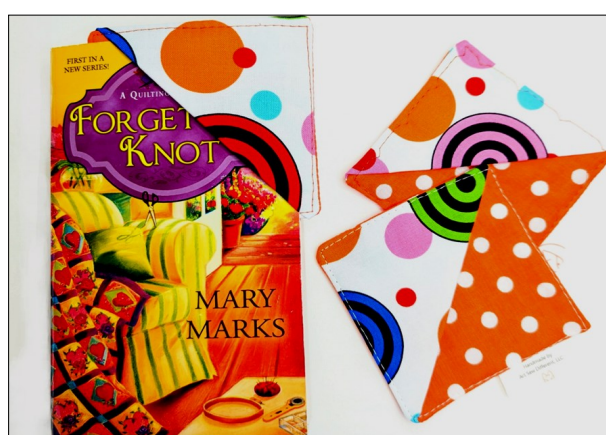


WHAT'S NEW

New items in [The Art Store!](#)

[Check out these corner bookmarks!](#) Lots of fabric patterns to choose from. Great for left- or right-handed people. Use them on the top of the page or the bottom. You can even use more than one at a time. One person said they are great to use when she needs to mark 2 or more sections of a book at once for quick reference, particularly when she's doing research. The corner pocket can hold several pages at once. Each bookmark measures approximately 3.5" square.

[Other items available in The Art Store:](#) limited-edition mugs; greeting cards; mini-stocking advent calendar; coasters; art quilts. [Shop here!](#)



WHY WHAT YOU MAKE MATTERS

In a desperate moment of creative despair, my friend Ana cried out, "What does it even matter? No one cares about my work! Why should I keep making things when it doesn't matter?"

I was rendered speechless, stunned into a slack-jawed silence she misconstrued as irritation over her outburst. "I'm sorry for complaining," she said. "It's just that if nobody is going to even look at my stuff, why am I making it? I'm not making a difference to anyone, and I feel like I'm wasting my time." Tears rolled down her cheeks. I held her hand in silence for a few more minutes as I gathered my thoughts.

After reassuring her I did not think she was complaining, but rather saw it as problem-solving, I started talking with her about why what she makes matters, why what any of us make matters.

Art is one of the greatest healers of the spirit, third in line after nature and healthy food. Art comes in as many forms, too. In some ways, creativity is more important than art itself: making things, anything, but especially that which is beautifully aesthetic (to oneself, anyway) and has meaning (even if the meaning is unknowable).

We are human, and one of the things the human species is really good at is creativity. For over 200,000 years, human beings have been making things, and often those things are beautiful or create art. Early bone flutes produced music. People painted cave walls with red ochre to tell a story. Somebody lacquered a box, gilded a letter opener, carved a statue, sewed a quilt. Some of those things have been passed down through history for us to marvel at today. Most were lost and forgotten. But even if we never knew the people who created those things, does that invalidate the joy and creativity they felt at the time? What of the other people who benefitted from what was made or the person who made it?

Creativity is fundamentally human, and thus art is important for humanity. It doesn't matter how well-recognized we are for making something. We don't have to become famous for our creativity and our art to matter. All that matters is that we make it. We never know how it will impact another person.

We all deserve art and beauty in this world. We all deserve to be surrounded by beautiful things, whether someone else makes them or we do. What we make matters, not just because it is important to others and for others, but because it is important to ourselves, for us. I create not just because I have a need to create, not just because I have something wordless to say, not only because I have something inside of me that I need to give to the world. I create because I am a part of humanity. I also need art. I, too, need to see beautiful things that I have made and that others have made.

So, make your art. Make it not just because you need to make it, but because you deserve to see it made. You are part of humanity and deserve art in your life. You matter, and what you make matters.

[Click here to see this and other entries in my online journal The Artist's Journey.](#)



QUILTATIONS

*The event may be unique,
but the experience is
universal.*



HOW TO GET OUT OF THE SWAMP OF CREATIVE DESPAIR

In recent months I have had several people ask me how to get out of the swamp of creative despair. Here are six tips that have worked for me. Maybe they will for you or someone else you know, too! Keep in mind that the reasons for creative despair may be the result of significant issues, as I list in point #6. If that's the case, it would be best to discuss those things with a professionally licensed counselor or therapist.

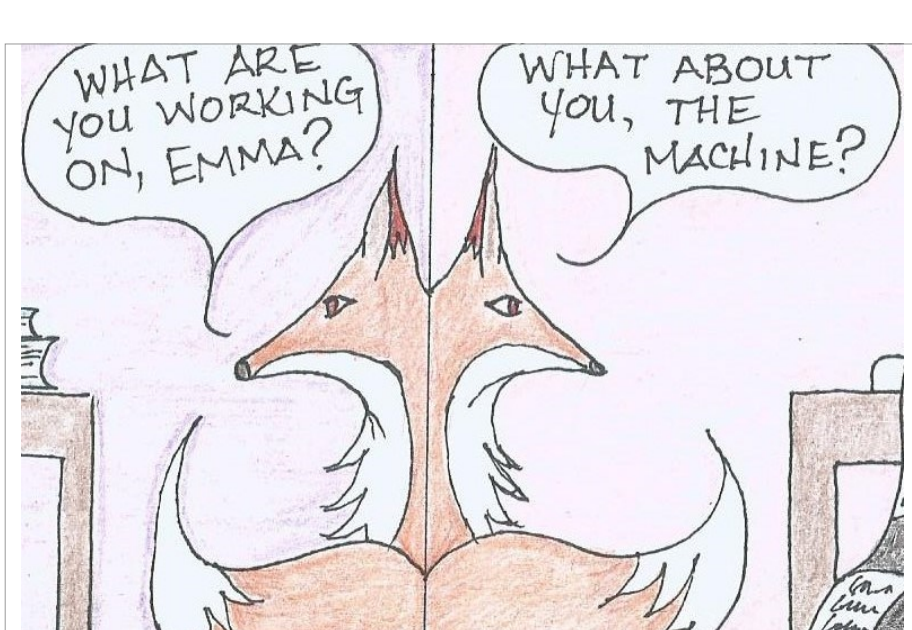
1. It is important not to confuse poor time management with creative despair. We all make choices on how to utilize our limited time. Be mature enough to own up to them.
2. Be kind to yourself. Not all procrastination is because of poor time management. I investigate my reasons for prioritizing something inconsequential over studio-time. For example, perhaps I'm avoiding a difficult step in my art making because I haven't quite figured out how to overcome the block. Maybe my brain wants to feel accomplished while I am creatively stuck, so I reorganize the kitchen. While I solve the puzzle in the kitchen, my brain can relax enough to begin to solve the puzzle in the studio.
3. Allow your creativity to flow at its own pace. Rushing adds more pressure. The *hurry-hurry* attitude of our society does not belong in the creative process. I have missed out on thousands of opportunities because I didn't even know they existed. That's OK! I can't catch them all. So, if I miss a deadline, I don't beat myself up about it. I prioritize my creative process first. There will be other opportunities.
4. Start with small steps. There have been times I simply cannot face a big project because it is too overwhelming. So, I break it down into smaller steps. While those steps vary depending on what I am making, the result is the same. If I can only work for one hour in the studio, I'm good. One hour is more than zero hours. If I can only cut fabrics or sweep out the studio that day, then so be it. I still feel accomplished.
5. Create a board, notebook, or box with images and ideas that inspire you. It's nice to keep photos on your phone, but if you can, print off your favorites and add them to your creative board/book/box. Add drawings, poems, song lyrics or music titles. Write yourself love notes about what makes you feel good and inspired. Add fabric patterns or found objects. You can make it a half hour project, or a lifelong one. Make it your own and revere it as something precious. It can help!
6. Most importantly, check your stressors, and thus, your stresses. What external factors could be causing a creative slump? Are you ill? Are you at a particular point in your reproductive cycle? Did you have a life-changing event? Are you distracted by other issues, such as money, work, family, etc.?
 - a. If any of these things are going on, the first thing to do is refer back to #2. Be kind to yourself. Be compassionate. Be patient. If you are ill (whether physically or emotionally), allow yourself time to heal. Your creative work will wait for you, I promise.
 - b. The next thing is to look at what you can control and what you cannot. For example, you cannot control whether other people have good manners or not, but you can control how you react or with whom you associate. Another example, maybe you need to work full-time, but the job you have sucks the life out of you. If you cannot change jobs, practice leaving work at work so you can be home when you're at home.
 - c. Lastly, some of these stressors may best be discussed with a licensed professional. A life-changing illness or event, such as cancer, a death, a break-up/divorce, or job-loss, cannot be fixed with a few points in a creative's newsletter article. Friends are nice to have, but they cannot (nor should they be expected to) do the work that a therapist can.

Again, your creative work will still be there when you are ready to come back to it. It may be a week from now, it may be in three years. But it will wait until **YOU** are ready.

FLAMINIA AND THE MACHINE

Episode 16: A Lesson Learned

Flaminia is impatient but The Machine reminds her of a very important lesson.



To see ALL episodes of Flaminia and The Machine, [click here!](#)

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UNIQUE QUILTED
AND FABRIC ART

As an artist, my passion is to create unique textile and fabric art. I was always drawn to sewing as a child, and now I am able to live my dream of artistic creativity through fabric and textiles. I am inspired to use materials and techniques that range from the traditional to those I make up as needed.

That's what makes it ArtSewDifferent!