

The story of how I became interested in this medium starts at the end of 2007. At that time I was facing a prison term that could have potentially included the rest of my natural life. I was 30 years old and facing a max sentence of nearly 87 years.

While I was going through the court's process I started to teach myself how to draw. I always thought it would be real cool to develop an artistic talent but never made the time for it. At first, all I could draw was stick figures. Even then I was unable to draw them with straight lines. Many things have humble beginnings.

I assaulted an officer in county jail. I was beaten soundly for this and literally dragged to solitary confinement. I stayed there for nearly 11 months, locked in my cell alone for 23½ hours a day. I guess one could say I had a lot of time on my hands. I began to draw in earnest. As my skills started to improve one of the things I wanted to learn to draw were fairies. The best

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I could do at the time was to draw a portrait of a model from a magazine and put wings on her. They never turned out very well.

That was right about the end of my time in solitary confinement. I received many blessings at this time. One of the largest blessings was of 87 years - I was sentenced to serve just under 6 years.

When I came to prison I continued to draw, and still do, but I never lost interest in wanting to learn to draw fairies. Of course, I could find no children's books for inspiration in design here. Instead of becoming discouraged I started looking to see what other resources I had available from the other inmates. I came upon a book catalog that advertised Cross Stitch Fairies in it. I was like, "right on now I can get some ideas going for my drawing." I ended up buying the book.

When the book finally came I was real excited about it. After thumbing through the book for a few hours I asked myself "how can I do this stuff without

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the proper materials." Little did I know at the time that question would lead to 15 months of experimentation and refinement of techniques. Since I lacked the right materials for the medium, I had to recycle things in my environment to make them. I bought what few art supplies are offered here and home engineered everything else. In absence of aida cloth and evenweave I used pieces of sheet. That was a problem because the weave of the sheet is so fine it was impossible to keep track of the design, so I started hand drawing grids for the patterns. For frames I use pieces of cardboard boxes. I sew the cloth to the cardboard then sew the pattern over the cloth. To get my string I buy boxers from the store and strip all the thread out of the seams and the elastic band (all the boxers here are white.) I color every thread I need by hand with colored pencils and water color paint as I have need for them. An average piece takes me about 100 hours of labor to make. However, I have made larger works. One piece I made I invested nearly 7,000 hours of labor into.

I worked on it 7 days a week for 14 weeks straight without a single day's break, It's a beautiful piece, but I must admit I'm biased. I have a picture of it here. It's the face of the woman with flowers and butterflies.

To date I have made works for my family and friends, and have been hired here to make pieces for the friends and families of the inmates. I have donated a large piece to be auctioned for a charity my aunt in California participates in every year. I have these artworks in South Africa, Canada, Spain, Italy, Oregon, Washington State, California, Arizona, Utah, Colorado, Mississippi, and Louisiana. Those are just the places I know my works have reached - all from prison.

If you are interested, I look forward to your comments.

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