

12 Habits of Highly Effective Artists, From Creative Exercise to Living in Airplane Mode

George Condo, Liza Lou, and other artists tell us the everyday rituals that help them create their best work.

Rachel Corbett, August 22, 2017

What makes some artists more successful than others? Talent, luck, and hard work certainly play a part, but there are other, subtler habits that many of the greats seem to have in common. We asked 11 artists about their work routines and the way they structure their lives to see how these everyday rituals, big and small, make them tick. Below, see the 12 habits that help these artists create their best work.

5. Do Your Admin in the A.M.



Tim Youd retyping Patricia Highsmith's *The Talented Mr. Ripley* (July 2017) at Cristin Tierney Gallery, New York.

The habit most commonly shared among artists is a commitment to answering emails first thing in the morning—and then not thinking about them again. “I wake up early and answer emails, but then the rest of the day I try to work more creatively,” says [Shirin Neshat](#).

If one doesn't learn to separate these two aspects of an artist's work, says Zoe Buckman, “the administrative side of the art practice can eclipse the making of the art practice.”

“This is my form of procrastination,” says Betty Tompkins. “In the morning, I do emails, walk, social media, and errands.” In the afternoon, she's ready to paint and draw.