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THE MC ART FRAMEWORK™

Organizer Tool Overview

THE MC ART FRAMEWORK ORGANIZER TOOL

This is a short tutorial on how to get the most out of the organizer tool. This spreadsheet tool is meant to serve as a single repository for managing and tracking activities related to both the creation of art and to artistic growth.

This tool is based on the MC Art Framework and my own organizational practices. There are so many aspects related to being an artist that I needed to find better ways of managing my time and activities so that I could devote more of my valuable time and effort into thinking about and creating my art. This is how this tool came to be.

As visual artists, we struggle with the whole concept of creativity and artistic growth. I developed a practical approach for empowering creative growth (the MC Art Framework) that brings some transparency to the entire process of creating art. I cannot overstate how much this

has helped me to become a better artist and photographer and helps me with creating new work.

There are no secrets or shortcuts to creative growth—it requires an awareness of what is occurring as we create our art and a structured analysis of results. This is precisely what the MC Art Framework enables and what this tool supports. This tool is at the heart of getting more organized and focussed on producing artwork and growing creatively.

Its value to you will be in direct proportion to the degree to which you adopt the use of it. This requires a commitment over a period of time. You may use whatever tool functionality you choose.

DOCUMENT FUNCTIONALITY

The organizer has functionality beyond the scope of that associated with the MC Art Framework:

- Helping to manage artist and business activities

- Serving as a repository for art ideas and techniques
- Learning and creative growth
- Applying the MC Art Framework to the making of images
- Managing project work

USAGE NOTES

- Date fields must be entered as either “mmdd” or “ddmm”. Note: Current year is assumed unless manually entered. To specify a year other than the current one: ddmmmyyyy or mmdd,yyyy.
- Create more rows via selecting, copying and pasting (per standard spreadsheet functionality).
- The row at the top of each sheet remains stationary as you scroll through the rows with data in them.
- The print area will automatically expand to accommodate additional rows. If a sheet spans more than one page, the header rows will be reprinted on each page.
- Sort data via the column label by clicking on the down arrow and making selections.
- Populate certain fields via drop down arrows in cells.
- Each sheet has a current date field.

What this tool does:

- Excel allows you to sort, display and print all data or just specifically selected information.
- Classify and group tasks.
- Various status indicators (red, yellow, green).
- Date functionality (start, target, end) with colour-coded date countdown (green: 8+ days left, yellow: 5-8 days remaining, red: 4 to -31 days).
- Snap shot historical reporting by manually setting the report date (top right of every sheet) and saving the file. Note that simply manually changing the current date field does not adjust any status indicators to that point in time however, date functionality adjusts relative to the current date. So, if you want a point in time version of the file, manually set the date on every sheet and save a version.

One feature that makes the organizer tool a valuable asset for managing tasks and planning workload is the automated date functionality (found on some sheets). You may specify start and target dates for items:

D	E	F	G	H
Apr 21, 2020				
Start	Target Date	Finish	Timeline	Notes
Mar 22, 2020	Apr 30, 2020		9	

As soon as you enter a target date, the Timeline column is populated with a number. This number is a count down of the number of days left to complete a task based on the assigned target date relative to the current date (found in upper right of sheets). The countdown value changes dynamically (as the current date changes) and is colour-coded to assist with workload planning and priorities management:

- 8+ days left - **Green**
- 5-8 days remaining - **Yellow**
- 4 to -31 days - **Red**

D	E	F	G	H
Apr 21, 2020				
Start	Target Date	Finish	Timeline	Notes
Mar 22, 2020	Apr 30, 2020		9	

D	E	F	G	H
Apr 21, 2020				
Start	Target Date	Finish	Timeline	Notes
Mar 22, 2020	Apr 27, 2020		6	

D	E	F	G	H
Apr 21, 2020				
Start	Target Date	Finish	Timeline	Notes
Mar 22, 2020	Apr 23, 2020		2	

D	E	F	G	H
Apr 21, 2020				
Start	Target Date	Finish	Timeline	Notes
Mar 22, 2020	Apr 10, 2020		-11	

When a Finish date is entered, the Timeline field is nulled out:

D	E	F	G	H
Apr 21, 2020				
Start	Target Date	Finish	Timeline	Notes
Mar 22, 2020	Apr 30, 2020	Apr 21, 2020		

Notice that all of the date fields and the Timeline field are also sortable. This means that you can filter rows of data based on any of these values to show only what you want to look at. For example, if you wanted to delete all rows that specify a Finish date, you would click on the upside down triangle in the column label cell and select/highlight rows to delete them. You will find this same date functionality in most sheets.

USING THE ORGANIZER

The organizer has a number of tabs/sheets. They are labelled as follows:

Home ▾	Tasks ▾	Artwork ▾	Learn ▾	Image Template ▾	Sample Image ▾	Projects ▾
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The **Home sheet** has some descriptive text and usage notes.

The **Tasks sheet** is used for managing various activities that many professional artists need to address on a regular basis to produce their art and support their businesses. The information this sheet contains is laid out like this:

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Apr 22, 2020							
Category	Task	Status	Start	Target Date	Finish	Timeline	Notes
▾		▾					
▾		▾					
▾		▾					

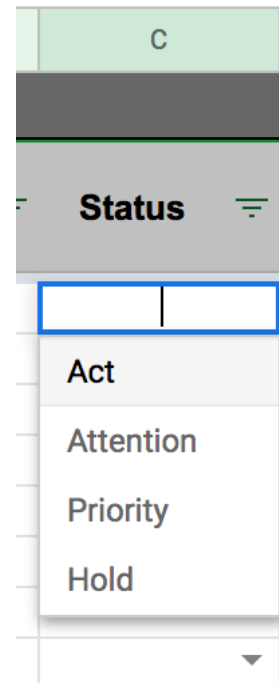
Cells with upside down triangles are populated via a drop down list of values. Tasks are grouped by task “category” (column A). You can sort on this field by using the upside down triangle to the right of the column label and specifying a sort order or values to display.

Acceptable values are as shown and your selection will populate the cell:

A
Category ▾
Admin/Organize
Art Launch
Blog
Content Development
Networking
Newsletter
Plan
Research
Social Media – Explore
Social Media – Post
Website

The other drop down list on the **Tasks** sheet is the “Status” indicator. This field is also used on other sheets and lets you assign a status value that is colour-coded for quick reference:

- Act - **Green**
- Attention - **Yellow**
- Priority - **Red**
- Hold or blank - no colour



TIP: Status values are optional. I recommend that you only assign them to items that you are either working on or plan to work on and to leave this field blank for other items. In this way, you do not become overwhelmed with having to set/adjust statuses on an ongoing basis for many multiple tasks.

The **Artwork sheet** is designed as a repository for art ideas and techniques. This is where you would record all of your thoughts about learning and making art.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1								Apr 24, 2020
2	Category	Item	Status	Start	Target Date	Finish	Timeline	Notes
3								
4								

The prioritization functionality is helpful to sort out what to work on. Here is an example of the use of status values used to manage workload.

	A	B	C
	Category	Item	Status
	Art Idea		Act
	Artwork To Do		Attention
	Experiment		Priority
	Project		Hold
	Research		
	Technique		

In this example, not all categories have items that have statuses assigned to them.

TIP: Only assign a status to an item that you wish to flag as one that you want to pay attention to. You can only act on a few at any one time. It's a good idea to mark only several as ones that require some attention and only one or two as a priority to focus on.

TIP: Always ensure that the status field reflects only current realities (this applies to all other sheets as well). In this way, the sheet will remain useful to you. There is no point

flagging more items than what you can reasonably action in the short term.

TIP: Use date functionality only for items that you wish to be working on. The start date should reflect the date you started working on the item. Set realistic target dates and use the date functionality to revise them as necessary.

TIP: The most important tool you have to manage how you spend your time is the Timeline value—this is how you decide what to work on next and how you manage workload priorities.

D	E	F	G	H
Apr 21, 2020				
Start	Target Date	Finish	Timeline	Notes
Mar 22, 2020	Apr 30, 2020		9	

The **Learn sheet** is for managing creative growth. You can record comments and results and sort based on MC Art Framework steps to assess your MC Art Framework compliance, its effectiveness and your learning progress.

A	B	C	D	E	F
1	May 20, 2020				
Methodology Step	Artwork Title	Description	Results Rating	Date	Comments
3					
4					

Methodology Step

1. Conceive – Find
2. Conceive – See
3. Conceive – Feel
4. Define – Clarify
5. Define – Know
6. Construct – Connect
7. Construct – Plan
8. Construct – Execute
9. Evolve – Evaluate
10. Evolve – Learn
11. Evolve – Aspire
Success
Lessons

Results Rating

Good
Acceptable
Failure

Results Rating

Good
Acceptable
Failure

The **Image Template** sheet is a template meant to be copied and used to record all details related to one image. The **Sample Image** sheet can be used for working on your first image. You should use the artwork title as the sheet name.

A	B	C	D	E	F
Artwork Title & Description:	recommend using artwork title as sheet name as well				
Project:	include project name and/or description if applicable				
Methodology Step	Results Rating	Date	Image Design Approach for Methodology Step 7: Construct - Plan	Comments	May 20, 2020

A
Artwork Title & Description:
Project:
Methodology Step
1. Conceive – Find
2. Conceive – See
3. Conceive – Feel
4. Define – Clarify
5. Define – Know
6. Construct – Connect
7. Construct – Plan
8. Construct – Execute
9. Evolve – Evaluate
10. Evolve – Learn
11. Evolve – Aspire
Success
Lessons

B
: recommend using artwork
: include project name and
Results Rating
Good
Acceptable
Failure
B
: recommend using artwork
: include project name and
Results Rating
Good
Acceptable
Failure

In column D, you can specify and track design protocols and design elements used in an image along with comments and even Results Ratings if desired.

D
et name as well
on if applicable
Image Design Approach for Methodology Step 7: Construct - Plan

TIP: Design protocols and elements can be specified in the comments column instead of column D however, keep in mind that when capturing this information as text, you lose the ability to sort.

TIP: When using column D, you may wish to specify a Results Rating value in column B so that you can sort according to column B for learning purposes.

The **Projects sheet** is for defining project work and tracking progress.

TIP: Use a separate sheet for each project to avoid having to scroll down a screenful at a time looking for info.

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