

STRATEGIES TO HELP ARTISTS

DEALING WITH REJECTION OF YOUR ART



FROM ARTIST
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Rejection is never fun, but it can be particularly rough for artists who bare their heart and soul in their work. All artists face this dilemma at some point in time and these strategies can help. Read on for ideas that will inspire your inner artist.

When I first started submitting to juried art exhibits, contests and galleries several years ago, I didn't expect my art to get selected. Just entering felt like a win. As I continued, I received both acceptances and rejections and overall felt content. But then came a time when hearing "no" really stung, making me pull back.

REJECTION OF OUR ART CAN FEEL LIKE WE'VE BEEN DEEMED NOT GOOD ENOUGH. IT CAN FEEL PERSONAL EVEN WHEN IT ISN'T. IT CAN SHAKE AN ARTIST'S CONFIDENCE AND BRING ON A CREATIVE RUT.

When this happens, pause and recall why you create art in the first place. And if the sting of rejection lingers, consider one or more of these strategies to help you cope.

5 WAYS TO DEAL WITH REJECTION OF YOUR ART



1. TALK TO OTHER ARTISTS

The artist's path can be solitary. Our family and friends don't always understand the vulnerability that comes with submitting or sharing artwork knowing it may be rejected. Other artists who relate to your hopes, desires and worries can offer support and perspective.

You can form connections on your own through local art events or on social media, and/or join an established artist membership group, often founded and run by artists. Other creatives can provide encouragement and helpful information. There are always people ahead of you (and behind you) on the creative journey. If you are struggling with something, ask for help or express your challenge; chances are others have experienced something similar.

2. CHANNEL YOUR FEELINGS INTO NEW WORK

Use your feelings of frustration and disappointment to fuel a new piece of art. Create as if the piece is for you alone. Akin to writing a letter you don't plan to send, this exercise can help you work through and expel complicated negative feelings.

You may never show the art to anyone, but it will be generated by authentic emotion and could lead to something great.



3. SUBMIT AGAIN

Applying to another art call right after receiving a rejection notice can feel empowering. This is a numbers game of sorts and the more opportunities you try for, the greater the chance that one of them will be successful. Also, submitting again can make you feel proactive, hopeful and in control. We've all heard the mantra, "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again." There are many available opportunities for artists and having possibilities in the works can lead to optimism.

4. TAKE A BREAK

Alternatively, stepping away from your art for a time can be healthy. It can take time for disappointment to dissipate. Seek inspiration outside of your studio. Change your daily routine and visit a museum, a garden nursery, a bookshop or a natural place of beauty. If you are feeling down, shed your focus on tangible achievement. Consider instead reconnecting with the simple joy of art-making without focusing on outcome. When you return to create, PLAY! Let your art flow without a prescribed path.



5. TAKE A CLASS OR JOIN A CHALLENGE

Taking an art class or joining an online art challenge can help you refocus on what's important. It gives structure to your artmaking for a time, and the focus is on what you are doing in the present.

After a particularly disappointing rejection, I took a 21-day online sketchbook course focused on the fun and joy of artmaking. Ignoring external influences, I reassessed and explored what felt good in my artmaking without pressure to produce finished work. It allowed me to relax and see what felt right – which was exactly what I needed at the time.

Award-winning artist Stefanie Stark is an abstract painter who has exhibited in art shows and fairs across the United States. She lives in Bethesda, Maryland with her family.



I hope you found these tips helpful! If so and you want to learn more, sign up for my newsletter at www.stefaniestarkart.com

Creatively Yours,
Stefanie



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