

STYLE FINDING TIPS

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THE EIGHT INGREDIENTS

We believe there are eight key ingredients needed in order to discover and develop a personal creative style.

These ingredients are: *Desire, Self Inquiry, Trust, Awareness, Expansion, Exploration, Gentleness, and Dedication*. Below we've expanded upon why each of these ingredients is so vital to this process.

DESIRE:

Feeling moved by it all

Having a clear desire to explore or make a change is often the first step on any journey. This kind of sincere motivation serves as potent fuel for the quest, and it also helps you to stay the course. We imagine if you're reading this, you already have the desire to find your unique style, so you're off to a great start!

SELF INQUIRY:

A willingness to get quiet and look within

If you want to invite more of you into your creative process, your life experiences, cultural lineage, relationships, passions, and memories create a fertile ground where your personal style has already been developing and growing throughout your entire life. Once you tune into these deep personal reservoirs, there are infinite ways to assimilate and weave your stories and experiences into your artwork.

TRUST:

Fostering the courage to listen to your intuition while noticing your preferences.

Learning to trust what you see, hear, feel, and get excited by (and not relying on what others think) is a foundational practice in bringing your own style to life. Cultivating a sense of trust in your own sensibilities is a lifelong journey that never ends, but we believe developing a committed art-making practice creates a nourishing place to flex and strengthen these important muscles that will serve you in both life and in art.

AWARENESS:

Developing a practice of finding + archiving information + inspiration throughout daily life.

Moving through your day-to-day life with a keen awareness of what draws you in and lights you up not only makes the world around you feel more alive, but it also connects you to the present moment and to your creative spirit each and every day. Developing this kind of mindful practice around seeking, noticing, and archiving inspiration, whether it's internal or external, allows you to continually fill your basket of ideas so you'll always have fresh things to explore the next time you break out your paints.

EXPANSION:

Continually growing your knowledge of new materials. More mediums = more opportunities for something unique to emerge.

It's easy to get stuck in creative ruts, and this is why continually expanding your knowledge and understanding of new materials, approaches, ideas, and sources of inspiration is so important. Continually evolving and growing in different ways, learning from new teachers, pushing your boundaries, and exploring techniques and materials that are unfamiliar create more opportunities for something truly unique to emerge in your art-making practice.

EXPLORATION:

Giving yourself time + space to explore and play that is curiosity driven, not outcome driven.

Giving yourself the time and space to explore and try things on in a way that is curiosity-driven, not outcome-driven, is critical when it comes to developing a unique artistic style. Creating from this forgiving and playful space sets the stage for letting go, risk-taking, breaking out of habitual patterns, and eventually stumbling upon new gems of discovery. We believe creating one-hundred paintings and considering them “studies” vs. little masterpieces is a great way to set yourself up for a world of exploration and success.

GENTLENESS:

Choosing to staying open, curious, and kind to yourself and whatever emerges through you.

If you've engaged in the creative process, you've probably gotten to know your inner critic. Whether it's loud and obnoxious or soft and persistent, negative self-talk often gets in the way of freedom, and sometimes it even makes you want to quit. This is why cultivating a gentle and compassionate inner voice helps you to stay present, even in the tough moments. Think about how you'd regard a dear friend or child in their creative practice and invite that gentle and encouraging voice into your own process.

DEDICATION:

Showing up to your practice with persistence + understanding that this is a lifelong journey

Although it's easy to want to speed right to the finish-line, discovering and developing a unique artistic style is a life-long journey that requires dedication and persistence. In many ways, it's about becoming more and more honest with yourself and allowing that authenticity to show up in your work in ever-evolving ways. Just like in life, there are endless ways to add new layers of depth and understanding to your creative process, and we believe this life-long practice is something to celebrate and embrace. You get to do this work!

THREE AREAS OF PRACTICE

With the Eight Ingredients serving as the foundation for our style finding adventures, let's explore the three main areas of practice that each ingredient falls into. You can think of these as the three ways you will spend your time as you develop your artistic style: *Internal Exploration*, *External Exploration*, *Hands On Art Making Practice*.

Here are some examples of different ways you might explore each area of practice:



THE KEY TO FINDING INSPIRATION FROM OTHER ARTISTS WITHOUT COPYING

It's very natural to be inspired by other artists and art forms – we certainly are! This kind of creative exchange is something we've seen throughout history, and with today's wide-spread access to the internet, it's easier than ever to glean inspiration from artists all across the globe.

The way we see it, the problem is not being inspired by other artists, but how we incorporate it.

One simple key to gleaning inspiration from other artists without directly copying or making work that is overly derivative:

GETTING SPECIFIC

When you see a piece of art or a body of work you love, it's natural and easy to think, "Oh I just LOVE that. I'm going to try it myself!"

This approach of direct copying from outside sources can offer helpful insight when you're new to a medium or a process and have no intention of sharing or selling your work. However, when you're in the business of developing a style that is unique to you, it becomes ethically important to be mindful of just how much "borrowing" you are doing from any one particular source.

This is why getting specific about exactly what you feel inspired by is so important.

To dig in a little deeper into your personal preferences, ask yourself, "What am I feeling specifically drawn to or excited about in this piece of art or body of work?" This one simple question will instantly give you important information about how to incorporate what you like without borrowing too much from one place.

Instead of taking it all, choose one specific thing you really love and add that to your ever-growing repertoire of inspiration.

For example, you might think, "I love how the bright teal pops against the brown background to create a visual pop. I'm drawn to the juxtaposition of large quiet areas of color with smaller fine details. I'm intrigued by the way the figures are out of proportion. I'm inspired by the mixture of yarn, paper, thread and paint."

Once you gain clarity about what you specifically feel drawn to, take that one specific element and work with it in your own work, while also mixing in your inner and outer explorations and other sources of inspiration.

THREE PROMPTS TO PLAY WITH

1) Fill one page of a journal with things you really LOVE Consider places you love to travel, your favorite pastimes, your most beloved humans, colors you feel drawn to, things you collect, cultures you feel connected to. Anything that comes to mind is fair game! When you're finished, circle any words or phrases that stand out as particularly potent or personal that might make their way into your art in some way.

2) Go on an Inspiration Wander. This can be in your neighborhood, a new place, or even in your home. Look at the world around you with fresh eyes or "the eye's of an artist" as you seek to find inspiration in your environment. Notice what kinds of colors, shapes, and imagery you feel drawn to. Tune into all your senses. And consider making an "Archive" of the inspiration you find through photos, drawings, or collecting bits and pieces of nature or found material as you go.

3. Choose one piece of art you really love and ask yourself what you specifically feel drawn to about it. Take that one specific thing and create your own piece of art using that as a jumping off point.

For an extra challenge, feel free to take inspiration from all three of these exercises and combine them together to create a piece of artwork that incorporates them all in one place!

If you're inspired to discover and develop your own unique creative style, the *Fresh Paint Online Course* offers an in-depth curriculum, inspiring framework and loving community to support you on your journey. As free-flowing creatives, we find working within this kind of thoughtful structure is an incredibly potent way to stay committed and connected to this life-enhancing work

We would love to have you join us!

Find out more about Fresh Paint here.

<https://florabowley.com/online-learning/fresh-paint>

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