

# CHALLENGES & INKTOBER 2K18



# JLB

CREATIVE



# G'DAY FRIENDS

Today's Blog Post is going to be all about CHALLENGES!



j u n i c o r n



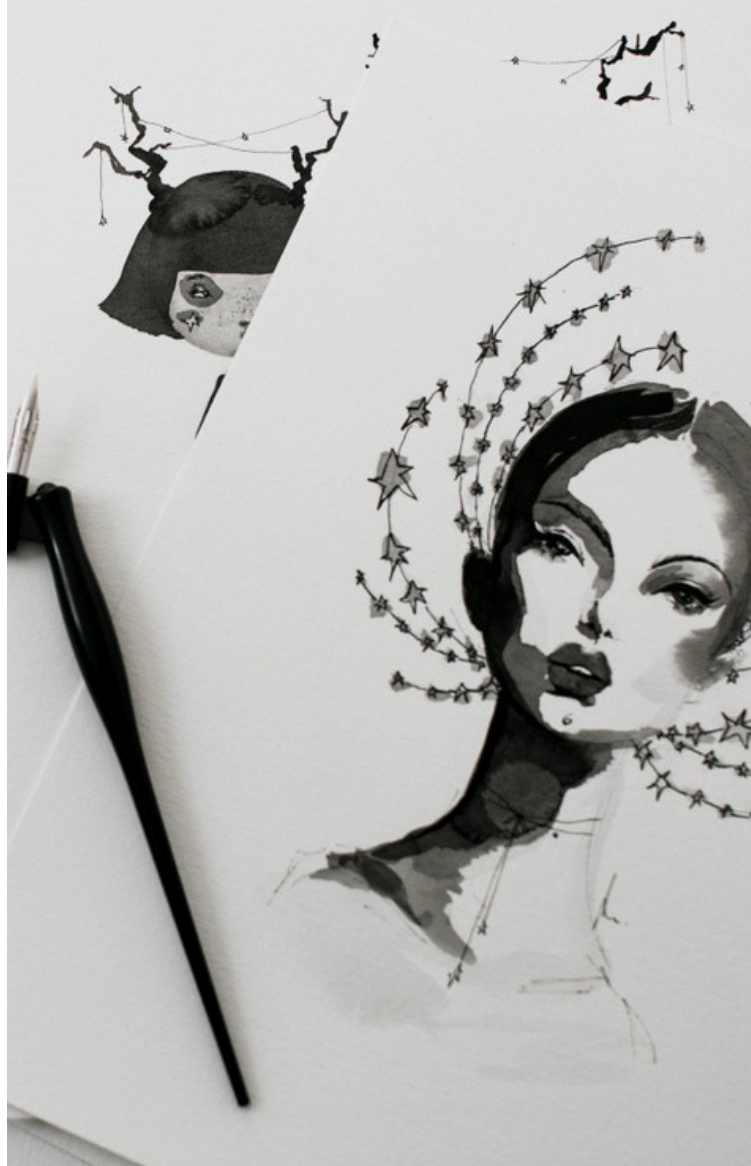
i n k t o b e r



m e r m a y

Monthly challenges are as difficult as they seem, let's just put that out there. They're so appealing because if you've ever followed someone through one you notice how much they improve so quickly! They stimulate Creativity and catapult you into this perpetual motion of producing... sometimes good works, sometimes pieces that make you question your existence on this planet. HAHA





# INKTOBER 2017

was the first monthly challenge I attempted and completed. It's a month of creating works produced with ink. I had been a long-time admirer of the challenge and half-tried a couple of times. I think I got 3 pieces into it AT MOST!

The challenge itself was originated by Jake Parker in 2009 as a challenge to improve his inking skills and develop positive drawing habits. This is no surprise, but I'm not so bent out of shape following rules, just be careful though - there are self-appointed Inktober police. In any case, it caught on in a big way and I always wanted to try it properly. Although, without accountability I am pretty pathetic!

In 2017 I thought I would give it a real go and keep myself accountable by filming EVERY piece coming together. I'm not recommending you do this, but it was very effective in keeping me on track.

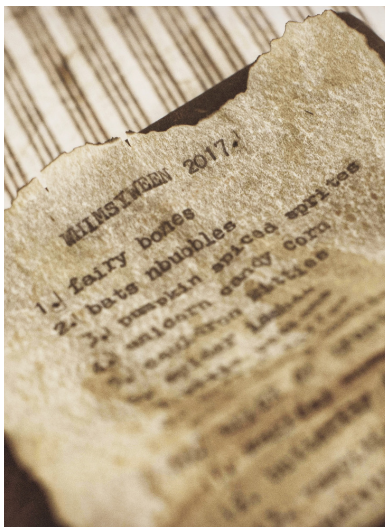
So, I did it. It helped me with my inking skills.  
The End. HAHA!

I mean, obviously it built a lot of confidence in my inking ability but, more than that, it showed me what I was capable of. This is where I see the real benefits of challenges!

Before Inktober 2017 I was creating content at a steady and respectable rate. There was frequent content, and I was happy with the quality of it, but I never pushed myself that hard before and I didn't actually know what I was capable of achieving.



I should also mention I was an absolute idiot and did “whimsyween” 2017 and “Halloweek” in the same month... still, I achieved it! And I had no idea how important it was to feel that.



*Whimsyween 2017*



*HalloZine*



*Journal spread from Halloweek*



*Fave Tag ever! Steve helped me make this for Halloweek Tag Tuesday*

“Achieving” became a new goal for myself. I suddenly felt more accomplished and it sparked a desire to move forward faster, stronger, more confidently than I ever had before. An unexpected result that became more invaluable to me than the inking skills I learnt.

I believe these challenges aren't just for us to learn and improve skills, I think they're tests. They force us to look at ideas beyond the “inking” or “drawing” or “making”. They make you question your commitment, your dedication, your self-doubt, your passion and desire, your abilities and your real goals. There's a common idea that runs amongst people who successfully complete these challenges:

# I can't believe I did it, I'm so happy I did! I learnt so much!!!

I struggle to find many people who complete and only say “I'm a better inker” or “I can draw better mermaids now”. The goal we set out to achieve is a byproduct of actually completing, but the real reward comes in the sense of achievement we feel at the end. I also see evidence of this when people fall off the band wagon. There's a sense of disappointment, and even frustration at not finishing. When we set aside ANY time of day to practice we should feel happy about it right? So why is it that people who only create 17 ink pieces instead of 31 feel upset? It's 17 more practice pieces than you might have done before... they're upset at missing out on the achievement. The badge of honor that says “I did it” and the confidence that feeds us moving forward through the next set of challenges (be it daily, monthly, yearly or lifelong).

It's hard to take disappointment and use it as fuel to move forward. It's not impossible, but I believe it's just easier to fuel yourself with confidence, not dejection.



So why do I commit to these challenges now? Well, I still want the badge of honor and the feel-good-fuel, but I also saw what happened when I shared in this challenge with others. I'm not sure how many people were around for Whimsyween and Inktober last year, but my Facebook + Instagram feeds were BLOWING UP! There was an unbelievable creative comradery unfolding and the outpouring of posts being shared were so inspirational.

In sharing that journey I unknowingly gathered a group of "accountabili-buddies". We got excited to see each other's new posts, encouraging one another to power through to the finish line. Each post was a gift that kept on giving.

I took all the motivation from that period and used it to power through the stressful and exciting growth I was having at the same time. At the time I was also releasing my very first professionally manufactured products – stamp sets and washi tapes :)

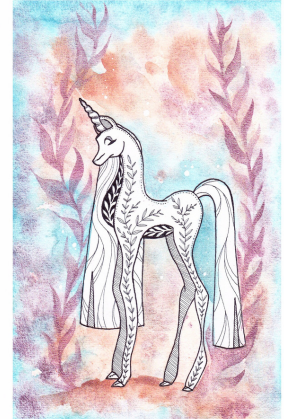
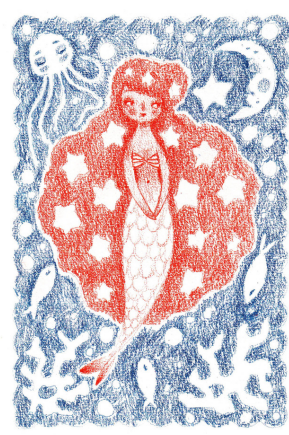
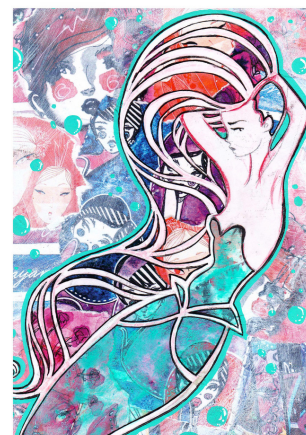


*My first stamp sets*



*My first washi release*

Six months later I decided to accept the challenge again. I was just as nervous starting MerMay as I was doing Inktober 2017, mostly because I KNEW how much work it was going to be. But it stood to reason that if I could do it once I could do it again! And I did... then the feelings of achievement, pride and motivation flooded back – which I stupidly used to attempt a week of Unicorn! HAHA



**If you're going to attempt these challenges, I want you to finish – so I'll share some of what I learnt throughout the 3 attempts and what I plan to take into Inktober 2018.**

# 1. Choose a challenge that excites you

It's already stressful to make the attempt, so set yourself up for success by choosing a challenge that makes you think "oh, I could do that" not one that seems like you might get bored of it.

## 2. Bend the rules

Echoing off of the tip above, you might not actually find a challenge with a prompts list that totally excites you, so make it work for you! Write your own prompts, work out of sequence or not from prompts at all. I don't like working from the prompts list for monthly challenges because I'm usually not feeling EVERY SINGLE PROMPT, even if I made the list. Something I'm excited for on a Monday might be the last thing I want to do the next Friday... Some people might get upset at you for bending the rules, and that's OK, they have their own challenges they can attempt – you just worry about yours ☐

## 3. Set YOUR time frame

A lot of challenges are monthly, but that doesn't mean you have to do the whole month. My job is content creation, so it makes sense that I should schedule that for myself. Even then, I know my limits and when I couldn't commit to a whole MONTH of Unicorn I did a week of it [uploaded over a fortnight on YouTube, I know, I was really confusing about that one! Haha]. If you're going on a holiday in October, but want to try Inktober, just do 7 days! If World Watercolor Month rolls around and you need to do a World Watercolor Week, you do you! I would actually encourage most people to start with a weekly challenge because they're easier to commit to and I think getting a few of them under your belt will empower you to move into a monthly – or even crazier, a yearly! I'm not planning any yearly's any time soon. To be honest my business already feels like a yearly challenge haha.

## 4. Stay accountable

Share on social media. It's a great way to stay accountable but it also motivates and inspires others. I love to watch others complete these challenges and I get super invested! I want to cheer you on and use your progress as motivation to power through my own challenge ☐

## 5. Celebrate your success!

When you finish – celebrate! You did a great thing! Inevitably you'll want a break from the pressure of constantly creating, but look back on all your work and make sure you celebrate how well you did! More people start these challenges and DON'T finish them than people that start and actually finish, it's a great accomplishment that you should feel very proud of.



So as I move toward Inktober 2018 I have a new idea about how to keep others encouraged and get others involved. My Inktober is going to be

# COLLABORATIVE

This year I plan on writing and illustrating a children's book. Only, I'll be illustrating ONE page and the other 30 will be illustrated by YOU!

Confused yet? So am I... haha

Basically, I WILL work from prompts this year. Every day will be a new sentence, ultimately turning into a 31-sentence children's book. Each sentence represents one page of the book, and one illustration to be completed. I will complete an illustration for every page of the book, but will also release all the sentences for YOU to complete as well! You can do them out of order (I encourage that!). I will do mine all for Inktober, but you can collage, draw, paint, go digital, get your children/grandchildren to submit. It's a FREE FOR ALL and I'm dying to see what happens!!!

There will be a YouTube tutorial breaking down how-to-draw our main character, but I'm leaving everything up to interpretation. I want to see the character change from page to page, to reflect the diversity of styles within our Creative Community. The story itself is written to be quite open – there's no definitive time period or location. I will film every page I create for YouTube, and if you want to re-interpret those pages you are more than welcome to!

I will explain all of this closer to October, essentially I will ask all those who wish to submit their art for the book to upload to an album in The BURKEMATES Creative Outlet and sign a release for printing permissions. At the end of Inktober I will select 30 illustrations to fill the book with an eclectic wonderland of artistic interpretation. From there I'll get to formatting like crazy and bring you a delightful book filled with our communities art.

The Rules? Ok, do you know me? Haha, well there are a few this time actually, just for logistics, no creative constraints.

- The release waiver must be signed and submitted to be considered for inclusion
- Art must be created to fit a 5x7inch page
- Selected images must be submitted via email as a 300dpi scanned image. Office works or Staples etc. can do this, but I can also do this if the art is mailed to me, which I will discuss during the selection process.
- Create with reckless abandon!

I want everyone to get as involved as they were last year and also have the chance to see their art featured in print. Some of my favorite books for inspiration are Disney Concept Art coffee table books because they're FULL of different artists interpretations of the same characters/themes. It just made sense to create one for all of us!

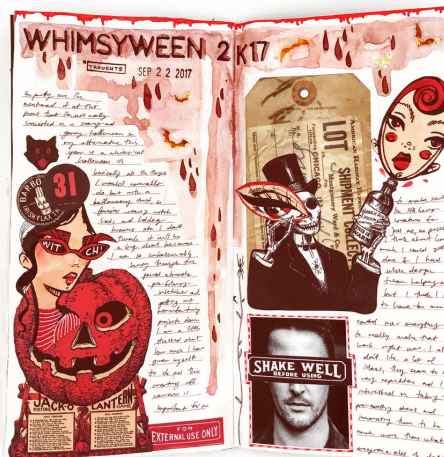
I know this is going to be a big formatting task for November so I will most likely have a submission cut off at October 20, 2018. Again, I will let you know ;)

Ok, now the cat's out of the bag I'm sure I will get a bunch of questions but I will just ask you to wait until I release the information in a YouTube video, hoping I can pre-empt all the questions and have your answers in there for you :)

I am nervous, I know this is another big task, but is anyone shocked? Hahaha I PROMISE I will take a rest after it's completed! I'm actually really excited though, I haven't felt this way about a challenge before. I know watching those pieces upload to the Facebook group will be incredibly motivating! And I'm so excited to be able to work collaboratively with you! I want to take all that inspires me in the Facebook group and share it with as many people as I can :)

Oh, and Whimsyween is happening at the same time! HAHAAHA, aaaarrrrrgghhh, HELP, someone call my mum! Hahahahahahaha

I love Whimsyween, and I'm currently working on the prompts list for 2018. I'm looking at Whimsyween this year as my break from my more structured Inktober challenge. It will be where I can create without constraint and just run nuts with holiday festivity. I foresee many journal pages with chocolate smudges...





I hope this post has given you a better insight into CHALLENGES and why I tackle them. There is so much more to gain than you think... You'll get better, but more than that, you'll feel better! You'll start feeding off of your successes and overwhelm that monster of doubt in your mind. Just start a small challenge and see where it takes you... try a week, let me know how you FEEL at the end of it...

-j

