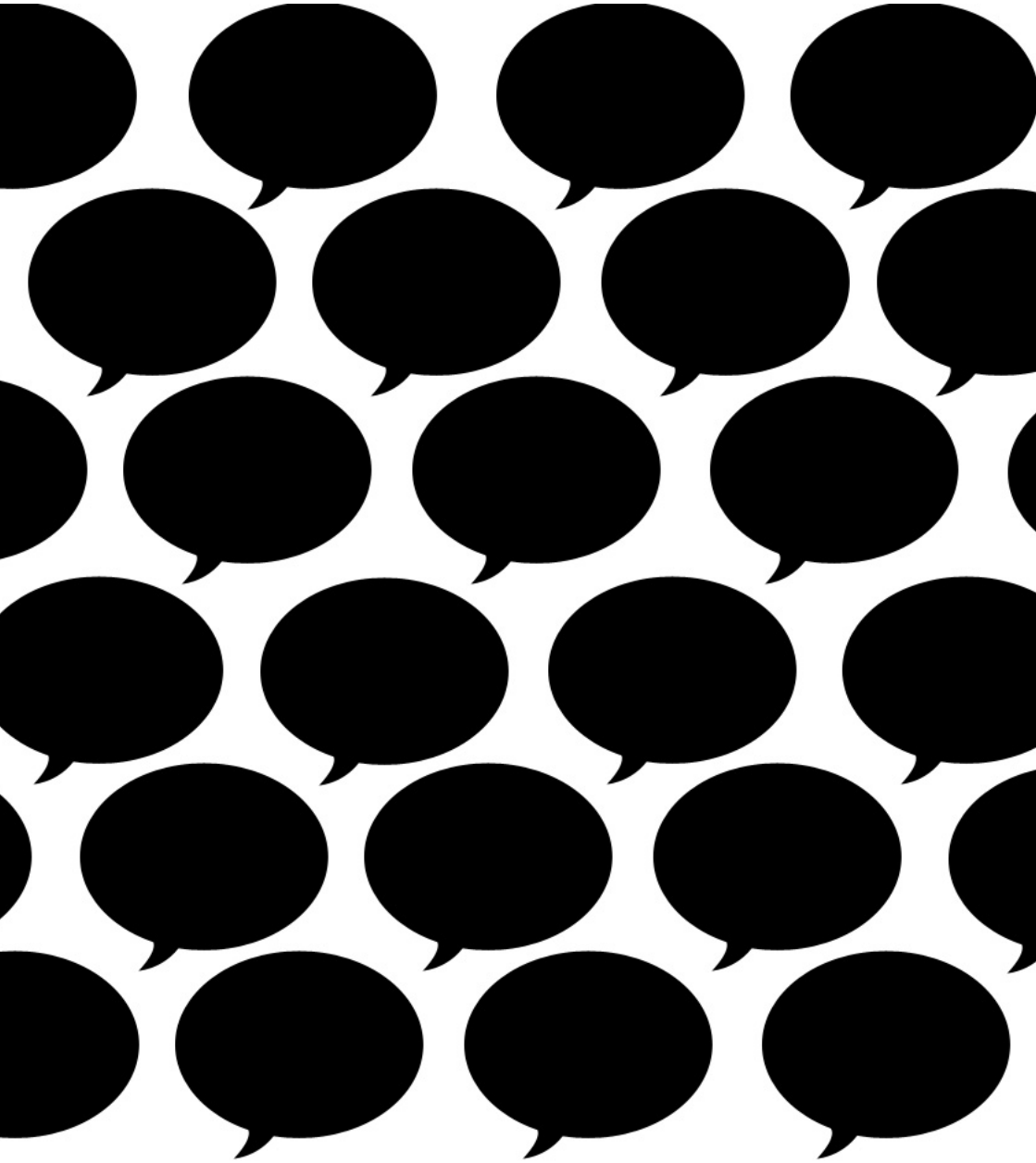


What is your biggest
stumbling block to **creativity**
(or expressing yourself artistically),
and what works for you in overcoming
these setback(s)?

issue #1



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advice + inspiration from artists/illustrators/ designers **on creativity, business and life.**

www.pikaland.com/goodtoknow

pikaland.etsy.com

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It's always comforting to know that I am not alone in dealing with self-doubt and fears. The best thing about being a part of the artistic community is the sharing that goes on -- sometimes behind closed doors.

Right now, our doors are thrown wide open to everyone who needs a little lift in spirits. The **good to know project** is full of advice + inspiration from artists/illustrators/designers on creativity, business and life. Maybe you'll find a kindred spirit. You might even learn a thing or two. The best part is that everyone is in it together.

And that's good to know.

Amy
www.pikaland.com

From time to time I get caught up in the idea of what art is "supposed" to be, and in that what my art is supposed to be. When in actuality what I create IS what my art is supposed to be. I get confused and sort of put my self in a box as far as expression is concerned... It isn't until I regroup and do something creative with a definite outcome that I kind of reboot. For me this is usually baking a cake. If I get stuck or am being too hard on myself, i'll just bake a cake for someone. It involves planning and precision, as well as creativity and expression, but I know exactly what I want out of it, and something about this really works for me.

Lizzy House
www.lizzyhouse.com

I've been thinking about this question myself lately. As a painter, my biggest creative block in painting is moving past my graphic design background where I want everything to be "contained" and "fit" and "line up" to a more loose, unbound, free style way of painting. And I've found a way to do this. I unblock by painting with my less dominate hand. It helps me tap into my right brain and get the more spontaneous look I seek when I use my left hand. I also will forego the brushes and just get right into the paint using my hands or other tools like string or rags to make marks with.

Lindy
http://lgrugerartandtravels.blogspot.com/

My biggest creative block is when my hands and brain dont want to work together. or when my brain simply dries up! the cure is to watch alot of wes anderson and sofia coppola films, and then start drawing with your eyes closed.

caitlin shearer
www.pepperminte.etsy.com

My greatest stumbling block to creativity is when I stop drawing for a while. Getting back into the routine is very difficult for me.

I overcome it by working every day, trying not to expect myracles right away (which is difficult and frustrating, but probably serves me right for letting things slide).

Julia Freund (from Lineanongrata)
www.lineanongrata.com
juliafreund.typepad.com/lineanongrata

My stumbling block always occurs when I'm given far too many restrictions for a project. ie, create a character for a book but you can't use paint, pencils, red, blue, green, it musn't be a famous person, they must be tall, they must have birthmarks, they have to be drawn in a sea of animals, but they all must be from your imagination, oh and we don't like realistic characters either. When I'm given a job like that, I find I have to renegotiate it or walk away. I just can't sit down and create something with so many restrictions, otherwise it hampers the creativity. I need to be able to let my mind speak for itself and dream about what I'm creating. Otherwise it feels as though I'm in a paddock of sheep all trying to jump over hurdles, and it gets a bit overwhelming. When I do have restrictions placed I often try to overcome it by doing huge flow charts and plans of everything positive to do with the project and just allow words to spring up at me. Those words will eventually form the picture of the job in my mind, and then I can move forward and finish it. Otherwise I find I stare at blank sheets of paper for far too long!

Ali J
http://www.alijart.com

No doubt: my biggest stumbling block to creativity is TIME: I think I would need a day with 48 hours... not just 24! But, I have a cute strategy to overtime that: I wake up very very early in the morning... and take advantage on those hours that everything is so quiet and calm at home...

Yael Frankel
yaelfran.etsy.com
www.miniatureart-yael.blogspot.com

My biggest stumbling block to creativity is insecurity or apprehension...I may want to tackle a new project or something I've never tried before, a departure from the norm, maybe...what works for me in overcoming these setbacks, is to just dive right in and remind myself that the first try is the most important and that there is perfection in the process.

rachael amen
numbereight.etsy.com
rachaelamen.blogspot.com

I'd have to say that my biggest stumbling block is doubt. I never feel like my work is good enough or I'm working hard enough. Although people tell me otherwise and the work I do and reactions I get for my art should tell me otherwise, I'm still very hard on myself. It would be all too easy to give up but I know I can nevr do that so I just keep going!

I'll sometimes get a severe mental block after I've had a really good run of producing work; if I try and carry on, I find that the stuff I'm producing just turns out wrong and I end up getting really frustrated. To remedy this, I just take a break; read lots of books and magazines; play video games and watch films. If I don't think about my work, something will spark off my inspiration again when I least expect it!

Jess Bradley
www.jessbradley.com
venkman-project.deviantart.com/

I think my biggest stumbling block is me. Sometimes you're just not in the right mood or frame of mind and everything grinds to a halt but I've only just figured out that it's not actually a bad thing. It can be frustrating whilst you're in the rut but when I'm there (which is a lot) I get myself a new book, or find an old one and read chunks of it, go see a film, look at pictures, do something new. I allow myself to have a couple of hours off or a day off and wait till I can focus again. Sometimes even rejiggling old bits of work helps too. You'll find the perfect colour yellow and before you know it everything's yellow.

Amy Blackwell
drawingontables.blogspot.com

My biggest problems start when I think about what other people might think of my work, whether or not anyone else will like it etc. The only way I can really produce the best possible work is to shut myself off from the world and do what I feel is right...and usually I am pleasantly surprised by the reaction I get!

Melody Seal
www.melodyseal.etsy.com
www.melodyseal.com
www.melodyseal.blogspot.com

My biggest stumbling block to creativity was always - rules! I am not good with rules especially regarding my art.

I painted since I was a little girl, as much as I loved it, to school when I was a child I always made the paintings on the recess, a few minutes before the class would start. I always didn't like people telling me what to paint or what to create especially when I didn't connect to the subject talked-about. I was never good in staying in art studies I took even if it was only short courses, I would almost always leave in the middle of it or few lessons before it got finished. It was always hard for me to find teachers that I felt that they are teaching me something new or know how to arouse my creativity.
I have no longer this block because I choose only to make what I love and to illustrate what is in my head and to choose only subjects that interest me.

Yali Paz-Gilboa
www.yalipaz.etsy.com

Back at art college my stumbling block was lack of confidence in my work, thus taking less risks. Thinking your work is not 'good enough' makes it lack enthusiasm, which is quite obvious in the feebly attempted results. Since leaving college I started working on both collaborative and personal projects, and selling on Etsy. Creating for yourself with no pressure is a good start to building confidence, especially when you post work online and it gets encouragement and good feedback. These days it is more a physical stumbling block, if I'm not in the right environment it can really stifle the creative flow, to overcome this I need a lot of space, good company, great tunes, and plenty of tea!

Heidi Burton
www.flickr.com/photos/heidillustration/

There is no stumbling block to creativity; Limits create desire!

Zeina Mroueh
www.tchiki.com
www.Friday-Wear-Online.com

My biggest stumbling block to creativity is a lack of confidence. I have periods of self-doubt that make me think I have nothing worthwhile to offer to the world, who would want to see my stuff and that I have no talent. I overcome this by taking part in no-pressure creative projects such as Thing A Day (which I'm doing right now), the Everyday Matters Group and Think Monday, Think ATC and whatever else I can find on the internet that inspires me, like reading the blogs of other artists and illustrators.

It really works for me!

Stacey-Ann
www.missann.etsy.com (shop)
www.creativesque.co.uk (blog)

Im new in this wonderful creative world. With the economic crisis, cpsia rules, "resolution making", goal setting and reflection that accompanies the beginning of a new year, it created a feeling of restlessness with a bit of a lost sense of direction together by a "now what" sort of fear and hesitation. The call to expand and evolve in my creativity came with uncertainty about how and when things are going to happen.

One thing i've learned from online creative friends is to know how and when to calmly listen. And when the inspiration has a direction, that's when we know when to take the next step. That is when i stop my panic and fear, and started to clamly listern. Using this time as a gift to learn, a time to relax and listen. Some things got very clear about what might be next for me. My work and creating has just taken on a different form over the last few weeks. I was reminded of this sentiment "everything is always gonna be alright". It also became very clear to me that building friendship and developing a postive support system with others build creativity. Getting support and love from other creative friends inspire me.

And I'm not entirely sure if I'm making any sense or anwering directly to your question but I felt inspired and compelled to share.

Jacqueline Low
jqlinesocuteithurts.typepad.com/
Jqline.etsy.com

I sometimes find the pressure to create something good holds me back. I will think about a project I need or want to do, and I'll be very excited about it, and get very anxious to start working. But then when I sit down at the table to begin working, I start panicking. What if I do this, and it's not good? What if it looks terrible, and it doesn't represent me in the way I like? Usually, if it's for a deadline, I just have to try very hard to push those thoughts to the back of my head and continue on. But when I don't have the luxury of a deadline, and I'm working just for myself, I have to lie to myself and say "oh, this is just going to be a rough draft ... you can always do this drawing over again if you need to." And somehow just thinking that something I'm making is a sketch lets me work a little bit more free and easy instead of all rigid and nervous.

Candice Hartsough McDonald
www.cordialkitten.etsy.com

One of my main blocks is time management. i have alot of beings that depend on me from the second i wake up til the moment i lay my head down to sleep. I remember feeling like I had to choose an art life over a family life. I'm not naturally a super organized person but more of a dreaming fly by the seat of my pants type who does her best art in this mode however, as a big grown up with big grown up things to attend to, i feel like my day is swallowed by "duties" which requires tremendous energy and focus often leaving no time for selfless (or rather super selfish!) absorption into my "real work" which is always calling me. Now that my babies aren't cooing in the backround but rather needing rides across the state to go to sports events , i feel i never have the TIME to produce quality artwork. I doodle a bit here and there and hope for more time.

What to do? I am learning, as my family and their needs grow, that it imperative that i carve time for myself everyday to do something artistic. As i get closer to a show i naturally take the time i need because of the impending deadline but the family rythmn does suffer...everyone puts up with it and is glad when it is OVER..esp in the meal dept.

My blog is a way to committ to a snippet of artistic indulgence on a daily basis. I may not post an entry everyday but i do go there and check out my ever growing list of Esty loves and sites.Gon a little fielf tripto Pikaland :) Here's another time management issue...i can't stop!!! Following one link to another, excited by the visual sense of familiarity and adventure...is what keeps me going.

Hence the COMMUNITY of artists all over the planet gives me the incentive to keep trying everyday to squeeze in my art.

In the grand scheme of things, I am simply taking a sabbatical, my children need me and i signed up for them, pledged my time the day they arrived. Once a wise lady told me...your art will always be there, your children will be young for just a short time. You decide.

So, I suck at juggling all the bills and hopelessly unartistic and boring duties but make really awesome birthday cakes and host insane birthday parties, i volunteer in the school and bring in boxes of junk and get the kids to sculpt high wire acts out of corks and wire and tell them about Calder's Circus, point out the ever amazing shapes and shadows of the clouds and mountains, light and birds, patterns of hay and the way snow crystallizes on every tiny bare branch int he dead of winter.

So, as i transition into a more organized person who can guiltlessly report to her studio (her husband made for her) and be a "real" artist, I will keep flying by the seat of my pants and in the grand scheme of things, add YOGA to my routine, calm down, do the bills quickly so i can get back to LIVING, exploring, evolving and know that i a always doing my art even if it doesn't end up on canvas.

Stephanie Morgan Rogers
miladyproductions.etsy.com
miladyproductions.com
miladyproductions.blogspot.com

the biggest stumbling blog I'm my creativity is the fear of being misunderstood by the larger artistic creative community, and also the pressure to be trendy. Ultimately since I am an illustrator I am often not taken seriously as a fine artist. My goal would be to merge to two categories in a seamless way so that i could be marketable to gallery owners and freelance illustration publications as well. the cross over between these two worlds is still strained, and often i find myself pigeonholed into a particular singular style or way of working which is dictated by the industry. All these elements combined lead to a major hampering in my creativity.
Some of the ways that I try to overcome these stumbling blogs are:
1. attempting to market myself only precisely to the people that will understand my work
2. doing as much personal sketch book work as possible on my free time
3. constantly researching current artist and potential venues in which to showcase my work
4.trying to be flexible to the demands of my client even when i am not fully in agreement with the client
5. researching the European market for potential fresh art scenes

Marina Kharkover
www.marina-kharkover.blogspot.com

My biggest stumbling block to creativity is not prioritizing my workload and getting lost in small tasks that are not, at the moment, of the utmost importance. What I've started doing again recently to help me stay on track is to keep a day planner. Not an electronic one, either. I have an iphone, and it's fun and was sort of useful in this regard, but it really was not able to function in the way that I really needed it to, in order to really keep me on top of things. A regular paper planner is unmatched, in my opinion. It is like magic. It keeps me organized, prioritized and focused on the tasks at hand... and, by extension, my creativity greatly benefits from this orderly mindset!

kathy weller
wellerwishes.etsy.com
wellerwishes.blogspot.com

Aside from having to expend my effort on non-creative activities such as the writing of my dissertation, creative repetition is one of my biggest fears, as whilst personal style is important I feel you need to be able to show I have multiple skills and can communicate my ideas in ways that are fresh and exciting with every project.

To overcome this I find evaluating my work is the best thing to do. Also getting away from my workspace so I come back refreshed... going out and feeding the ducks or something, with a notebook on hand for sudden inspiration of course (although mine always blow up on me)

Matt Saunders
www.rabbitportal.com/

doubting the validity of an idea – usually a result of thinking at one time and sitting down to work quite some time later. solution: coffee, looking through new magazines and just working {even if what results is not what i was hoping for}.

Belinda Kempt
gretchenmist.etsy.com

My biggest stumbling block is time. Never having enough to do everything I want to do. Having so many ideas running through my head and feeling like I don't get them all out before they get forgotten. But, I tell myself, Shawna, get focused! Make a priority list and stick to it! I also started carrying a little journal for random ideas that creep in my head at odd times. That's helped too.

Shawna Stobaugh
www.shawnanonna.blogspot.com

DOUBT - when it comes up I find myself making excuses not to be in the studio... to go to the DVD store and get 5... watch them in a row.... with a block of fudge chocolate!
To overcome feelings and thoughts of doubt in my creativity or potential, I now have learnt to recognise what I am feeling is just a thought not the truth, and to acknowledge them as that. By getting back in there and pushing through, new ideas come quickly and I feel inspired again.

Nina O'Brien,
Kindling,
www.kindling.com.au

whenever I feel uninspired I go to the library or the bookstore and look at magazines, interior magazines mostly, I love 'em.

Amy Cartwright
http://amycblogpage.blogspot.com/

My biggest stumbling block to creativity is clutter. I am easily distracted and it is very hard for me to keep on task and focus if my space is not neat and orderly. To overcome these setbacks I need to keep organized. I also find that having traditions helps with the creative flow. Playing certain music, having a fragrant candle burning and a clean space helps to switch my brain into creative gear.

Robyn Wells
www.robayre.com

My biggest stumbling block is doubt over my abilities and confusion over what the next step is. To overcome doubt I tell myself to breathe and to just continue working and "let's just see what happens" and for confusion I set a list of priority to do tasks each day, make sure they are realistic goals, and take a couple of breathers in between them. It's all a practice in progress.

Racheal Anilyse
www.rachealanilyse.com
www.rachealanilyse.etsy.com

My biggest stumbling block is distraction. There are too many rad things to suck up my attention. Cruising the web looking at art, playing video games, reading magazines, playing with toys....In small doses these can be inspiring events, but if I'm not careful they can suck up an entire afternoon. The best way for me to overcome this is to just get to work. Once I start working, creativity just comes. If I wait to start working until the creativity strikes, I don't get much done.

BAM POP!
www.bampop.com

I love drawing more than anything else, so to inspire myself I just have to surround myself with images of things that I love. So the creativity part usually organically/intuitively starts to evolve by itself. My biggest stumbling block is wishing I had more constructive feedback on my art. I think it is important to have others perspective on your artwork to help you grow so that you can push yourself to new levels. Also talking about art, can inspire you for later projects.

Valerie Pensworth
www.valeriepensworth.com
www.valeriejoan.etsy.com

At the moment, lack of time (and lack of sleep) is my biggest problem. This is mostly due to the fact that I have two small children (ages 1 and 2) who keep my busy all hours of the day. On the other hand, they can also be a source of inspiration with their amazing energy and creativity. Having a few quiet moments at the end of the day (when the kiddies are sleeping) does wonders for me in helping me gather my thoughts and deciding what my next artistic projects will be.

Stephanie Levy
www.stephanielevy.blogspot.com
www.stephanielevy.com
www.stephanielevy.etsy.com

Sometimes I can start feeling like I've hit that horrid brick wall...usually brought on by not sketching and working on new ideas enough. When this happens, I find that what is really helpful is listening to inspiring music or watching a magical film, and then sitting down with my sketchbook to 'just draw' and see what comes of it.....also a nice walk in the woods can do wonders for creative thoughts! :)

Marjorie
www.marmeecraft.etsy.com
www.marmeecraft.blogspot.com/

I would say it is most difficult for me to carry on when I am not satisfied with the work I have done the day before. If I hate a page in my art journal or cannot bear the sight of that painting that I made, I get frustrated. I think obsessively about how to get it right but then am afraid to make it even worse. This frustrated state usually lasts for about a day or two, but sometimes longer. What helps me is to try and let it go. OK, so it sucks. Big deal. Move on. Make the next one better. Also realizing that I don't HAVE to show my work to anyone, so there's no reason for me to feel embarrassed by my less brilliant work.

Anna Denise van der Reijden
(AKA AnnaDenise)

www.annadenise.nl
www.flickr.com/ann-d
annadenise.etsy.com

Stumbling blocks come in many forms - the old "itchy" block (can't sit still enough to draw, had too many coffees or something else on the brain), the "it's not good enough" block (too critical of your work to push it further), or just the "big nasty" block where you just can't get started at all. My technique to hurdling these annoying lumps of anti-create is to make a cup of tea, a nice piece of paper, and just forget about what looks "good" and fill a whole page with quick, loose characters. Usually one of them has an interesting enough look to be repeated and upgraded. Even if nothing strikes my fancy, it is better to have played with the block rather than stumbled over it!

Jess
www.jessesmess.com

I would say for me the biggest stumbling block artistically is working on projects where the client has quite a strong idea of what they want or having to illustrate something too literally- i enjoy using my imagination and bringing my own ideas into a project. I'm learning it's best to try and get as much information as possible about commissions before beginning a project. For me I find it helps to do a bit of work on a personal piece you're enjoying when you're working on a commission you're not keen on.

Anna Wadham
http://www.annawadham.etsy.com
http://www.annawadham.blogspot.com

I would say my biggest obstacle is often myself! I can get in my own way and really over think things sometimes. What works best for me in that situation is to get a fresh opinion from someone who's never seen the piece of work before. Sometimes I agree with their feedback and sometimes I don't, but it can help to get "fresh eyes" and go from there."

SparklePaw
http://www.sparklepaw.etsy.com

My block is my grasp of upcoming technology and I overcome it by undertaking collaborative projects where technology experts help flesh my illustrations into digital work.

paola
http://www.flickr.com/photos/paolaguimerans/

My biggest stumbling block to expressing myself artistically is that I'm often taken too literally. I struggle with this because I usually don't want to have to explain my work. The thoughts I put into the piece are my own and private and explaining those thoughts is like telling my life story to a stranger, to whom I just began to exist. I think my work invokes the feeling of curiosity, and just like lyrics of a song, my art could be interpreted in different ways, according to the individual.

Tanya Pshenychny
www.razorberries.com

Our biggest stumbling block is lack of time. It's really hard to feel creative when you're under the pressure of several different deadlines. So much of our work is inspired by the patterns in everyday objects and the landscape around us, so in those situations we always try to take time to notice small details as we're rushing around, and save them up in our heads as inspiration for quieter moments. Things like the piles of colourful fruit and veg in our local greengrocer's, or the pattern of bricks on one of the houses opposite the office window lit up in the sunshine. Little moments of inspiration like that really help to keep creativity flowing!

Sarah Spooner and Jon Gregory
http://forwhatischatteris.blogspot.com/

Self confidence! Sometimes I find myself looking at other peoples' work too much and feeling down because my work isn't as good as theirs. When this happens, I have to take a break for a few hours- I read a book or watch a movie and drink some tea. I usually come back feeling refreshed and ready to try some new ideas out!

Gemma Correll
www.gemmacorrell.com

I sometimes wait too long to execute a project and I find that part of the energy is already gone when I do actually begin. I recognise now that it was fear -- fear of failing, of beginning, and of that white piece of paper staring at me.

Now, I tell myself to take a step -- no matter how small, to achieve my goals. When I break it down, nothing seems too daunting anymore.

Amy Ng
amyng.etsy.com
www.pikaland.com

My biggest setback is when I over think & design in my head. It makes me stuck on one image that is usually complicated & stiff.

What I do is :

1. write words associated to the theme I'm interested in
2. I collect images related to these words
3. I pick one image from each word
4. I take out the outlines of the image
5. put all of the outlines on a new file flash & play with them until I found new images the new images are a weird combination of sum & in a miracle way they always express what I wanted to show much better:)

VanillaRoyal
www.myspace.com/vanillaroyal
www.ILikeVR.com





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