

THE STUDIO SCHOOL SPECIAL EDITION NEWSLETTER

Easel Society Newsletter

APRIL 7, 2020



studio school

NOTICE:

The safety and well-being of The Studio School's students, faculty and the community at large are of top priority as we make plans for Summer classes. In view of the worsening COVID-19 crisis and the president's declaration of a national emergency, we might have to make difficult decisions over the next few months involving our Summer classes and workshop. As classes do not start until June, we are hoping for the best and that we can go ahead as planned. However, we will reassess as time passes to do our part as we adhere to the guidelines set forth by the CDC and The Virginia Department of Health. Changes might become necessary as guidance continues to be updated. We will keep you posted on our website of any changes regarding the school.

We encourage you to reserve your space in one of our exciting Summer classes. Please rest assured that in the event it becomes necessary to cancel classes, refunds will be promptly issued.

Please feel free to contact any instructor by email if you have any questions or concerns.

We look forward to seeing you in the better days ahead and wish you all the best!

Stay healthy and keep painting!

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

Staying Creative and Thriving!

What are you doing?

By practicing social distancing it is difficult to not want to share what is going on in our lives. Here's a sneak peek of what we are doing!

Jane has been busy entering shows!



Life Quilt accepted to 2020 Artemis



Vera is tending to her gardens.



In The Know

Spring Online Exhibition

International Society of Experimental Artists



Ghost Images was accepted into the Academy of Fine Art National Juried Show in Lynchburg!



Gina has had *Mornings Mist* (L) accepted into the Academy of Fines Art National Juried Show and had *Be Still My Heat* (R) accepted in to the 2020 Artemis publication. While also enjoying gardening, she is working on a colored pencil portrait and teaching high school art from home.



Tracy is working on Zoom painting and critique classes. I'm painting a large 36x48" canvas of water lilies. Her classes meet Monday for demo, Tuesday for critique. Tracy says she's gardening and working puzzles also! and there is baking
Judy, Patti and Robin are busy working in the studio.

What are you doing?

Joan Fullerton updates:

We are trying to get Joan to reschedule for September. we'll keep you posted.

We are still busy planning new things for the school and planning a 2020 Art Blast the first Saturday in November. Mark your calendars. As for now, stay safe and well.

Let us know what you are doing! Staying creative in times like this is crucial for health and well being.

Let us know areas of interest and we can feature a short class.

In the meantime, enjoy this about fueling creativity.



Ideas to Fuel Creativity For Everyone (C) by gls

1. Definition Of Creativity

What is creativity, exactly?

“The use of imagination or original ideas to create something.” AND

“The ability to transcend traditional ideas, rules, patterns, relationships, or the like, and to create meaningful new ideas, forms, methods, interpretations, etc.”

So at its most basic, creativity is simply the act of creating something that didn't exist before.

Where and how and with what materials you apply creativity is up to you. It could be anything. There are no limits to the areas where creativity can be employed.

2. Follow Your Natural Talents

You can obviously apply your creativity in whatever area or areas you choose, but you'll get the biggest joy if you follow your natural talents. Having talent in a particular area simply means that it's easier for you to learn the necessary skills than it is for someone whose talents lie in a different area. Start where you feel comfortable!

3. Go With the Grit!

Natural talent will give you a boost, but talent alone won't cut it. Creative endeavors often come with challenges.

You might be intimidated by needing to learn new skills. You might struggle with perfectionism and fear of failure. You might be battling the real-world demands of work and family when trying to find time to pursue your craft. You might get frustrated when your painting doesn't materialize exactly the way you imagined. You might be terrified of releasing your creation out into the world and making yourself vulnerable to rejection.

To overcome these kinds of challenges, you need grit. Grit is a combination of passion and perseverance that enables you to persist in the face of obstacles.

Simply put, you need to love what you do and be too stubborn to quit. This is a big part of being successful. Never give up!

For more on this topic, check out Angela Duckworth's wonderful book ***Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance*** .

(This also is reflected in #5)

4. Try, Try, Try, and Try Again

One way in which grit will help you is by pushing you to enhance your skills in your area of interest. Regardless of how much innate talent you may or may not have, getting over the beginner anxiety and acquiring new skills and techniques is key. The more skilled you are, the more freedom you have to explore.

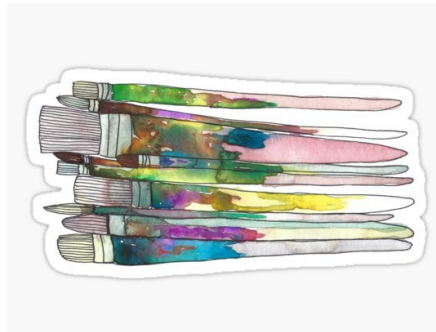
Think about someone who has writing talent but never learned the basics of spelling and grammar. Or someone who has artistic talent but never learned how to mix colors.

Everyone has to start somewhere.

Let yourself be a beginner.

Learn from others who went before you.

And never let the learning stop.



5. Carry On Through Fear and Failure

Grit will also push you to overcome fear of failure. Fear of failure is a giant obstacle to creativity. It can completely paralyze you and prevent you from creating altogether.

Fear of failure is perpetuated by the fact that we usually only see other people's successes.

We usually only see their final product. We don't see all the years they spent honing their skills. We don't see all the rough sketches and first tries and abandoned starts that happened along the way.

And we usually only see the successful creations. We don't see the failures. All the painted over canvasses or gessoed over sketch book pages. Even if it's mostly invisible, failure happens to all of us. In order to have a chance of success, you *must* be willing to risk failure and find ways to work through it.

I always tell my students, "Artist are problem Solvers." Once you embrace failure, there are no limits to what you will dare to try. Some of my best works have been created from failures. When a problem arises, it forces you to find a solution and ask questions. This is when artistic growth occurs.

My favorite book on this subject is ***Art And Fear*** by David Bayles and Ted Orland.

(A must read, actually.)

6. Let Yourself Start Over

Sometimes you might get an inkling that you are pouring your heart and soul into a project that is headed Nowhere and Fast. But it can be really hard to *admit* this fact to yourself when you've put countless precious hours into your creation du jour

However, there are times when moving on and letting yourself start over truly is the best thing to do. The more you accept failure as an expected part of the process, the easier it becomes to admit that you have landed on a no-go and the easier it becomes to start fresh.

7. Try Many Things

And while we are on the topic of starting over, let me point out that creativity is not monogamy. You don't need to find the ONE. You don't need to get married to any one given idea or solution or project and stay devoted to it happily ever after.

As a matter of fact, one of the best ways to boost creativity is to challenge yourself to come up with MANY possible solutions. Challenge yourself to come up with four possible titles for your work of art. Or three possible color schemes for your work of art. Maybe try three possible ways to change a process that is a giant undertaking, but you will discover new ways to approach a process. For instance, create an image in watercolor, collage, and a drawing.

8. Expose Yourself To Work In Your Medium or Subject Matter, Or Not

To keep trying out new possibilities, your brain needs stimulation. One way to incite creativity is to expose yourself to ideas and work by other people.

This doesn't mean that you'll become a copycat. Instead, you can collect ideas from multiple sources and then put them together in a way that's unique to you. Look at how they handled their subject, what mediums, and also take time to look at the Elements and Principles of Art to see how they handled them.

Other people's work can serve as a spark that ignites you to think of a new way in handling your creative vision.

9. Expose Yourself To New Environments

There's also something about exposing yourself to a new environment that entices your brain to make new connections.

I've noticed that whenever I go on a trip (short or long), I come back with a plethora of visual images, and photographs to work from. It's pretty much a given that as I make my daily trip to work (about 45 minutes) I will leave early and go down the back roads. I often photograph the early morning landscape with my iPhone.

10. Surround Yourself With Other Creative People (@ 6feet....)

And then there are the people who inhabit your environment. You know that cliché about being the average of the five people you spend the most time with?

Enough said. Embrace new discussions, meet new people, join new groups, take a class out of your comfort zone, and try new resources.

11. Give Yourself Lots Of R&R

So we have established that your creative brain needs stimulation. This comes from learning new skills and techniques, exposure to other people's work, and exposure to new environments.

But you also need a chance to marinate these ideas. Your brain needs a chance to process and put two and two together. It does this when you are sleeping and when you are relaxing. I often have inspiration come to me when I dream, or when I am driving long distances.

12. Keep Idea Lists

Whenever ideas do come to you, be prepared to capture them.

Ideas have a tendency to show up at random moments when you are busy doing something completely unrelated. You might think you'll remember them later, but you won't. STOP and write them down. Sometimes I even record longer versions of ideas on my cell phone.

I keep lists of random shared websites, artist names, and ideas on my notes section of my iPhone. I have no memory of when I came up with most of the times on my list. Sometimes I look at the list and I don't even remember seeing some of the ideas before. But there they are – ready and waiting whenever I need them.

A small notebook on your desk, in your car, or by your bedside is another good way to go. I have all of these! :)

13. Step Away

Regardless of where and how you apply creativity, there will be times when you get stuck. When you don't know what to do next.

Sometimes all you need is to create distance between yourself and your work and you will be able to look at it a moment later with fresh eyes from a different perspective.

When I find myself asking questions about What? Where? How? One rule my dad taught me. He said, "If in doubt, DON'T!"

14. Exercise

There are times when I literally just need to step away from my studio or easel for 5 minutes. But when that doesn't work, the answer will most often come to me the next morning when I'm gardening, on the elliptical, or when I take a morning walk.

Human beings evolved to be on the move and exercise literally makes our brains work better. For more on this topic, read

Spark: ***The Revolutionary New Science of Exercise and the Brain*** by John Ratey.

15. Take Long Showers (or Swim)

If the answer doesn't come to me when I distance myself, it will come in the shower when I'm all relaxed and away from distractions...

16. Listen To Music

...or when I'm listening to music...all kinds of music. Typically, I try something out of my itunes collection. Sometimes, for me, I get inspiration from a lyric.

17. Let Your Mind Wonder While Doing Something Mindless

...or when I'm letting my mind wander while doing something mindless, like vacuuming, dusting, or cleaning windows.

18. Look At A Different Point Of View

If just stopping when in doubt, you can look for a different perspective by pretending to be someone else. What would the person you admire the most do? What would one of your fellow artists do? How did a famous artist handle the problem?

19. Ask For A Critique

Just ask someone. A friend, an art teacher, another artist, etc. Sometimes another person's fresh perspective is all you need to get inspired again. Sometimes I ask an unknown observer for a different approach.

20. When Is Your Most Creative Time Of Day?

One other way to boost your creativity is to time your creative pursuits so that they match your chronotype.

Are you a morning-person or a night-owl?

I'm a morning person all the way and I noticed my creativity soared when I managed to change my schedule so that I was creating in the mornings as opposed to afternoons or evenings.

So if you can, it really pays to take advantage of the time of day when you are at your most productive and have the least distractions.

21. Just Do It!

With that being said, optimizing the conditions conducive to creativity is a luxury – not a necessity. If you wait for inspiration and the perfect time, you might be waiting forever. The best way to start is to begin and then keep going!

Simply START creating.

**Sat Well, Stay Safe.
We hope to see you soon!**



Wheatfields (C)

encaustic

by gis