

Conceptualizing the Creative Process in the Visual Arts: Steps Toward Actualizing Art (By Kip Deeds)

The following list was created to assist students through their self-directed artistic journeys. It is also meant to serve as a reminder that inspiration is more likely to occur as a result of related work than it is by passively waiting for it. Ideas and insights may come at any stage throughout a creative endeavor. This means that the creative process is not always an exact step-by-step process and for this reason my list is unnumbered.

Cultivating Ideas By Being Aware- Take note of ideas, experiences, emotional sensitivities, etc. that can inform your artwork.

Looking, Seeing, and Thinking Visually- Be on the look out for subjects and perspectives, and then be willing to see how these subjects and perspectives can be transformed into art.

Research- Learn by studying your subject.

Gather Information- Collect sketches, pictures, and notes. This is source material for further development.

Learning Through Work and Chance- A tangential idea, an error or an unexpected event can transform your thinking.

Make Goals- Have objectives that challenge your technical capacities and your intellectual engagement.

Plan Ahead- Have the proper materials to do your best work. Make sure to allot yourself more than enough time to complete your work. There are no shortcuts to craftsmanship.

Stay Focused- It is easy to give up on a project. It is harder to be patient and cultivate a project.

Learn From Mistakes- Nobody is perfect. Mistakes provide an opportunity to learn about your self.

Question Completion- When you think you are finished, consider the strengths and weaknesses of your work. Substantiate your likes and dislikes. By questioning or testing your assumptions you stand to learn the most.

Review- Have others review your work so you can gauge your progress.

Listen to Reviews- Allow yourself time to process the observations and reactions that are most difficult to accept. Keep an open mind. Others come to their observations and art making decisions based on experiences and perspectives that may be very different than your own. You can either take or leave advice but one should not immediately discount it.

Confronting Fear- Don't be afraid to expand on your concept and work. You learn by testing the boundaries and limitations of your ideas and work.

Compare- Look at comparable examples that might help you consider any further steps. By broadening your knowledge of possible artistic solutions and examples, you become more aware of the history and place where your artistic practice comes from.

Make Revisions (if Needed)

Have More Reviews (If Needed)

Make Any Final Refinements

Finished But Not Done- Judgment and finality is contingent upon circumstance and context. The work of an artist is ongoing. What you learn from a finished work becomes a source of knowledge applicable to future work.

Learn to move on- An artist's best work is the work that he or she has yet to make.