

Winnipeg artist Michael Joyal brings his sketch a day exhibit to cre8ery Gallery

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Sketch by Michael Joyal from December 29, 2010. (Michael Joyal)

On June 25, 2010, Winnipegger [Michael Joyal](#) decided to do one sketch a day, just before he went to sleep, for a whole year. The results -- all 365 of them -- are now on view at the [cre8ery gallery](#). Looked at one at a time, there are some fascinating little images here. Looked at all together, Joyal's year-long adventure shines a light on the whole creative process.

Joyal forced himself to work to a tight schedule -- an art work a day, come what may - and strict parameters - all the images are 4x6 inches. Rather than waiting for his muse to strike, he ended up finding inspiration in the oddest places.

A graduate of the [Nova Scotia College of Art and Design](#), Joyal works in watercolour, pen and ink, pencil and collage. Some pieces draw on comic books, movies and Internet gossip. There's a pencil drawing of James Franco in a crown of thorns and a few images of Lindsay Lohan - she was having a particularly bad year. Some pieces are sketches of everyday life - pictures of Joyal's wife, of his fellow Winnipeg Transit riders. Some respond to current events -- the Tokyo earthquake and tsunami, the Manitoba flood. Works riffing on bizarre illustrations from a 1958 encyclopedia or calling up Spider-Man cartoons jostle along with references to art history and world mythology.

The work can be uneven, and that's no surprise: We all have off days. (Interestingly, the period in which Joyal was felled by flu and fighting a temperature of 104 degrees have a reassuring normalcy.) The best works show off Joyal's quick, indelible draughtsmanship and fluid facility with the tricky medium of watercolour.

As the project took on its own life, Joyal found he needed more time with his art. He often started thinking about his daily pic at breakfast, doing preliminary designs during his lunch hour and finishing things off at night. The project acted as a "physical and mental clearing house," Joyal says, as he burned through ideas that had been circling in his head or sitting in his sketchbooks. As he posted his work on the Net, he got encouragement - and ideas and photos -- from Facebook supporters.

Joyal's 365-day journey ends with a watercolour of a pregnant friend, a fitting image for a very fertile creative year.

Michael Joyal: 365 Days Before I Sleep runs until February 21st at the Cre8ery, 125 Adelaide St.

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