

Setting Art Goals

A 6-Phase Strategy



Phase #1: Reflect

Phase #2: Brainstorm

Phase #3: Prioritize

Phase #4: Monthly Plan

Phase #5: Weekly Tasks

Phase #6: Review + Adjust

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Before we get to work, I want to remind you that you are more than capable of creating meaningful art that can inspire and bring joy to others.

Believing in yourself and continuing to develop a strong, supportive mindset is essential as you move forward.

Improving your art skills, growing your name, and even starting an art business someday, if that's something you want, have just as much to do with mindset as they do with strategy and discipline.

A growth mindset will serve you far more than perfection ever could.

It's also important to get clear on what success means to you and what the life you want to build actually looks like. This is where goal setting must begin. Without this clarity, everything falls apart.

Keep your expectations realistic, build a plan you can sustain, and remember that progress takes time.

And above all, never forget to prioritize your mental and physical well-being.

I'm rooting for you!

Erika

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Phase #1: Reflect

Before setting goals for the year ahead, take a moment to pause and look back on your current chapter in life and your art practice over the past year. Reflection helps you see what worked, what didn't, and what you truly want to focus on moving forward.

This phase sets the stage for goal-setting with clarity, honesty, and a deeper understanding of where you are and where you want to go. I've included a few powerful questions to guide you, but feel free to explore even further.

- How much time do you realistically have available to work on your art in this chapter of your life? How many hours per week? On which days?
- What negative habits might be taking time or energy away from your art practice? What positive habits could you adopt to make more space for your art?
- What obstacles might come up, and how will you continue creating despite them?
- How could your life improve by making art a regular part of your weekly routine? How might your life suffer if you continue setting your art practice aside?
- Is there an area in your life that you found you were neglecting (health, relationships, having fun, etc.)?
- What are some non-negotiables you can establish each week to support your growth-personally, interpersonally, and professionally?

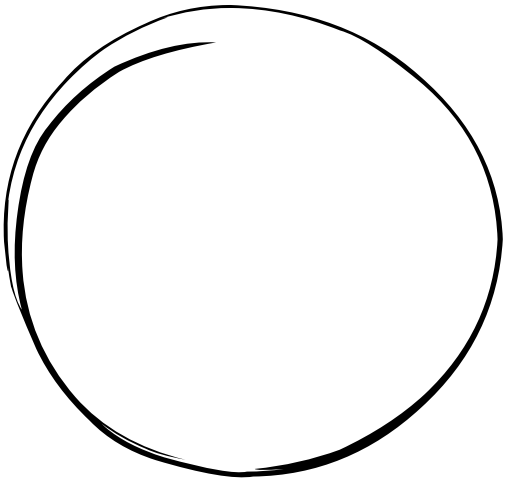
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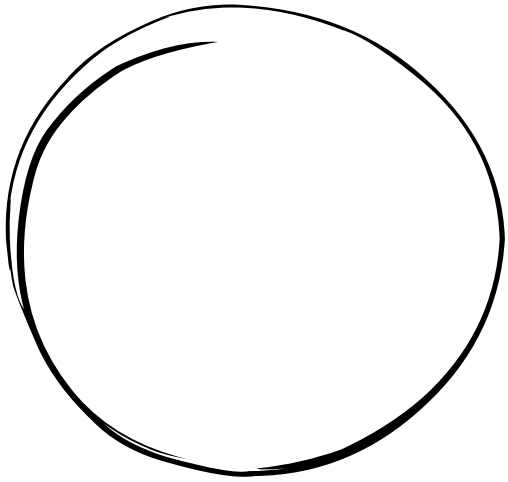
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Phase #2: Brainstorm

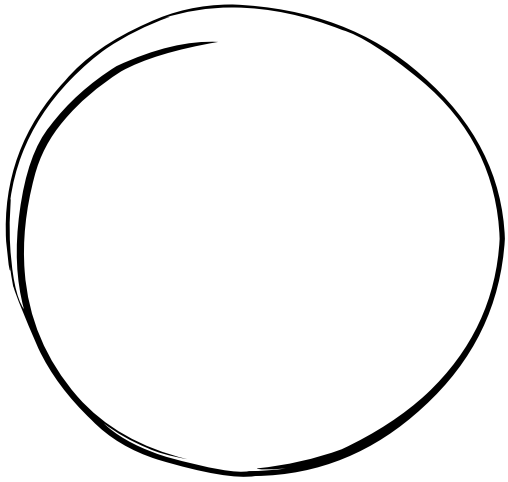
Once you have a clear picture of where you are, it's time to dream a little. Create a brainstorming web with a central, larger goal that aligns with your current phase, whether that's developing technical skills, growing your name, or building a business. If you want to set goals in two or more areas, create separate webs for each.
Use this space for ideas, possibilities, and everything you want to explore in the year ahead. This is your time to put it all on paper. No idea is too far-fetched!



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Phase #3: Prioritize

Now it's time to narrow your focus. Review your brainstorming web(s) and choose the specific goals you want to tackle in the first quarter of 2026. Start by listing your eight favorite ideas below, then narrow them down to just three goals. Remember, you'll always have time to work on other goals later in the year. Prioritizing helps you focus your energy on what matters most, prevents overwhelm, and still leaves room to expand as the year goes on.

Favorite Ideas:

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3 Main Goals to Work Toward in Q1:

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Phase #4: Monthly Plan

Break your key goals down across the months of the quarter (January, February, March). Consider your ongoing responsibilities and any special events that might affect your schedule, and add them to your monthly calendars first!

Assigning goals to specific months creates a realistic roadmap and helps ensure your plan fits with the life you're actually living.

Start getting more specific by thinking about how you'll break down each goal. What do you realistically need to do to reach it?

For example: taking a course, completing a certain number of pieces, applying to galleries or art shows, or starting your Instagram page- all of these can be broken down into smaller, manageable steps. Which steps do you need to take to complete the goal, and which can you start with right now?

January- Main Goals & Action Steps

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January

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

February- Main Goals & Action Steps

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February

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

March- Main Goals & Action Steps

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March

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Phase #5: Weekly Tasks

With your monthly goals in place, break them down further into weekly tasks. This makes your plan actionable and manageable. Hopefully, you have a weekly planner by now!

Start by plugging in your existing life commitments- using what's already on your monthly calendar, plus any other appointments you have coming up- then schedule your art practice or work around them at times that make sense. This helps keep your workload doable, consistent, and sustainable.

Here are some examples of how to break down monthly art goals into small, manageable daily tasks that you can plug into your weekly agenda. I also recommend jotting down the approximate amount of time you expect each task to take, so you can plan your days more realistically.

Example 1: Complete a Watercolor Landscapes Course (Monthly Goal)

- Day 1: Research courses and find one taught by an artist whose style resonates with you. Purchase and save the course.
- Day 2: Review the course structure—classes, projects, etc.—and estimate how many days you'll need for each. Plug them into your agenda. Make a list of supplies so you'll be ready.
- Day 3: Buy any necessary supplies and set up your workspace.
- Day 4: Start Class 1.
- Day 5: Complete Class 1.
- Day 6: Start Class 2.
- Day 7: Complete Class 2.
- Day 8: Start Class 3.
- Day 9: Complete Class 3.
- Day 10: Post your work for instructor feedback.

Example 2: Complete 3 Original Still Life Acrylic Paintings (Monthly Goal)

- Day 1: Establish the concept for the series.
- Day 2: Collect or buy supplies and objects for your still life photos.
- Day 3: Take still life photos.
- Day 4: Choose your four best photos and edit them in photo editing software.
- Day 5: Work on thumbnails and plan a cohesive color palette.
- Day 6: Start the first painting.
- Day 7: Continue the first painting.
- Day 8: Finish the first painting.
- Day 9: Start the second painting.
- Day 10: Continue the second painting.
- Day 11: Finish the second painting.
- Day 12: Start the third painting.
- Day 13: Continue the third painting.
- Day 14: Finish the third painting.
- Day 15: Self-evaluate. Make any adjustments or redo as needed.

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WEEKLY PLANNER

Monday	Tuesday
Wednesday	Thursday
Friday	Saturday
Sunday	Notes:

WEEKLY PLANNER

Monday	Tuesday
Wednesday	Thursday
Friday	Saturday
Sunday	Notes:

WEEKLY PLANNER

Monday	Tuesday
Wednesday	Thursday
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Sunday	Notes:

Phase #6: Review and Adjust

At the end of each quarter, take time to reflect on what worked, what didn't, and what needs to change. Use this insight to adjust your goals and plan for the next quarter. Reflection and adaptation are key to steady progress and long-term success in your art journey. I've included a few powerful questions to guide you, but feel free to explore even further.

- What worked in my systems that I want to continue?
- What didn't work and I want to stop doing?
- Did I set unrealistic expectations for myself?
- What would I like to explore next quarter in terms of time management and systems to help me stay productive?

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