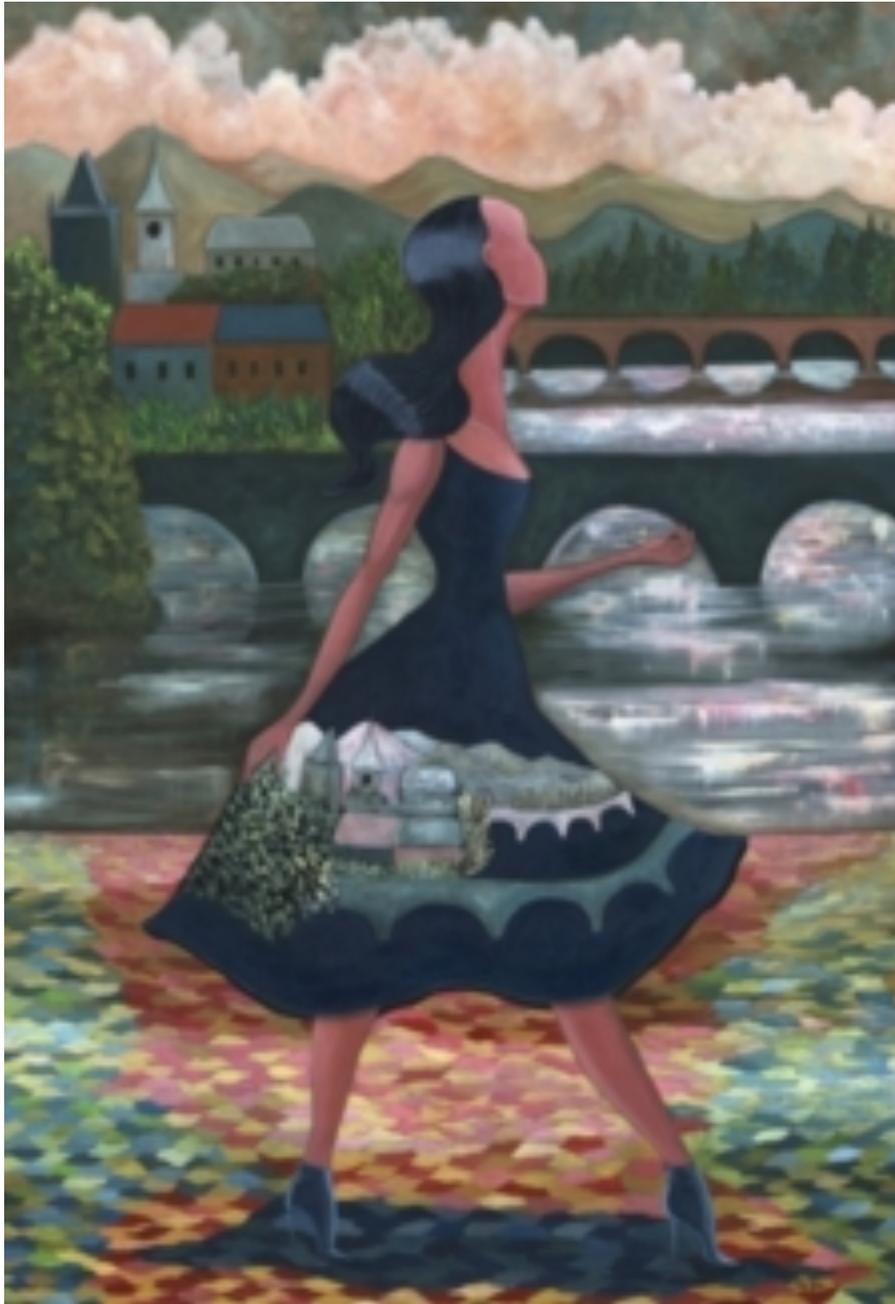


10 Steps to a Successful Painting By Ting Yuen



Reflection II by Ting Yuen
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10 Steps to a Successful Painting

Hello my fellow artists,

I am so glad that you are here! Obviously, you are here because you want to learn the principals of a good painting. Do not be intimidated by this subject because it is as ancient as the beginning of time, the principal of a good painting is as simple as how you feel about a particular piece of artwork. If you don't like the painting that you are working on ask "why". By questioning the painting you will find the answers within your own knowledge.

Most of the lessons that I am about to teach you are based on practice, observation and intuition. I am a self taught artist, I work with my intuition first, secondly I hone in on my technical skills in order to help me compose the image that I see in my mind.

When you are working on a painting, how do you feel? Are you liking what you see or is there something that just doesn't feel quite right? Do you know why your painting is evoking that particular feeling? I recommend that you stand back and analyze it, look at the composition, what is it that speaks to you and what is it that turns you off?

Artists are mostly introverts, so we basically work alone, most of the time when we have a problem with our artwork, we have no one to talk to. I am not one of those painters that puts my problematic work away and try to work on it another day. I am a stubborn artist that is willing to work through my challenges till

the end, even to the point that I rather destroy it than to leave it alone! :)

So when I am working on a painting and it is not working out, these are the analysis that go through my mind that I would like to share with you and perhaps my insights can assist you to solve a problem or help you to create better work.

And here are a few principals I go by and please feel free to add more onto the list where you see fit.

When I am in front of a piece of artwork, This is what I look for

These are the guidelines that I have made for myself and it helps me to create better paintings mindfully.

1) Composition

Composition is about the placement of things, the overall design, the story that it tells.

Design: Are the placement of things balanced? Does it work with the Golden Ratio Rule or did the artist break the rule and it still works?

The Golden Ratio rule is something I work with often intuitively without thinking because it looks right but many times I broke the rules and it still works. If you are unfamiliar with the golden rule please click here: <https://emptyeasel.com/2009/02/03/the-rule-of-thirds-why-it-works-and-how-to-use-it-in-your-art/>

Ask yourself some questions about your overall composition.

-As the artist of your painting, what do you want your audience to focus on? What is your focal point? Where is your focal point?

Do your viewers get pulled into a feature in the painting that they are meant to focus on?

If your viewers are drawn to something that has nothing to do with the design purpose but a dark blob in the background then it is obviously not a successful painting. It doesn't matter if you know much about art theory but as humans we are intuitively instinctive with it comes to art and creations, if your painting is weak then your main focus is off it basically means you need to re-work your painting and ask a series of questions.

Remember to create balance in your painting. Is the overall placement of things feel right or symmetrical. Symmetrical composition creates harmony and a sense of peace. Or is it asymmetrical?

Asymmetrical painting creates excitement and dynamic.

2) Proportions

Painting things with the right proportions can create perspective. Proportions are about the scale of your subjects and how they relate to each other. Things get smaller with distance and things get bigger when they are closer to the foreground.

3) Lines

Are the lines of your painting: Bold, refine or both?

Are the lines used effectively to enhance depth, dimensions or for decorative purposes?

Are they pleasing to the eye? When you paint, create lines to come and go, make lines hard or soft, blur distance, crisp the foreground and use lines to enhance a mood.

Let your lines create dimensions, depth and eye focus.

I love curvilinear lines myself, if I had to paint buildings, I go with curvilinear lines, they are fun and whimsical and my type of art is whimsical so playful lines are perfect for my expressions.

4.) Negative Space

Are the negative spaces beautiful to look at?

Most people may think that negative spaces are not an important design element in a painting but they are actually so important to the overall design of a painting.

Make use of the negative spaces, pop in colours between the trees, put in a cloud in the empty sky.

Negative spaces need to be beautiful, the shapes and colours should be cohesive to the overall design.

Let your negative space be the pillar of your painting, let it help you to achieve space, depth, light and colours.

Utilize your negative space, let it assist you in creating focus to your main design by emphasizing your secondary elements to compliment the main focus.

5.) Colour

Colour is so important to a painting, it sets the overall mood of the painting.

I love colour because it creates a feel to a painting, whenever I finish a sketch, I usually am able to visualize what colour groupings I would like to create in order to enhance the feeling or the meaning behind my painting.

Ask yourself if the colour combinations work?

Is it bright? Colourful? Moody? Dull? or Intense?

Don't be afraid of colour, let it set the mood for your painting.

The basics:

Primary colours: Red, Blue and Yellow

Secondary colour: Green, Orange and Purple

Complimentary colour: Red and Green, Blue and Orange, Yellow and Purple.

Warm colours: Red to Yellow on the colour wheel

Cool colours: Blue to Purple on the colour wheel

Here are some ideas of what you can do with colours:

Put any of the complimentary colours together you enhance their intensities.

Pick up a colour wheel and study it, explore the possibilities of different colour combinations. You may go Tetrad, Triad, Split complementary or Complimentary.

Complimentary colours, when you lay complimentary colour side by side it creates vibration. Both colours enhance one another in the most playful way. And if you paint one complimentary colour underneath another complimentary, the colour on top intensifies. For eg. paint red underneath green and see how the red intensifies the green.

I also love painting colours that are in the same family field such as Red, Magenta, Alizarin, Violet , these make great compositions and I find colour combinations like that produce very soothing paintings because everything blends into each

other and it creates a sophisticated yet cheerful disposition.

Some artists are so afraid of colours, they produce extremely monochromatic paintings, I am not saying I dislike them but there are so many colours that are available to us why would we only use one or two?

Good artwork has a strong sense of contrast and a wide range of tones, tints and shades.

Lay warm colours against cool colours it creates interest. The lay out of your colours should be cohesive, so that they create balance in the painting.

Now you may use colours to create distance, focus, composition and emotions.

Dimensions should be created with not only compositions but with colours. Cool colour make things recede and warmer colours bring subjects forward. Warm against Cool.

Know your local colour, basically the colour of focus for your painting, make that stand out but remember to use that colour cohesively so that it creates balance.

Use gradations of colour on large plains to add interest and depth.

Colour focus: If you want to have your subject matter emphasized for eg. If you were to paint your main focus in a red dress in a somewhat sombre colour painting, that will definitely get the attention of the viewers but remember to dot this focus colour cohesively throughout the painting to create balance.

6.) Movement

Another thing about composition, I usually add movement such as with butterflies, wind blown leaves, dragonflies etc leading the viewers' eyes to roam the painting. This is especially useful when you are trying to tell a story.

You can also use lines to create movement such as on a street scene, you can paint such things as electrical lines going from one spot in the painting to the next, creating perspective and leading the viewers' eyes to the point of focus. Movement can also be created by the flowing of a river, a windblown cloud or grassy lands.

Create patterns that repeat themselves here and there, this way you can also create rhythm in your movement.

7.) Light

- Light is very important, a strong sense from a certain direction adds drama to your composition.
- Pop in light between forest to create interest and depth.
- Create light against dark to create excitement.
- Let light in to create dimensions.

The other great thing about light is that it creates shadows therefore it gives the painting many different dimensions and interest. Paint shadows because they are fantastic to create 3 dimensional forms and add mystery with shapes and lines whereas without them, the painting may look flat.

Reflected light gives the painting a new energy. Have your chosen subject reflect the colours surrounding it, for eg, a lady in white standing among a field of wild flowers. To add life into the painting, paint the lady's skin and white dress a reflection

of the surrounding colour, creating a liveliness that is charming and unbeatable.

Create light by using your colour wheel, go up one colour on the chart and add white and/or if you were to create shadows go down one colour on the wheel and add black,

8.) Patterns and Texture

These are as important as every other principals that I have discussed so far. Without patterns and texture, a painting can be most boring. So if you wished to create a strong piece of artwork, create patterns on plain floors and texture or flat plains. It would give the painting complexity.

- Patterns add interest to a painting.
- Use patterns or texture on plain grounds to add dimensions.
- Use patterns or texture to create a focus interest.
- Use patterns or texture to create excitement.
- Create patterns to guide your viewers.
- Repetition of patterns creates interesting and strong rhythmic composition.

9.) Depth

Depth gives your painting perspective. Without perspective your painting will look flat, here are a few suggestions on what you can do to create depth.

Create depth by blurring the background.

Create depth by using lines and cooler colours.

By creating depth you can also create a sense of mystery.

10.) Brush Strokes

What makes energizes a painting is the joy of your colour palette and brush strokes. Brush Strokes: I paint in a clean style but my strokes are always methodical, gentle and joyous.

Create your brush strokes with purpose do not paint with gusto when you don't have enough knowledge because it will look like amateur work. So practice your brush strokes and make them appealing. Don't be intimidated by your paint or your paintbrushes, remember you are the owner of them and master your strokes with confidence and purpose.

So there you have it my fellow artists, I added two more below, the followings are not painting principals but they are Habits and Mind Set that will help you to create better paintings.

11) Rest

This is an important lesson:

If your painting is not working out, go through this list, question your painting and take a break.

When you take a break from your painting, you will go back to it with fresh eyes, the problem will reveal itself but if that doesn't work, keep trying new things.

There are also a lot of artists that will put their challenging projects away for another day, in order not to overwork it. For me, I just take a tea or lunch break and once i have given myself enough time to rest, I go back to my problematic painting with a new perspective.

12.) Fear

Don't let fear paralyze you. Fear is the worst enemy when it comes to creating. Remember we are not brain surgeons nor astronauts, we are the fortunate ones with interesting and inspiring jobs, it is important work but it is not life threatening work nor will the world crumble if we make some mistakes on our paintings.

So please my fellow painters, cast fear aside, bring out the child in You and Play. Once you are not afraid to make mistakes, you will learn more, create more and have more fun. Devote some time to your craft, if you practice often you will become better and better each day. And with a little bit of luck and casting fear aside, this practice will lead you to success.

Happy Painting everyone!

If you have any questions please visit me on Facebook @ TingYuenArt and feel free to message me, I will be happy to assist you in any way I can .

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