



Nine Tips for Insurgent Artists & Small-but-Spicy Publishers

1. **Craft.** Write, write, write! Draw, draw, draw! Make time to learn and practice your art. Through raging hormones, poo diapers and toddler tantrums. Through depleted estrogen bombs and heat waves. Through each passage of life lived by we warriors of Women Nation.
2. **Sharpen mission.** Periodically clarify why you draw and write. Puzzling out answers to these meditation riddles will illuminate your goals and priorities throughout the creation, production, promotion and distribution of your work—and in building mutual assistance networks for our kine community-based artists.
3. **Pinpoint audience.** Clarify the communities of readers you want to reach. Start close-in and build your base among your most supportive peeps and co-conspirators. As you gain a footing and more confidence, loosen up and imagine new areas to test your traveling circus routine.
4. **Pace yourself!** Because you must do all the work that big- and mid-sized publishers have paid staffs with a division of labor to do. Because as a woman, lgbtq and/or person of color, skillfully managing resources—including your health and sanity—is critical to survival.
5. **Network like crazy.** Get help from kindred artisans tucked among your sistren/peeps. Work with and promote fellow artists who possess editing, design and writing talents. Raise money by any means necessary to pay them. Trade work. Bum rush crowd source funding. Tell your favorite auntie what you *really* want for your birthday. Get creative with your underground economy.
6. **Reciprocate.** Participate in mutual assistance writers/ artists/ publisher networks. Learn. Respect. Pay back. Stay humble. Stay open.
7. **Find your hawk voice.** Clarify what you consider as success in marketing and distribution. Take into account changes in the publishing—largely white and middle class—industry and the problems attracting new readers even for establishment media outlets. Of course, you are permitted to occasionally cop a bad attitude because of the jacked race, class, gender, homophobic, transphobic et al inequities of the industry. But then suck it up and get busy. Holding on to too much rage burns up precious *chi/ki* you need to create new work and hawk your wares. Think San Francisco Women's Building's history of forty-five years standing tall. Think insurgent artists connecting village markets and trade routes. Think liberated territory.
8. **Support indies.** Learn from and support indie presses and bookstores. With the exception of a few rocket-to-fame artists who get picked up early by large presses, let's face it: pipsqueak publishers are our peer group. So what? Many of us are the descendants of coolies, peasants, migrant workers and market women, immensely creative in the hustle arts of survival. Work your DNA. Sit with the ancestors; sit with the indies. Share. Thrive.
9. **Dream big!** Carve out cave time to work on your next project. Because dear people, we are here, not to produce a one-shot flameout, but a *body of work* big enough to nourish our communities for at least a generation going forward. Here's to our longevity and creativity! Here's to the smell of ink on paper! Here's to works phat with characters who look and sound like our peeps!

Wishing you love & luck,

Miriam & Nguyen Louie, Co-publishers

Rabbit Roar & Friends Book Party, San Francisco Women's Building, September 17, 2016