



Leap of Faith

How to Paint from Your Heart

First, decide what you want. Pay no attention to your painting skills. Instead pay attention to the size of your intentions. It is grander to overstate the important reasons you are here painting – than to understate it. In this painting assignment, I hope you will not fall in with the procession of ordinary painters. From your own heart, beat your own drum. Set your own goals and write them in your journal.

I remember hearing from a successful painter who said, “Go after your painting with the enthusiasm as much as a dog gnawing a bone. Go at it with zeal, exclusion of all else and with the full knowledge that this is all mine!” Decide what you want and write it in your journal.

It isn't so much that you paint what you feel is the truth, but that you paint the importance of your truth. . . from the heart.

It is not uncommon for artists to reach a point in their painting where they just stop, dissatisfied. Actually it is really the time the artist emerges with self confidence in expression and elegance. This becomes the time of breaking boundaries in the artist's development. For example, Claude Monet's early water lily series was characterized by light and color and classic in proportion. He was at the height of his powers as a colorist but his work was rejected by the French as “wild, out of control, bizarre and untutored.” However at the age of 80, he was commissioned by the Republic of France to paint a major series of his water lily theme. The grand master of the Impressionists reluctantly agreed. This was a period where he hesitated, started, stopped and became dissatisfied with his work. His early works dissatisfied him and he painted over or destroyed them all. Out of this reconstruction period, Monet emerged with a new, refreshed style. An eighty year old painter,

in poor health, poor eye sight, emerged with work that astonishes us all still today. Amazing.

So today, break your boundaries and paint from your heart. . . for your heart. Paint where you want to go, not from where you are – the familiar. You can always go back, but you may never know the thrilling sensation of swimming in the ocean unless you. . . jump in.

Is this You?

Sense of Wonder

You are in awe and very aware of the world around you. You use all your senses while you paint.

Express your Feelings

You are spontaneous, uninhibited in thoughts, words and action.

Curious

You are adventurous and curious about new possibilities in your painting.

Imagination

You are vivid and colorful. You have a sense of urgency. You play with abstract thoughts.

Intuitive Thinking

Solving problems without logical reasoning. You go with hunches.

Independent Thinker

You find things out for yourself – not what you've read.

Personal Involvement in your Work

You are absorbed by your work and enthusiastically go at it for your own satisfaction.

Divergent Thinker

You go beyond the one “right” way to paint. You go off in different directions; off the beaten path to seek several possibilities rather than seek only the one “right” answer.

Focused on Creation

Rather than focus on how things are supposed to be, you seek novelty and surround yourself with originality.

Tend to Play with Ideas

You toy with possibilities and do not listen to others who try to disprove your ideas, talents and gifts.

QUICK GUIDE TO MAKING A GOOF-PROOF PAINTING

1. You're here in front of your canvas because you want to paint. Be happy about it.
2. Attitude and Passion - Before jumping in with your passion, think about why you are painting this piece in the first place. Write it down. Write down your goal. Now, your head is clear, your goals are established, now passionately go after it. If you are hesitant or fearful at this point, you are already thinking about failure. Whoops!
3. Paint the way you have always wanted to paint. Paint your way. If you paint to copy another's painting, you become another bad copyist and have denied yourself the chance to demonstrate to others who you are. A successful painter paints what they know and what they feel about a subject they love.

If you have no feeling about your painting, if you are ambiguous, you will struggle painting an ambiguous, unfeeling painting. Contemporary painters don't separate themselves from their art. Paint who you are. It's much more interesting for you and for the viewer. Oscar Wilde said, "Be yourself; everyone else is already taken."

4. Decide on your equipment, your tools and your medium. Put away everything else. If the tools you have in your workspace do not serve you, put them away. Visual clutter around you may add to visual chaos. (But not always . . . Some artists, however naturally do well amongst chaos.)
5. Decide on your color combination and get out only those colors. Limit your colors, don't overmix, mix some midtones (value of 5) of those colors and begin painting with midtones all over. Eventually you add the pure colors of lights (value of 1) and pure colors of darks (value of 10).
6. Decide on the focal point of the painting. Everything you do should lead the eye to the focal point. The reason or the thing that originally caught your eye to do the painting in the first place (the goal).
7. Paint extremely abstractly first - under every good painting is a good abstract painting. Also, abstraction around the periphery of the focal point nudges the eye to go to the point of focus. The point of the painting.
8. The focal point, remember, is the WOW. . . the reason you wanted to paint this in the first place. This is the most important part of the painting.
9. Stop too soon. If you overpaint a subject it becomes visually boring. Too much detail is a bore. Think about this, a painting is never finished. . . it just stops at an interesting place, usually at 90%. Do not give the viewer all the information, thereby inviting the viewer into your work. And here's something to think about: It takes less than three seconds for the viewer to decide if they are interested in the painting. Try this yourself on your own work.
10. Finally, your painting series should include what I call, the Five C's:
 1. Concept (intention)
 2. Color Combinations
 3. Composition Design
 4. Commitment to the Concept
 5. Continue the Series

Have the courage to follow your commitment for awhile (it was a good idea at the beginning of the painting). Follow through with your original idea, your original goal. Commit until the painting says, Stop!... then stop. And repeat the same theme over and over. This becomes your series.



Burridge's Working Studio



Working on a Series



Magic Circus Series

JUROR'S STATEMENT

Serious artists are full of opinions and personal viewpoints. It's that simple. The opinions, however, have been developed over time in the studio, art exposure, and their "time in the trenches" making their own art. I respect all artists who have made the commitment to be a dedicated artist. You can't be "half a painter." I realized that my opinions are going to affect many, hard working artists. Some would get accepted and some would not. I too am a full time artist and my daily work and committed career also depends on others' opinions. It comes with the business of being a full time painter. I feel a responsibility to them and take my privileged position as a juror very seriously.

So, as an artist and a juror, I respond to other artists' work instinctively. I tend not to have a preconceived vision of what I'm looking for, but rather to keep an open mind, as if I were an explorer anticipating the unknown. My options are to make comparisons based on the paintings that are in front of me, all the while looking for newness and surprises, and what I call, *The WOW! factor*. These pieces are usually full of originality and passion. Actually, I search for high craftsmanship and maturity, I react to artists who project confidence in their work, conviction to their own art messages and their artistic energy. Their paintings jump out and grab me.

One of the perks I get is knowing that the top finalists may be awarded with cash or additional art materials. Plus, the notoriety looks good on their resumes!

After concluding jurying this exhibition, I am surprised that I had selected both cutting-edge pieces along with traditionally executed pieces. For me, the consistent through-line however was each artist's personal commitment and involvement in developing their own art. Their art simply said "Look at me!" The ones that are new and fresh always get my attention. The subject matter may be the same old thing, but if the artist brings individual newness to the art, I notice and remember it.

When jurying an exhibit, I look for artists who are not showing me the same old stuff, or a repeated generation of someone else's art. I search for artists who project their developed skills and passion in their artwork. After all, it was Beethoven who screamed at one of his pupils, "It's not the technique that matters. It's the passion!"

R. Bunnidge

HOW TO CHOOSE A WINNER

I've outlined a checklist of ideal qualities for choosing a winner. This list is also my check points in critiquing my own artwork before it leaves the studio.

- Did it stop and surprise me
- Did it hold my attention
- Created with authority
- Strong presentation
- Original view point
- Painted with passion
- Skill level
- Clear message
- Well developed idea
- Have the WOW factor?

The non winners list, as you might expect, is the opposite:

- Not interesting
- Does not hold my attention
- Confused message
- Too common
- Weak presentation
- Not original
- Poorly executed
- Needs development
- Boring
- Tried too hard, too mechanical
- Phony far-out



ROBERT BURRIDGE



Robert Burridge was a noted international award-winning Industrial Designer who, after twenty-five years in the corporate design world, has focused his new life to painting everyday. Today he is a celebrated, contemporary painter, contributing author to artists' magazines, college teacher and publisher of his own books, "Loosen Up Workbook & Studio Notes" and "Hot Art Marketing." His instructional DVDs feature his popular "Loosen Up" techniques. Burridge attributes his success to his education from the University of the Arts in Philadelphia, his stint as an adjunct professor at Cooper Union School for the Advancement of Science and Art in New York City, and in 1966, his Fluxus art performances with Yoko Ono, Nam June Paik, Jim McWilliams and Charlotte Moorman.

He is much sought after as juror, lecturer and workshop instructor. Also, Burridge is a featured artist-mentor for Master Workshops in France, Italy, Mexico, Bahamas, Guatemala and Cuba.

Robert is the Honorary President of the International Society of Acrylic Painters and Signature Member of both the ISAP and the Philadelphia Water Color Society. He is a recipient of their highest and most prestigious award, the *Crest Medal for Achievement in the Arts*. Previous recipients include Georgia O'Keeffe, Andrew Wyeth and Pablo Picasso.

Burridge's honors include: "Commemorative Artist" for the Central Coast Wine Classic; "Official Artist" for the prestigious Sausalito Art Festival Poster, which was named the Best Outdoor Festival Poster for 2001 by Sunshine Artist magazine. Burridge was commissioned to create twelve large abstract canvas paintings for the Hollywood movie "Dean Quixote," a feature film produced by Victor Simpkins.

Burridge's Coffee Cup painting series were reproduced by Starbucks Coffee Company on thousands of cups as well as framed art prints. Williams-Sonoma stores carried his popular fruit and vegetable prints. Both series sold out quickly. His commercial success now includes eight paintings woven into large tapestries selling at national design centers. Chosen as the "Pearl Vodka Artist of the Millennium," Robert's artwork appeared on bottles and national ad campaigns.

Being a typical Gemini, Burridge's painting themes can be put into two categories: His "Good Life" series emphasizes color, humor and good times. The other theme is his continued focus on contemporary Abstract Icons, Mythology and Metaphors.

Currently, his popular work hangs in the permanent collections of international embassies, corporate galleries, art colleges as well as television and entertainment personalities. The San Luis Obispo Museum of Art curated fourteen of his abstract paintings for his first solo museum exhibition, which led to his second major exhibition of seven foot abstract charcoal drawings. The Elverhoj Museum also invited and exhibited Burridge's personal collect of his seminal paintings from past years.

ROBERT BURRIDGE

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