ideas in magazines and online, pick up paint swatches from your local DIY store and gather up buttons, embroidery threads, and other helpful items. Free postcards, interesting bits of paper, wallpaper swatches, colored masking tape, stamps, stickers, fabric swatches, and so on can all go in. Boards are fun, easy, and can be done with your hands or on a computer, often without costing a cent!

Why not make a mood board before you start decorating your craft area? That way your brand will begin to synchronize with all the creative inspiration around you.

First of all, you will want to plan your mood board. What kind of a mood are you going for; what it is going to be about; and what is the purpose, end goal, or dream your board needs to inspire? On the subject of branding, what do you want your brand to say about you? What's the emotion that you want your product launch or website to generate: playful and lighthearted, warm and endearing, glamorous and sophisticated? How are you going to communicate the mood?

Start by gathering up all your initial images, ideas, and finds and spreading them out on the floor, a board, or a large table. Start moving them around and seeing how everything works together. Then start tearing interesting images from magazines or printing interesting images you find on the Internet to plug gaps or hammer out ideas and pull the concept together. Look for imagery that "speaks" to your design aesthetic. When you have all your images and finds laid out, you often find that a pattern will reveal itself. You'll see certain materials and colors you are attracted to, ones you prefer over the others. Approach the task with a light and playful heart and a mood will come to you. Keep taking a step back from your ideas and simply observe. Discard anything that doesn't flow. Keep moving things around, playing with contrast and textures—happy accidents occur when you just go with the flow.

The next step is to find a platform for your board, ideally one that can be mounted on a vertical surface for easy viewing. Supports can come in all shapes and sizes, so decide whether you want to make a pin board or clipboard that you can change, or a collaged poster or digital board. You can use a cork board or a large sheet of craft board. Other alternatives include hanging a curtain wire and using the clips to suspend your inspiration in the air. Use washi tape to adhere your finds to a blank wall, or you can use your computer to make a digital version. You could also make a magnetic board or ribbon board.

If you ever want to share your board online, you'll want to choose public domain images to avoid breaching copyright. If you have a copyrighted image that you love, try hunting on Flickr for Creative Commons work (page 123).

Take a photo of your board so you can carry it around with you. Keep looking at it so you can be sure you're on the right track.

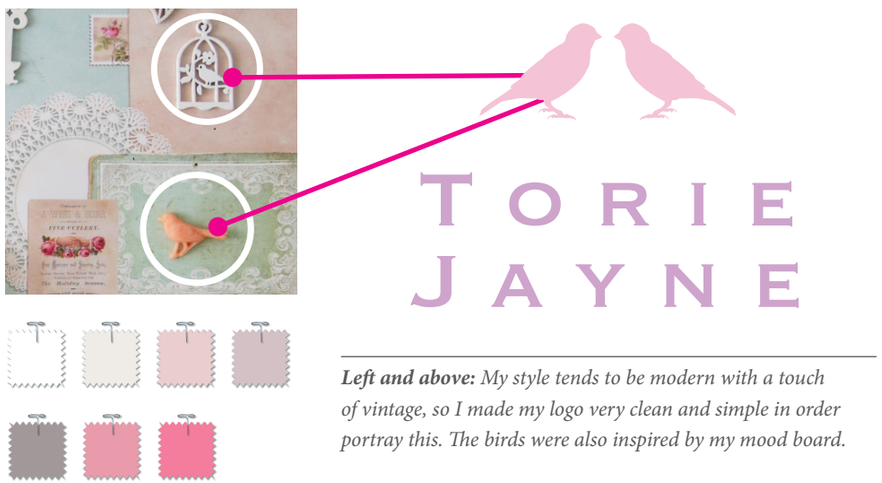
Use an inspiration board to inspire the graphics for your branding. Images might include other works of art you admire, your favorite print, or textures and patterns you are often drawn to. Texts might include quotes or just words that are specific to your brand. Generally your boards aren't trying to be a work of art but rather a collection of images and ideas that inspire. Having said that, I am sure you will still want it to look great and be a pleasing composition, so sort and trim the pieces for your board. Larger images work well as a base and a variety of sizes can look very effective. Remember you don't need an abundance of materials, just a select few that tell your story.

So now you have an organized craft area, a mood board that sums up your brand, and an inspiration board to project the mood and feeling of your brand, why not start branding your craft area? And no, I don't mean putting up signs and banners. You can brand your craft space in a much more subtle way, as shown in the crafter profiles in this book. Take Vicky Trainor, for example (page 97), her brand is about bright and bold primary colors, and Wit & Whistle's clean lined stationery is reflected in clean lines and a super-organized space.

If you know my brand, Torie Jayne, you will be familiar with my pretty pastels, modern look, and touches of vintage. So in my craft room, I have acrylic drawers alongside a vintage filing cabinet, modern shelves with stainless steel ends, and quirky glass jars.

HOW MY CREATIVE BOARD INSPIRED MY BRAND

Above: *When you have all your ideas and images laid out, you will be able to narrow down your color palette and see how different shades, hues, and tones work together to inspire your next project as well as your branding.*



Left and above: *My style tends to be modern with a touch of vintage, so I made my logo very clean and simple in order portray this. The birds were also inspired by my mood board.*