



THE 100-ART-DOLLS CHALLENGE



In January 2008, Arrigo and Stacey launched into a blogging adventure. They each set a challenge to create 100 art dolls. They hope to reach the goal by the end of 2008. But the challenge isn't really about meeting deadlines. The challenge is to learn about themselves and to set intentions for their lives, using art-doll-making as a tool.

Here are the rules we've set for ourselves:

- We intend to make 100 art dolls each.
- An art doll is defined as "a hand-made human or anthropomorphic effigy".
- On the myartself blog, we will post a picture and write about each doll we make for this challenge ... what we learn from the doll, how it inspires us, and so on.
- We agree not to spend money on new materials to create these dolls, where possible. We'll use "stuff from our stash" and recycled materials.

The invitation:

You are cordially invited to join in the challenge. You may use our rules or make up your own. You may choose to create art dolls or you might prefer something else. Collage postcards? Mini-art quilts? Shrines? If you establish a blog to track your own personal 100-art-(whatevers) challenge, please link to www.MyArtSelf.com. We will respond by linking to your blog.

Keep tabs on the
challenge!
www.myartself.com

Question to Stacey: What prompted you to start the 100-art-dolls challenge?

In 2006 I read about Debbi Crane's attempt to make 365 paper dolls in a year and post them on her blog, <http://paperdollpost.blogspot.com/>. I don't think she quite achieved the number she wanted, but she did make lots of really cool paper dolls and I admired her effort.

I wanted to attempt something similar and add-in the transformative art aspect. Art can help us heal. It can help us learn about ourselves. Art can help us identify and anchor new intentions in our lives. Dolls are particularly good tools for transformative art because we can model them on ourselves. So I wanted to make dolls AND write about what each one revealed, healed or proclaimed about me and aspects of my life: relationships, work, environment ... or where I've come from or where I want to be placed in the future.

I hinted on my Ispirato blog that I was thinking about undertaking this project and three of my friends responded with immediate encouragement, one being Arrigo. That made me think about how good it would be to collaborate with someone else. Arrigo agreed. He's a psychologist as well as an artist so I can think of no better partner in this venture. We've been friends a long time and live in the same city so could get together and discuss it in person.

As we nussed out how the challenge would work, we thought that 100 dolls each - that's 200 between us both - would be a more realistic goal than making a doll every day.

Arrigo was also particularly keen to encourage other people to join in the process, so there is information being added to myartself.com about how to create your own blog about your own 100-art-dolls challenge, should you wish to do it. It doesn't have to be dolls you make, actually. We want to support people to make any sort of art item and, in particular, to examine the transformative aspects.

Question to Arrigo: What's a nice guy like you doing making dolls?

Dolls? Hmm, don't you mean *action figures*? I could say that Geppetto has always been one of my heroes, but... Creating dolls,

statues, creepy effigies, talismans and little figurative sculptures ... these periodically emerge as an addition to the paintings and drawings that are part of my artistic output. I'm an eclectic artist. For example, I'm trained as a painter and continue to be passionate about working in ceramics to make sculpture. Due to my current circumstances however, I resort to recycled materials. In all likelihood, the reasons that underpin the art work that I'm choosing to do for the challenge include:

1. The childhood and adolescent ambition of becoming a surgeon
2. My interest in figurative and religious art, especially religious statues and reliquaries
3. The psychological benefits of creating art: Each of my pieces has an autobiographical element
4. A love of children's toys

...and thanks by the way. I can be a nice guy.

Question to Arrigo: The challenge is a big commitment. It's not just about making lots of art, but you'll be writing regularly on the blog. Do you think you'll enjoy the blogging process?

Like the artwork created for the challenge, blogging is another version of a reflective activity. I've kept diaries and journals for years. At times, my written records have invaluable assisted me in tracking important events, documenting significant experiences, and most importantly, providing me with a better understanding of who I was and how I've developed into who I am today. A journal, like a blog, can present as a format for reflective processes. I think that I'll enjoy and benefit from the blogging process.

Question to Stacey: This project has the potential to be more than a blog, doesn't it?

Absolutely! Arrigo and I have discussed the possibility of a joint exhibition in 2009, and I am convinced that there is a book gestating here. Right now, though, our focus is on promoting transformative art processes and getting other people involved on the Web. We want people to come look at what we are doing and we want some of those people to be inspired to do the same ... whether that means making one doll or taking on the full challenge.