

CAN O' WORMS

- MAY I SIT AT YOUR TABLE?

Here's the can of worms I mentioned I might open earlier. I'll preface by saying I haven't given this a ton of thought so forgive my candor and anything that might read "blunt".

I started art journaling in 2015. I learnt from many many different Creators who were kind enough to publish their journey and teaching in the public domain. Many days spent in bed and physical therapy were brightened by this new world of Creativity I hadn't known anything about before, and to say I devoured the content like Bruce Bogtrotter going in on a chocolate cake would be an understatement.

I'm reluctant to share some of those earlier experiences because some were very negatively charged and I struggle to find the right words for exactly what happened and why. As I was learning I joined Facebook groups to share in my experience and joy. I discovered a world of encouraging and supportive friends and artists, but also a culture of insecurity. It makes sense – sharing your work can be quite vulnerable. I just never thought my journey could rub someone else the wrong way, and I eventually found my posts being ignored, deleted and attacked. I didn't use "enough" of a certain brand, I didn't follow (unnecessarily strict) Facebook group guidelines, I was "intimidating" others by posting work that was "too advanced" or I was "stealing" for trying tutorials I learnt online. I got to a point where I stepped on enough toes that my only option was to start my own Facebook group and start sharing on my own platforms. Some Creators reached out and let me know why admins would delete my posts, others stayed silent and sighed with relief when I left... It was aggravating. I didn't understand why I was being punished for enjoying their teaching, working hard to master it and then respectfully sharing it with them as a token of my gratitude.

Things got exponentially worse when I joined a design team and I found out that not everyone really wants you to do well. I could have expected as much, but ever the optimist I kept thinking hard work and humility wouldn't get anyone offside with me. If you were following in 2017 you might be aware of how that worked out for me, but those worms are in a different can for another time. Hahaha.

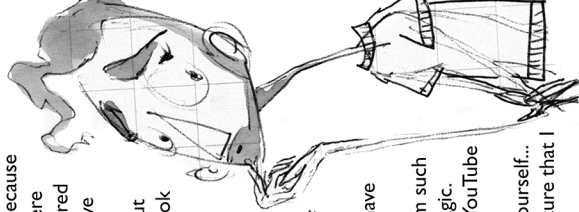
So not feeling welcome in groups, not feeling like I could learn from other Creators anymore and having experienced the weight of entire groups of people hate me for something I didn't do – I felt like I just had to go it alone. Don't get me wrong, I still couldn't help but learn from my peers' YouTube videos and show my support and gratitude where I could. I slowly found a group of people who were happy for me to join them in their space and let me learn from them. It sounds so

stupid as I type it out but I finally felt like I got to experience what everyone else experiences. I got to be the student again and share with the class, not just as the teacher of it. I could be encouraged for my efforts and not told how disappointing it was that my latest YouTube video wasn't what someone wanted.

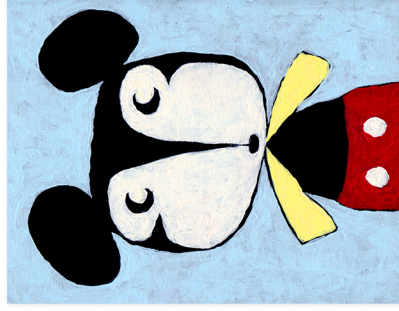
With good comes bad, and obviously I'm only exploring a bit of the bad here. There's a great joy to being on this end too, as the teacher and content creator. I feel like I am giving back in the way that so many people unknowingly gave to me from 2015 til now. That is why I do it with such joy and have a passion to do all that I can, to really put my gratitude on display. But I do like being a student too. I thought I phased myself out of those opportunities because I now teach or make videos, but thankfully that's not true.

So the burden of finding other Creators who will welcome me on their journey has lifted a little. I'll leave you with some food for thought that most of you reading this taught me – It wasn't me. I wasn't wrong for sharing and wanting to be involved with other Creators' journeys. I just have to be more discerning about who I choose to share with... you know, a pattern developed in the people that would allow me to join them as peers today... they're not insecure. They know what they have to offer and they're joyously confident in themselves. They're not threatened by the work of others, they admire and remain inspired to continue their own learning. They don't police Instagram and try to claim ownership over others work. They're humble and confident. When I started to notice this it all made sense to me. The reason people feel the need to attack is because they feel threatened. The reason people hold on so tightly to their journey is because they're afraid they will lose it. There are many people I have encountered who operate this way and I believe some of them know they do and others are ignorantly unaware. But it breeds a culture of fear that took my joys and passions up to a chopping block. I vowed NEVER to contribute to that culture, and I hope in some ways I am fighting against it. I have a few tribes that I bounce in and out of to play and learn now. Led by incredibly creative women who have taught me more than they give themselves credit for. It's why I am such a fan girl of Art Journaling the Magic.

It's why I binge watch Ali Brown YouTube videos. It's why I give you all the permissions you need to enjoy yourself... I'm just trying to help build a culture that I would want to be a part of.



Ok, I don't even know where this article is going now... I'm pretty sure this was my convoluted way of trying to let everyone know I'm still obsessed with everything "Art Journaling the Magic" and the video I'm off to film this week is just making me wish everyone could be there and we could all share in that fun together! I don't often get the chance to join workshops or share in other Creators' spaces because most teachers are not OK with another teacher learning from them. I understand the theory, but it becomes a challenge to know... you know what, I'm going to write a separate piece on this. I have too much to say! To wrap up this article, let me say: it is such a privilege to be able to go to Disneyland, let inspiration sink in and just draw. It's a privilege I'm eternally grateful for and I hope I can capture the experience and joy in a way that bursts through the screen. Until the video, here's a close look at some of my favorite work from my Disney Golden Book "Wall E" art journal.



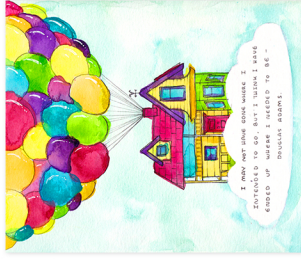
acrylic retro mickey



watercolor tea party (ajtm)



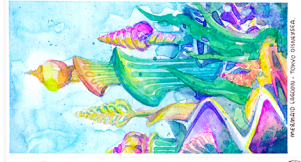
acrylic miguelito



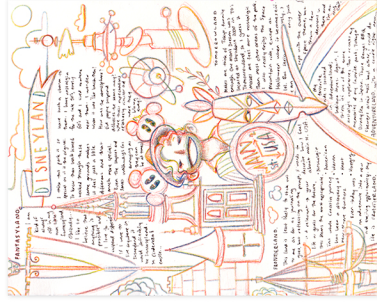
watercolor up house



gouache & ink alice teacups



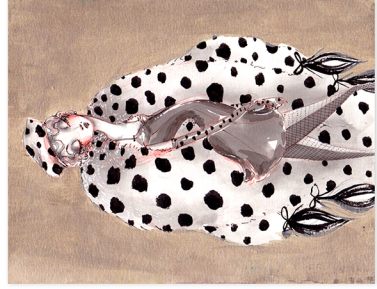
watercolor mermaid lagoon



multicolor pencil sketch walk (ajtm)



acrylic, watercolor & pencil mickeys



acrylic & ink cruella