

# 19 Daily Habits of Artists That Can Help Unlock Creativity

by Katherine Brooks in *The Huffington Post*, March 12, 2014

You do not have to be a famous painter or sculptor to sympathize with the pains of creative block. Whether it comes on like a giant smack in the face or creeps up on you like a shiver down your spine, we have all dealt with being stuck. You second guess yourself, you dance around ideas and you feel like progress is miles away, all while the joys of creating take a back seat to the pressures we associate with success. A book by *The Jealous Curator*, Danielle Krysa, (<http://www.thejealouscurator.com/blog/>) tackles the overwhelming topic that is "the block." She interviewed fifty professional and amateur, trained and self-taught artists to explore the ways in which the world's most creative individuals overcome the universal feeling of doubt. The results are compiled into "Creative Block", a Bible for the artistically-inclined; chock full of advice and inspiration for writers, designers, painters, actors, dancers and everyone in between.

## 1. Let go of your idea of "perfect."

"I do have to step back, take a breather, and realize that it is just a project and not the end of the world if it's not perfect." -Brooklyn-based illustrator and lettering master Mary Kate McDevitt

## 2. Allow yourself to have fun.

"It is when I find myself playing more than trying that I find my way out of a block." -New Hampshire-based artist and teacher Aris Moore

## 3. Don't be afraid to silence your inner critic.

"The inner critic is like that old friend from school that you wish would just leave you alone, but keeps calling and leaving messages." -UK-based collage illustrator Anthony Zinonos

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## 4. Realize that you can be your own worst enemy. Not the work.

"Don't put barriers up that aren't there -- just get to work and make something." -Portland, Oregon-based painter Lisa Golightly

## 5. But not all self-inflicted boundaries are bad.

"You have to set up the narrow parameters that you work in, and then within those, give yourself just enough room to be free and play." -New York-based painter Trey Speegle

## 6. Find your mantra and keep it close.

"I keep repeating my mantra, a quote by Charles Horton Cooley: 'An artist cannot fail; it is a success to be one.'" -Germany-based photographer Matthias Heiderich

## 7. Establish your "me" time.

"I love to start the morning with a peek at sites like Pinterest or Flickr while I'm drinking coffee, in the early hours before the rest of my family wakes up." -Boston-based painter Leah Giberson

## 8. And indulge in some vices to reset.

"Intimacy, cocktails and music are excellent lubricants in and out of a rut." -Kansas City-based artist Peregrine Honig

**9. Humble yourself from time to time.**

"I'm no genius and my work is only a reflection of my quirky insides -- you just can't take offense at what others think." -Toronto-based ceramics artist Wendy Walgate

**10. When in doubt, ask for help.**

"I could easily go around in endless circles with myself, questioning whether or not I'm on the right track with something. I just have to stop myself, and ask for help." -Milwaukee-based artist Cassandra Smith

**11. And be prepared to find inspiration in mundane places.**

"[I find inspiration] at hardware stores, building sites, empty rooms, other people's messes, in good design, conversations, and the time right before I fall asleep." -Austin, Texas-based designer Alyson Fox

**12. To clear your mind, maybe you need to clear your work space.**

"Once my studio was all set up, I really wanted to be in that room. It only seemed natural to start working again if I was sitting at a new desk." -Brooklyn-based designer Julia Rothman

**13. Find another perspective, even if it's physical.**

"Sometimes it's hard to see what's wrong, what needs to change. That's when turning the painting upside down, or looking at it in a mirror, is a good trick." -Sweden-based illustrator Camilla Engman

**14. Let yourself be impulsive!**

"When I can't act on a sudden burst of inspiration, I feel a little like I've held in a sneeze." -Chattanooga, Tennessee-based paper collage artist Hollie Chastain

**15. Don't be afraid to see the adventure in a challenge.**

"It's one of the most beautiful things about doing this -- you don't have to care... No one can wrestle the pencil out of your hand. You get to keep going in absolute defiance." -Toronto-based artist Amanda Happe

**16. Because failure is only one moment before success.**

"I try to remain open to taking risks in my work because I know failure can often lead to something amazing." -Rangeley, Maine-based artist Shannon Rankin

**17. Don't be afraid to alter your process.**

"I think it's extremely important to evolve your practice and challenge yourself conceptually and technically. It would soon become tedious otherwise." -Adelaide, Australia-based artist Deidre But-Husaim

**18. Sometimes, there won't be a "finished product." And that's ok.**

"In my own practice not every beginning is going to be a finished work." -Brooklyn-based artist Emily Barletta

**19. Because creation can come from destruction.**

"If I'm having trouble with a textile or paper piece, I always cut it up. I love cutting things up. It restores the potential to the materials again." -Ontario-based artist Jessica Bell