



A LITTLE EVERY DAY

More and more 365 Days projects are starting up every day. More and more people are writing or drawing or taking photos or making something and documenting that every day. Is this something you would like to do?

Why do it and, more importantly, how to keep it up?

Confucius once said, "Even the longest journey starts with a single step." Judging by the popularity of 365 Days projects – spreading like wildfire all around us – it looks like creative folks all over the world have embraced his words of wisdom. Every day people are posting an image or a few words on what they've done and what it means to them so that after 365 days – a year – they have a whole collection of very personal, authentic material. What you document is entirely up to you – anything goes. For example, an American chap takes a fun picture of himself every day, holding a napkin under his nose, like a moustache. You can make your project as personal as you like – take a daily picture of your sleeping child, or draw some detail from your home.

JUST DO IT

It's no wonder that 365 Days projects are so contagious because making or doing something every day is a great way to stimulate your creativity. Who has never been hit by the feeling of I'd-like-to-get-started-but-I-can't-get-going-so-never-mind? You can change that by thinking: what if I make a little something today? Put all those little things together and they can grow into something great. American Dana Beach did exactly that: she always wanted to crochet a blanket out of granny squares, but hey, a double bed blanket is kinda big.... Until one day Dana figured, "I'll turn it into a 365 Days project, crochet one square a day and post about it on my blog. At first I was afraid it would start to feel like homework, but now, a hundred granny squares down the road, I realize it has become part of my daily routine. It's more of a habit than a chore and I've finished my first blanket!"

According to American psychologist Leonard Martin people function best when they get regular feedback that shows they are nearing their goal. This goes totally for 365 Days projects, as you see your stack



The 365 Days projects from this article
 * Anja Brunt, 365facesproject.blogspot.com * Gertie Jaquet, astampaday.blogspot.com * Noah Scalin, makesomething365.blogspot.com * Dana Beach, craftyminx.typepad.com/a_granny_a_day * Henri Jacobs, www.henri.jacobs.be/journaalmap.htm/journaal.htm * Peggy Turchette, peggyturchette.blogspot.com * Kirsty Hall, 365jars.com * Julie Powell, juliepowell.blogspot.com

of achievements growing every day. Professional artists use this method, making something every day, to keep their creative juices flowing. Artist Henri Jacobs does a drawing a day and advises his art students to do the same. In the Dutch newspaper *NRC Handelsblad* Henri says, "It helps you get started. Lots of artists sit around



All the same, yet different

The very first 365 Days project was in the 1995 movie 'Smoke'. In that movie Auggie, who runs a small tobacco shop, takes a picture every day at the exact same time (eight o'clock in the morning), at the exact same spot in New York. One of Auggie's customers, Paul, looks at the photo albums (with over 4000 pictures already) and asks him why on earth he bothers.

Auggie replies, "It's only a small part of the world, but stuff happens here as well – like everywhere else. It's a collection of shots of my own small spot. The pictures are all the same, but each picture separately is different."

When Paul browses through the pictures, they all seem the same. But once Auggie gets him to look at them closely, he starts to notice how different they really are. Then Paul notices that his dead wife is in some of the pictures, and the project takes on a whole new meaning.

The scenario of this beautiful movie is by American writer Paul Auster.

waiting for inspiration, whereas art is a job just like any other. Just put a line somewhere and the rest will follow. There will be flops, but you might find some unexpected themes and fascinating ideas springing up from it as well. You can learn a lot from your own work."

UNWITTING WORKS OF ART

Apart from using your 365 Days project to get the hang of a certain technique (photography, knitting, pen and ink drawing), a daily goal/project is a great way of getting yourself out of a rut. Endless hours of work and merciless deadlines caused American illustrator Peggy Turchette to end up sitting at home, completely burned out. She realized she needed to rediscover the fun she used to have in creating and that's how the *Peggy Turchette 365 Birds* project was born. Peggy makes a bird every day and has the greatest fun doing it. She says, "The greatest thing about this project is that I keep trying out new styles and materials whereas I used to get hired for one style only. And because I only have one day to make a bird, it really helps tame the perfectionist in me." For Peggy, perhaps the most important thing is that she now sees herself as a new person. "I am no longer just a paintbrush-for-hire, I am a fun, creative and interesting person."

There are some weird, fascinating 365 Days projects out there, like one belonging to British artist Kirsty Hall, who goes on a daily walk through Bristol to hide an *art jar*, a jam jar with something beautifully handmade inside. She documents the finders, the keepers and the jam jars on her blog. Kirsty explains, "I have two reasons. First, I wanted to take a daily walk anyway and knew that if I tied it to a project I would actually do it. Secondly, as far as I was concerned my other job, as a consultant, was taking too much of my time. I wanted to give art a more central role in my life." Meanwhile Kirsty's project has taken on a life of its own. Scores of fans around the globe follow her blog. She is planning to take her jam jars on the road and to leave them behind in each of Britain's 66 cities. "And," Kirsty adds, "They are making their way to the Netherlands too, as I am visiting a friend in Amsterdam in a few months."

However fascinating this kind of project may be, we aren't all ready to take on something of this size. Yet you can do something on a much smaller scale as well, like illustrator Gertie Jaquet, who started her *One Stamp a Day* project early in 2011. Gertie says, "I am seriously into making stamps, I find it relaxing and use it to calm my thoughts because I am focusing on something I actually enjoy." On the same day Gertie started her project, Anja Brunt made a start with her own, the *365 Faces* project, which involves her making a little face from various materials every day.



365 faces by Anja Brunt

Get busy

Would you like to start your own daily project?

Where to start and most of all: how do you stop yourself from throwing in the towel after only thirty days? Here are a few tips by the people mentioned in the article and by Noah Scalin, who wrote '365 – A Daily Creativity Journal'. By the way, not all daily projects are female endeavors. Noah thinks about 30–40% of them are run by men like him.

- * Obvious, but still important: choose a subject or a theme that's close to your heart and excites you (and will continue to do so, because 365 days is quite a long haul).
- * Be realistic about the amount of time you have and how much of this time you are willing to spend on your project. Adapt your plan accordingly.
- * Choose a technique you like (photography, oils, charcoal, wool, etcetera). Or pick a technique you'd love to learn, as you will be practicing every day. Or change it every day. There are no rules, it's your project after all.
- * Don't quit. Simply change your rules and make it an Every Other Day project for a bit if things aren't going your way.
- * Share your work, through your blog, Flickr, Twitter, Facebook or YouTube. The response you get from followers will stimulate you into carrying on. You can also let your followers participate in your project. Posting at the same time every day makes it easier for people to keep up.
- * Keep it simple.
- * Don't get stressed. Focus on today's goal only. A large project can be disheartening, but you'll be amazed at what you can achieve when you cut it down into small, daily goals.

TEXT CAROLINE BUIJS

Anja says, "People really like them, I get loads of responses and tips. And on the way, I'm unwittingly creating works of art. Once I was making a bearded little face, while I was thinking of the polar explorer Ernest Shackleton. I stuck that little head on an old portrait in a book about polar explorations and turned it into a small brown cardboard painting. Guess what? Somebody immediately wanted to buy that piece."

You never know how things will pan out. For instance, a publisher might want to turn your 365 Days project into a book. Or your project might be turned into a movie.

Perhaps the most well known 365 Days project is the Julie/Julia project. One day New Yorker Julie Powell decided to cook every single recipe created by American cooking guru Julia Child (there are 524 recipes in Child's famous cookbook). Julie's life wasn't doing too well at that point and by doing this, she was hoping to cheer herself up. The very catchy blog she wrote about her exploits was widely read by millions of people. Eventually the blog became a book and the book became the Nora Ephron movie: *Julie & Julia*, with Meryl Streep in the lead. See what can happen when you start a 365 Days project? ●



A granny a day by Dana Beach

START YOUR OWN 365 DAYS PROJECT

Do you feel like starting your own 365 Days project? We've collected the most beautiful, fun, bizarre and sweetest ideas to get you started. It's often easier than you think since almost anything can be turned into a daily project. Have fun!



1. Collect or buy a postcard that goes with your mood.
2. Make a stamp a day. See astampaday.blogspot.com.
3. Take a picture at the same time, same place (for instance the street you live in). See the movie 'Smoke' with Harvey Keitel.
4. Make a daily flower from everyday materials: newspaper, wrapping paper, etc.
5. Pick a random spot in the atlas and write three sentences about what you think that place is like.
6. Photograph or draw your lunch or your kids' lunches. See also lunchbox-365.blogspot.com.
7. Make something with fruit peel (the alphabet, houses, etc.). For ideas: grapefruittoons.wordpress.com.
8. Take pictures of different street signs.
9. Draw a picture of your cat.
10. Take a picture of your kitchen counter: before and after cooking.
11. Cut out a different paper rabbit.
12. Draw a few letters in new ways to create your own pretty alphabet. See: www.dailydropcap.com.
13. Draw or photograph a tree.
14. Get someone else to doodle something and turn that into a drawing.
15. Design a wallpaper pattern.
16. Cut out a little paper doily.
17. Draw, paste or paint a star.
18. Draw, paste or paint a frog.
19. Take a picture of a detail in



20. Draw a fantasy pictogram (symbol), for instance something from your daily life.
21. Draw around your child's hand and see how much he or she grows in a year.
22. Design a tattoo with Indian ink.
23. Fold a paper crane and note how long it takes you.
24. Make something from Lego and take a picture of your construction.
25. Copy the veins of a leaf, using Indian ink or ecoline, for example.
26. Draw a detail of something from so close that you can't tell what it comes from. Or take a super close up picture.
27. Collect a lucky stone and write down where you found it.
28. Find out what happened in the year you were born and blog about it.
29. Make something from a pipe cleaner.
30. Write a three sentence ID profile of a fictional person, including name, place, occupation, love life and draw a small ID portrait.
31. Draw your feet or take a picture of them.
32. Cut and paste together a mosaic of collected pieces of paper.
33. Make a fingerprint and turn it into something: a figure, an animal, etc.
34. Draw something you like on a postcard and send it to someone (anyone) at random. See jillstodayisaw.blogspot.com.
35. Photograph someone from behind and write down where you were.
36. Take a picture of a TV show or a movie you've watched. Print, paste and write down the time and the date.
37. Make an anagram, for instance from a word in the news.
38. Write three pages and fill them with whatever pops into your

79. Design a flag for an imaginary country.
80. Collect, make, photograph a dragon. See www.flickr.com/photos/christiana_impressions.
81. Take a piece of chalk and write something positive on the pavement.
82. Give something on a daily basis: a smile, a compliment, a service. See also 365give.ca.
83. Plant a seed.
84. Photograph the digits of your age in a different spot.
85. Write one sentence of a story.
86. Write your own weather report: is there a storm raging inside your head or is it blue skies all the way?
87. Take a walk and leave something behind in a jam jar: 365jars.com.
88. Make a dog's paw print.
89. Make an owl: dailyowl.typepad.com/blog.
90. Cut out a square of pretty fabric and sew the squares together. After 365 days you should have a pretty patchwork blanket.
91. Work on a project where you make something new from something old (a stuffed toy from an old sweater or a sock for instance). See thesweaterproject.blogspot.com.
92. Draw a little face. See yep-a-face-a-day.blogspot.com.
93. Draw a doodle. See www.thedoodledaily.com.
94. Check this site to do something creative: grow365.posterous.com.

112. Make a miniature version of something.
113. Get on your scales and take a picture of your weight.
114. Invent a new traffic sign.
115. Take a picture of the contents of your wardrobe.
116. Draw a cloud you see in the sky.
117. Take a picture of your kitchen cabinet/kitchen drawer/pantry/fridge.
118. Make a little windmill and put it somewhere outside - anywhere in your village, town or city.
119. Make a bow: shoe lace, ribbon, paper, in your hair, wrapped around something.
120. Collect something and keep a blog about it. Find inspiration at collectionaday2010.blogspot.com.
121. Draw a fantasy machine. See theokbb.tumblr.com.
122. Draw everything you buy for a year. Think of a rebus (a rebus uses pictures to depict words).
123. Think of a rebus (a rebus uses pictures to depict words).
124. Take a picture of the button you have to press at the traffic light (try to get as many different places as you can).
125. Write down three things that made your day worth it.
126. Make a surrealist



95. Photograph, work with clay or draw a turtle. For inspiration: angeladailyturtle.blogspot.com.
96. Make a small drawing without taking your pencil from the paper.
97. Draw or paint a fish. Alternate with pictures you've cut out.
98. Photograph a (piece of the) sidewalk, a bit of street, the floor.
99. Draw/paint/paste a butterfly with a new fantasy pattern.
100. Write a mini story of ten words and add illustrations.
101. Photograph, draw, etch, etc. something that went well or that made you happy.
102. Make something using beads. Have a look at beadsforbrains.blogspot.com.
103. Draw, paste, cut out a little monster.
104. Make up a new coat of arms - for actual families. And when you run out of the real ones, for made up ones.
105. Photograph a traffic intersection.
106. Write down a sentence you hear from a random conversation around you.
107. Make a smile: photograph, cut out, draw, paint, and mail it to someone who could use a smile.
108. Take a picture of a local landmark, whatever the weather.
109. Write a limerick.
110. Draw the skyline of a city.
111. Take a picture of different



127. Rewrite down your favourite children's story just a little differently.
128. Do something you've never tried before. See jen365.blogspot.com.
129. Draw something you see through your binoculars.
130. Make a fictional passport for a fictional person in a fictional land.
131. Fold an airplane from a different type of paper.
132. Learn to play an instrument and practice; keep track of your progress.
133. Draw, paste, cut out, or work with clay to make a little skull. See skulladay.blogspot.com.
134. Draw, cut out or paste an imaginary animal every day and give it a name.
135. Take a picture of dinner every night.
136. Draw something on a steamed-up mirror and take a picture.
137. Buy a tablecloth and embroider a flower a day on it.
138. Take a picture of your cat, dog, hamster or other pet.
139. Cut out a picture that goes with your mood.
140. Take a picture of the sky at the same time, if possible from the same spot as well (for instance, featuring the same chimney).
141. Draw around your child's foot and see how much he or she grows in a year.
142. Briefly touch a passing stranger, in the supermarket, for instance.
143. Make a mini booklet (seriously mini, eight pages and tiny) for instance about how your day was.
144. Make up a new, pretty sounding word. Think up its meaning too.
145. Take a picture of a window.
146. Describe an event as if it were the first time it had ever happened to you.