

ISSUE 10. | 2026 | THE OFFICIAL TISCH ACADEMY MAGAZINE

PAINTE FOMO



TISCH
ACADEMY

ISSUE 10. | 2026

A message from Tisch



My goodness, as I think back over the last few months since our last issue, it's been a blur. So much has happened, both here in the studio and across Tisch Academy. Hundreds of new members and loads of projects, not to mention all the glorious art myself and the small team here in Wanaka have seen you produce. It's EPIC!

This is going to be a stacked issue!

As I think about the place we've landed I'm filled with both gratitude and the weight of responsibility at the same time. This is an awesome moment; I feel blessed to be here with you on this journey.

Let me catch you up on what's been happening in the studio, in the gallery, on the ground and here at Tisch Academy.

Since moving to Wanaka and getting the gallery up and running we've been blessed with a steady stream of commissioned work. I've been able to make video content

from many of these paintings, and some are still to be released, though you may have seen snippets on social media. The works are getting more imaginative in some respects, whilst other paintings are a direct reflection of the beautiful surroundings here in New Zealand, where we are now based.

Since our last issue I've finished the big imaged scene - you know, the one reminiscent of New Zealand, chucked in a blender with every detail imaginable? Immediately after that we opened the gallery, and then I got to work on a piece for the charity auction, to aid in raising funds for WAI Wanaka.

These two works could not have been more different, and whilst I'm pleased by how they turned out, the piece for WAI (Rob Roy Glacier) was a refreshing



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departure from the norm. Some paintings fall off the brush effortlessly, like this one, and some feel like a battle, but we still learn, even from those battles, right?

I had such a short window of time to complete this work! I break down that story in the "Say Now, Not No" video, so if you haven't already, check that out!

Then came the time of year that I look forward to immensely - Tour Season! I was so excited to pick up our first guests for our NZ Plein Air Tours in January, and since then it's been a whirlwind. Not only did I personally run three tours, but we had Joe Paquet and Kathleen Hudson come on board, as we hosted their tours as well.

Imagine 10 days, fully immersed in painting the best landscape on the planet!

I may sound somewhat blasphemous by saying this, but sometimes I think God used all His best ideas here. And the best part? Showing folks what's right here in my backyard, just to see their jaws hit the floor!

Each tour ran smoothly, I'm pleased to say - they went off without a hitch. Every group was filled with amazing people from all over the world, most of them being our awesome Tisch Academy members! On each



Rob Roy Glacier - a piece for WAI.

tour we spent half the time in Queenstown, and the other half in Wanaka - we're talking the best of the best locations!

Most of our painting spots were exclusively on private land, places you couldn't get to unless you knew the farmer or station owner. Each time we

settled in to a new locale, we would meet some incredible people - folks who were working the land, going back several generations. They were all too happy to allow us to paint scenes of their family farms, places they're proud of and deeply connected to.

Painting with Joe Paquet & Kathleen Hudson was a huge highlight of the whole experience.

Each artist has his or her own unique method for capturing the landscape plein air, and this further deepened, not only my understanding of working from life, but the visible paradigm shift in the work of our guests. “Lightbulb” moments, flashes of inspiration and new-found techniques - in fact, mastery of those techniques - were happening on a daily basis! There’s nothing like full immersion!

After the tours with Joe and Kathleen, I had the immense privilege of painting alongside them, garnering new approaches and colour combinations. Having observed Joe, with his prismatic philosophy, and Kathleen with her bold and free approach to subject and form, I was left in awe!

I can’t wait to bring these two on board in a more involved, hands-on way. In case you missed it, we are proud to invite Joe Paquet and Kathleen Hudson to Tisch Academy as fellow instructors!

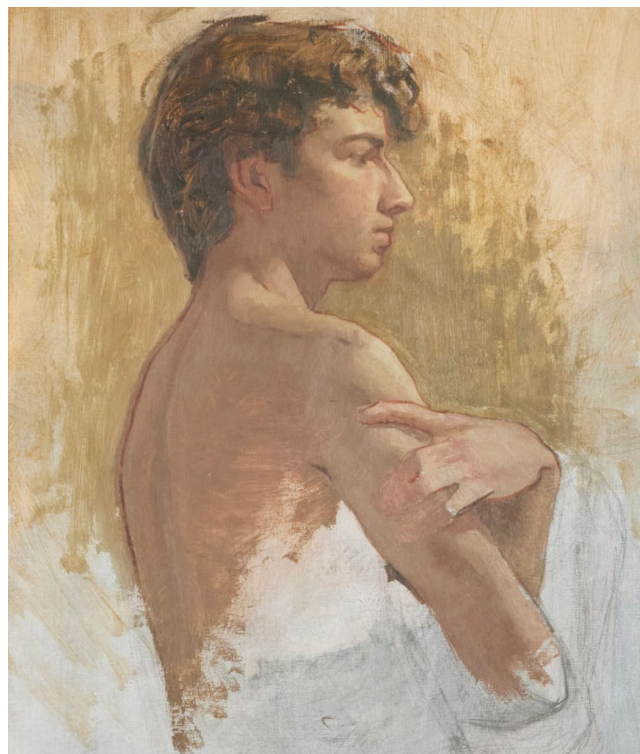
In this issue, we also hear from **Ben Dellabarca**, who’s

an insanely talented young artist from Wellington, New Zealand. Ben will share personal insights from his art journey so far - some ups and downs and where he’s experienced growth. Ben is a true artist in every sense. He’s one of the most hard working and dialed-in young artists I’ve ever met, painting on a daily basis. This guy is obsessed!

I’m pleased to announce that Ben will also be joining us as a fellow instructor, sharing his approach to portraiture and the figure.

As you can see, there are some massive changes that are about to take place here at Tisch Academy. I’m thrilled you’re with us on the ride! Let me take a moment to give you a glimpse of the scope of our new direction and vision.

Can I level with you? For years I’ve felt that I am the single biggest bottleneck and drawback to this online art school. I am continually torn between studio work, commissions and content creation. Don’t get me wrong, I’m grateful, and more dedicated than ever, but I only have so much to offer. I want to work with the best of the best and bring you world-class art instruction from people that are



Portrait by **Ben Dellabarca**.

elite level with their painting, but what's more, they have "the teacher's heart".

What is "**the teacher's heart**"? It's an open and free spirit of giving. It's sharing, with no stones left unturned. These amazing people are committed to others, helping them grow in their skills and understanding.

Moving ahead, we are going to be reaching out to others - but don't worry. This is NOT going to become another platform that's a "free for all" where just anyone can upload content and give their "two cents". We're carefully curating our group of fellow instructors, guides who will offer you the best instruction as you work away on your vision in the studio.

Tisch





We're back again, bigger, better, and more inspiring than ever.

By popular demand, I'm hosting three back-to-back art tours in 2027. This is your chance to paint side-by-side with me, Andrew Tischler, aka The Tisch in some of the most breathtaking and exclusive locations in New Zealand's South Island.

Tour Start & End Dates + Pricing

TOUR ONE January 18th – 28th | Approx. USD \$7,000 (NZD 11,995)

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*ALL DATES ARE LISTED IN NZDT (GMT +13)



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- 5 nights in Queenstown at the luxurious Platinum Apartments.
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- Art kits available on enquiry, cost depending on personal need.
- Each guest will have their own private bedroom and bathroom while sharing a 2 bedroom apartment with one other guest.

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NEWS

Adventures on our epic NZ Plein Air Tours 2026



STORIES

Keep showing up

Valerie Meyer



BEN DELLABARCA

My Journey and Approach

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This magazine has been produced as a gift to you from me, the artist Andrew Tischler, and articles and content have been donated by members of the Tisch Academy, who believe we have something great, it's community orientated. This magazine is being provided to help the busy ones keep up with the news in a nutshell, and the technology-challenged members who love to read the written page.

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PAINTING WITH *Mr. Joe Paquet*

It's hard to describe my experience with Joe Paquet here in New Zealand. They say you should never meet your heroes. Well, after this experience I want to challenge that. You should. Sometimes they turn out to be awesome.



I've been friends with Joe for many years, though it was only ever online that we've spoken. Never have we been in the same room, let alone in the same landscape painting together!

We hosted Joe Paquet here in New Zealand and facilitated his art tour. Ten very fortunate guests had the experience of not only painting this incredible landscape, but learning the prismatic palette from someone, who in my opinion, is one of the best plein air artists working today.



To see Joe in action during these pivotal lessons was unreal. The way he broke down his process and approach, woven together with art history and poetic nuance, was nothing short of sublime. There were several “AH HA!” moments.

But it was after the tours when my real education started. You see, I've arrived at a particular place in my process, and oftentimes we don't question the patterns we adopt working in the studio, or out in the field. You'd be fair if you claimed I was set in my ways. So, I vowed to push beyond my comfort zone, and adopt his methods and palette while we painted together.

The learning curve was extreme, and I was totally out of my depth. Day by day, my understanding deepened, and I had a newfound appreciation for the art of plein air painting.

We filmed every excursion, as we took Joe to some of my favorite locations. There are so many video installments to share with you on the Academy! And the best part? Joe will join us as a fellow instructor, teaching our community his ways!

Tisch

Watch this space.

Did you catch the latest plein air video? We cut this together with a bit of a different vibe in mind. Check out the latest installment in the Library! It's a blast! [LINK](#)

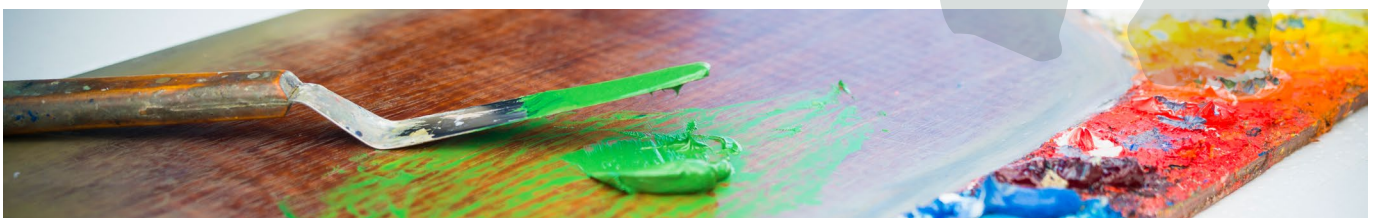




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Continual growth
necessitates
cultivation of both
joy and curiosity.

Joe Paquet



<<<<<

The road ahead is exciting, my friends!

Thanks for being here and thank you for sharing this space with us. I can't wait for you to experience what we have in store!

I've come to some conclusions after 40+ years of painting from life and 30+ years of teaching; most importantly, that the act of creation can be sacred and that it is possible to find beauty and grace in each aspect of building a painting.

Starting with one's sponsoring intention (the "why" of it all) through to design, drawing, subtle value shifts, underpainting (to freeze an effect of light), color stage and finally, the power of subjective choice making to enhance the visual impression.

Personally, it's a balance of ego and humility - one must have enough ego to face a blank canvas, and yet enough humility to let the world inform us - to take the task seriously, but ourselves, not too much.

Continual growth necessitates cultivation of both joy and curiosity.

In the end sustainable practice is key.

Through monthly downloadable modules I will take you on a virtual process of study and discovery, delivered with both seriousness and humor, to help you connect the best part of yourself to the creative process.

Thanks to Andrew Tischler and his amazing team at the Tisch Academy for making this dream become a reality, as anyone, anywhere (with internet) will have the information at their fingertips.

Looking forward **Joe Paquet**





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Guest Post From

Kathleen HUDSON



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I have always believed that a painting begins long before the brush touches the canvas. It starts with seeing as an artist, in finding the urge to pause before a dynamic sky or a passing shadow on the land and experience a sense of wonder. Indulge that urge often enough and you'll have a rich catalog of visual memories to shape your vision and motivate your work. The beauty of painting is that we all approach it with a different set of memories (and even a different sense of wonder) - no two of us see the world alike. As I start teaching through Tisch Academy, I'm excited to help you reflect on what brings you joy when you paint. This will help shape your artistic vision and motivate you to hone your skills.

As for me, I came to painting in a circuitous way. My early years were filled with travel and lots of time in museums. I noticed which works seemed to jump off the walls - mostly because they captured something true about light. I started with oils, at the age of 12, by copying Sargent and Monet; and later, I studied medieval history at Harvard University and learned how to read a text or object closely, and ask reflective questions about its context and the story it told. During college I also led backpacking treks in the White Mountains of New Hampshire, which required me to read the landscape around me more closely than ever. These practices of careful observation have never left me.

Now I live and work in Colorado Springs, Colorado with my husband and four children. Near our home the landscape offers a daily lesson in light and atmosphere. The summer skies over Pikes Peak build with a kind of quiet drama, gathering strength before sweeping downward across the plains. I love to chase those fleeting atmospheric effects and dynamic light in my work.

Being largely self-taught as an artist has shaped the way I think about teaching. Without a formal roadmap I had to become my own coach and critic. I learned to ask questions when a painting faltered. Is the light source consistent? Is the design simplified? What seems "off" about the composition? Do the colors harmonize? Over time, the practice of asking good questions became more valuable than any single technique.

Now, when I teach, I try to offer you those same tools. My goal is not simply to show you how I paint, but to help you see more clearly for yourself. A strong painting is not the result of an artist's elusive genius, or a technical trick with brushwork or color. It is the product of many small decisions, each one guided by careful observation and honest assessment. If I can help you learn how to evaluate your own work with clarity, then you will carry that skill into every painting you make. Over time, that habit will do far more for you than any single tip or technique.

I just returned last month from teaching my first art tour in New Zealand with Andrew Tischler's phenomenal team, and I'm currently poring over the hundreds of reference images I captured in those two weeks to develop a series of paintings. As an artist who loves painting remote, untouched landscapes with lots of dynamic forms and shifting atmosphere, I found inspiration around every corner in the South Island. Keep an eye out for those pieces in upcoming Tisch Academy tutorials. I look forward to painting with you!



BEN DELLABARCA

My Journey and Approach

I'm **Ben Dellabarca**, an oil painter based in Wellington, New Zealand. I'm part of a wonderful collective of artists based in the centre of the city called **DYED Studios**, where my working studio space is.



I'm also involved as a part-time tutor at a charity art school called the Wellington School of Drawing, where our main focus is bringing drawing back into the community and making it as accessible as possible. I started drawing and painting when I was very young, and over time I developed a love for oil paint. That early interest turned into a long-term commitment, and then into a complete obsession.

My passion for painting spans all subject matter. I do believe it is not the most important thing, and that the way it is painted holds the most weight in a picture, but for many years portraiture has had a special place of interest for me. The added concepts of the gaze, emotion, and likeness add a further element to making a picture.

I spent three years studying at a small painting collective in Wellington. That gave me a solid grounding in observational drawing. After that, I spent time in Norway studying with Odd Nerdrum. That experience had a big impact on how I think about painting and what qualities and values there are in it. It reinforced the value of working from life, but also the importance of experimentation, personal temperament, and expression.

In these courses, I teach painting with a focus on making it more understandable and less intimidating. My aim is to break painting down into key ideas and concepts rather than strict methodologies that force things to be painted in a certain way.

In my classes I cover the basics

of proportion and the structure of the head, thinking about the head constructively and with perspective rather than as two-dimensional copying of shapes. I also spend time on how to turn form, which is really about understanding how light moves across surfaces and how to use value and colour to create a sense of volume.

We also look at colour theory and how light itself works, while keeping it practical. How to organise your palette is a crucial skill.

Another big part of my teaching is mark making and brushwork. I encourage people to try different approaches and not get stuck in one way of painting. How you apply paint matters just as much as what you're painting, and developing a range of marks keeps more options available for what you want to express.

Overall, I try to give students a clear structure to work from while still leaving room for individual interpretation. Everyone paints differently, and I don't think there's a single "right" way to do it. What matters is understanding the basics well enough that you can make your own decisions and keep improving over time.

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Ben painting the portrait "George", oil on linen.

This painting was selected as a finalist for the Adam portrait award this year and will be on show at the New Zealand portrait gallery.



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shout outs

Welcome to all our NEWBIES, OGs and Legends! These paintings stood out on the community page, there were too many to choose from. Keep that paint flowing!



Sue Cowan



Hafiz Muhammad



Beta Golchin



Michele Parker



Camille Denny



Chris Holyoake



David Paine



Gary McGaugh



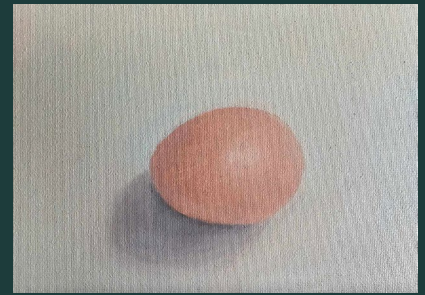
Donovan



Sarah Churchill



Stanley Cox



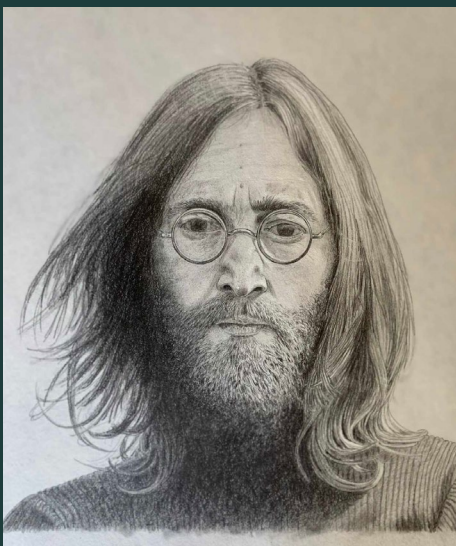
Samantha Williams



Mike Raiole



Sergio Silva



Kevin Robertson



Robert Duvall



Cihan Kutlugün



Dan Phelan



David A Paine



Donald Dolton



Susan Alexander



Margaret Kiprenko

BOOK & APP REVIEWS

SUBMITTED BY THE ACADEMY MEMBERS

HOLLAND'S GOLDEN AGE IN AMERICA:

Collecting the art of Rembrandt, Vermeer, and Hals

It's said that no one's a prophet in his own land, and so it was for 17th-century Dutch painters. While valued by compatriots, in later centuries, the Old Masters burned most brightly for generations of American collectors, who studded their gilded walls with Rembrandts and Vermeers, Hals and Claeszs.

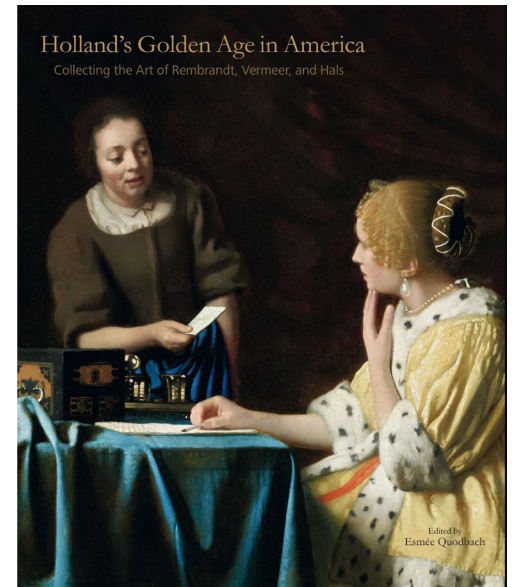
This transnational account told in *Holland's Golden Age in America* explains why, stacking together dozens of essays by well-appointed scholars and curators in America and the Netherlands. From studies of the early Dutch colonial settlers to reports on contemporary art-market caprices, this new field of cultural history proves that our American taste for Dutch art stretches further back than Donna Tartt's trendy Pulitzer-winner or the cultural ubiquity of *The Girl with the Pearl Earring*. Indeed, the collection is an invigorating tour around a

favorite, well-trodden topic in art history.

Richly illustrated, this volume is an invaluable contribution to the scholarship on the collecting history of Dutch art in America, and it is certain to inspire further research.

By Esmée Quodbach. Published by the Frick Collection and Pennsylvania State University Press (Available)

Available from Booktopia
RRP: \$170.

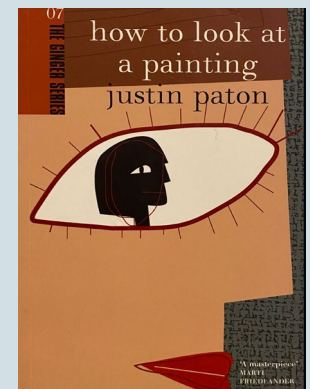


HOW TO LOOK AT A PAINTING

by JUSTIN PATON

Acclaimed art writer Justin Paton takes us on a journey of exploration through the centuries and across the painted world--from the luscious fruit of Italy's Caravaggio to the lonely landscapes of New Zealand's Rita Angus, the dazzling panoramas of America's Lari Pittman and the mysterious „tombstones“ of Japanese artist On Kawara. Whether you're a keen art collector, a serious student or just visit a gallery occasionally, this brilliant exposition of painting in all its forms will open your eyes to things you've never seen before.

Available on eBay, The Bookologist: AU \$12.50



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Valerie Meyer

I started painting as a child, back when my biggest creative decision was which colour to spill first. I was accepted into an art high school thanks to financial support from the school. At the end of my final year, I won an award for most promising artist. This award helped me get a bursary to study Visual Communication.

On paper, it looked like a strong start. In reality, my mom was a single parent doing her absolute best on a very tight budget, and I needed to work. So I did what many creatives do: I found a practical way forward.

That practical path led me into graphic design, marketing agencies, and eventually photography. Photography became a ten-year venture. I picked up skills that art school didn't teach.

I learned to run a business, connect with clients, and market myself. I also learned one of the most important lessons of my life: relationships matter. People matter. How you treat people matters. Those years gave me confidence, resilience, and a thick skin. They also taught me something tough: the more I created for others, the more I drifted from my own creative voice. It turns out you can be creative all day and still feel creatively lost.

Then life did what life does.

We immigrated, and I had to close my photography business to start again from scratch. This was in 2019, just before the world turned upside down. Between rebuilding, working, parenting, and settling into a new country, my creativity had to take a back seat again.

Fast forward to a very unusual turning point in my life, with a Mother's Day paint-and-sip at the local mall. No expectations. No pressure. Just paint. Something clicked very deeply in me that day. I went home, bought cheap supplies, and couldn't stop. That was just over a year ago, and it surprised me how quickly painting went from a "nice idea" to "this isn't leaving me alone, I am compelled to do this."





I knew from experience that if I wanted to do something properly, I needed to learn from the best. That led me to join Tisch Academy, where things started moving faster than I expected. I immersed myself in learning, painting, and questioning. Then, unexpectedly, I found myself on Talk to Tisch. That moment gave me the confidence to say out loud what I'd quietly wanted since I was young, that I wanted to build a full-time career as an artist.

Small signs followed. One of my paintings was accepted into the Craig's Aspiring Art Prize 2026, and I'm currently waiting on the results... nervously. I'm excited, of course, but there's also that quiet stress that comes with sharing something deeply personal and wondering how it will be received. It hasn't magically solved every question I have about becoming a full-time artist, but it has felt like a kind little nudge saying, "keep going, there might be something here."

Now I've entered a new chapter and a new set of challenges.

Painting itself comes with its own set of challenges. You learn and refine your skills. Mistakes are part of the process, so you start over sometimes. It takes focus, patience, and time. That time feels really precious when you return to art later in life. You know you have years of brush mileage to make up for. My ambition wants speed; my painting temperament leans toward refinement. Learning to live inside that tension has become part of the work.





What makes it harder is everything around turning this into a full-time career while still working full-time, it involves a lot of admin. You have to handle follow-ups, building a website, inventory, and emails. You also need to keep track of conversations and remember who you spoke to and when. All of it quietly eats into the time and energy needed to actually paint and still be a present parent.

I sometimes feel like I'm failing, and I do feel stretched. The kind of stretched where your coffee gets reheated three times and still goes cold. This is why I began working on a solution for artists like myself. Who needs less friction, less overwhelm, and more time for the work that truly matters. But that part of the story is still unfolding.

I'm in my early forties now, and this return to art feels both exciting and urgent. There's motivation, momentum, and yes, the occasional panic about time and how to fit everything in. But I keep coming back to one simple truth: "you only truly fail when you completely give up."

*I'm still learning,
still building, still
painting, and I'm
curious to see what
happens when I
keep showing up.*

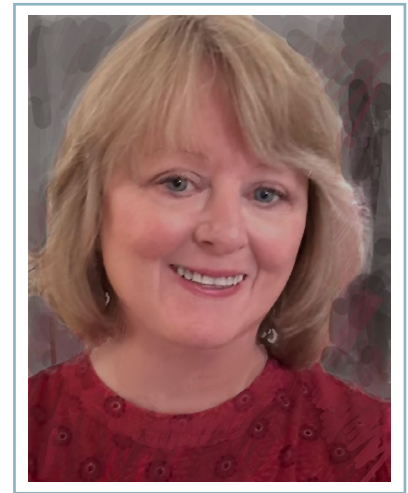


SHARING *the* Struggles

While many artists are reluctant to share their less-than-successful works with their followers online, I've come across a few lately who were brave enough to chat about the truth of the matter. That truth? Artists at every level of their careers experience frustration with what I call "bad painting days".



Image #1: My reference photo - Catalina State Park, Tucson, in the spring of 2020. This scene is about four miles from my home. A forest fire burned this entire area two months after I photographed this scene. Going back for further references was impossible.



Article by
Lori Woodward

Sometimes those days grow into months, but with artists who make their living through art, they get back to the easel quickly, needing to put food on the table.

Richard Schmid once said to me that he used to have bon fires, burning his works that didn't measure up to his best. I was surprised. Certainly his failures would be my best paintings ever! He explained that he didn't want an agent or gallerist to sell those inferior works for high prices after he died.

Just last week, Susan Lyon shared on her Youtube channel that both she and her husband Scott Burdick were feeling like they couldn't paint anything well and didn't even want to try. Susan said Scott was depressed and that she was feeling burnt out with no will to get started. She looked tired and sad. Granted, they both recently returned from a successful painting excursion in South Africa,

so perhaps fatigue and general let-down was the cause of their funk. Later, in the same video, Susan returned with clean, fluffy hair and a smile. Her funk didn't last too long. I've painted along side Scott and Susan a few times. They seemed like geniuses. I appreciate Susan's honesty. It seems that even geniuses have off days.

Matt Smith, who paints western landscapes and is considered one of the best living plein air painters, said that he cuts up his less-than-desirable works with a matte knife and throws them in the trash. Again, I'm sure the quality of his trash bin works would be my best.

Take Heart When You Struggle

Knowing that these top artists have times when they struggle is an encouragement to me, especially when I have periods where I just can't seem to paint anything well. Sure, I've had plenty of paintings that I've been pleased with. Yet, there are times that no matter how well I've prepared, my efforts fall completely flat as soon as the brush touches the canvas. Let me illustrate how this happened with a 16x20 inch landscape that I started in 2023 and finished in 2025.

What I Did Right

I didn't just attack the final canvas without planning. The initial reference does not look much like the painting - I redesigned the reference photo in color and also black and white, along

with a small oil color study (that sold). I normally do preliminary work, but alas, there's no guarantee that the final painting will go easily. Many times, I have no trouble whatsoever for which I'm thankful, but there are a few paintings that fight me every step of the way.

I had high hopes that this work would be my best to date. I had been dreaming about which show I would submit it to. Those dreams lost their mojo pretty quickly.

The cost of the panel (\$55) was the main factor that kept me working for 2 years even though it was quite a struggle. I scraped it down many times, repainted most of the surface - meanwhile learning and experimenting. Today, I consider it my best rendition of the area. I'm thinking I'd like to hang onto it for myself because that painting, which was my enemy at first, became a friend in the end.

What Went Wrong

I bought an acrylic primed surface, thinking I'd block in with acrylic. This company's surface tends to be rough and very thirsty. I've blocked in with acrylic many times, but never with this particular surface. At the time of writing his article, I'm now using oil primed linen.

Additionally, my skill set wasn't high enough to pull off a 16" x 20" landscape, especially in oil. Up until this time, my oil landscapes were very small. I do understand the subject matter

pretty well, having painted the area over a couple of decades, but mostly in watercolor, which was my main medium. Oil is a completely different medium. If mediums were musical instruments, this would be like knowing how to play a tune on the piano and then thinking I could just as easily play that same tune on the violin.

Landscape is the most difficult subject matter for me. In my past artistic lives, I painted mostly still lifes, portrait and figure. With still life and portrait, I do the designing in the setup and lighting. Then all I need to do is replicate what I've set up. One of my college dorm mates called me a human xerox copier. With landscape, there is much moving of elements, changing shapes to make them more interesting and even making up entire areas. Foregrounds have always been my nemeses. Painting elements that I can't observe is not in my DNA. That said, I'm getting better at it over time.

What I Learned

There were periods when I let the painting sit for months while I learned to conquer some of the weaknesses that were keeping me from moving forward. Because the panel was expensive, I resolved to use it as a learning piece, not necessarily being concerned with the outcome. I didn't worry about composition or much of anything that would hold back my learning how to paint rocks, desert trees or rock-studded mountains.

While living in New England for 40 years, I got pretty good at painting the countryside there. The rugged desert is an entirely different story.

I can't say how many times I scraped down areas and repainted them. In fact, the images below show only a handful of the

many iterations this painting went through. The evolution was slow and sometimes downright painful.

I hope this article is an encouragement for those times when you get frustrated with your progress. I read a quote recently by landscape painter Clyde Aspe-

vig which said, "If while painting, you lose confidence and don't know what to do next, go have a nice dinner". That's a paraphrase. It really means the same thing as Andrew's "Cook Time". I've taken Aspegvig's quote to heart and sometimes eat dessert!

Image 2

I simplified the photo reference using Procreate on my iPad Pro with an Apple Pencil. This took me about 4 hours. For the mountains, I grabbed color in Procreate from the photo and drew over areas of detail to simplify the masses, Then I created a path that led from the stream up towards the mountain peaks to break through the tangled desert brush. I also filled in the sparseness of the trees. Desert trees are like lace with hundreds of sky holes - especially in the spring. I wanted them to look solid.

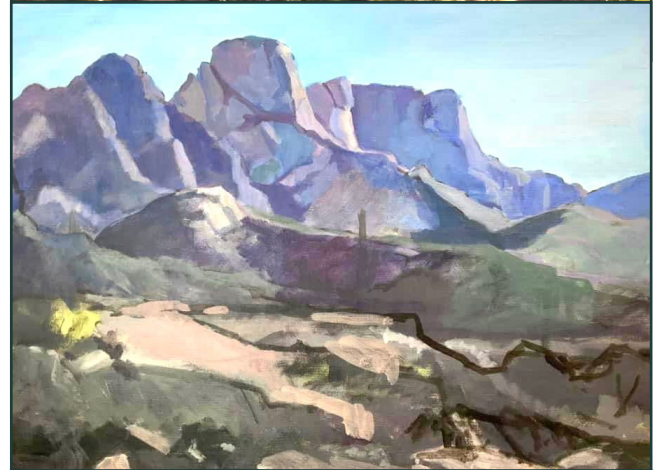
2 >



Image 3

This was my initial attempt using a 16x20 linen panel that was primed with acrylic from the manufacturer. I began with acrylic paint and mediums using a large soft brush. That said, the surface sucked in the paint almost immediately, making it difficult to get large areas covered. Even so, the main culprit wasn't the paint, rather it was that I had not done enough designing before heading to the palette. The "made up" middle and foreground were lacking important detail on the Procreate study, and the original photo reference was far too complex. I felt utterly lost! I'm not one to make up scenery well. If I had taken time to work out a more finished study before starting with paint, I might have had more success.

3 >



4 >

Image 4

I didn't give up! I photographed the painting at the stage above and downloaded the image to Procreate to redesign it. This time, I worked digitally in black and white and added more detail from the middle ground down. Now, I was hopeful again.



Image 5

I added color to the middle and foreground with oil paint. It was easier to cover the surface. I was feeling lost and frustrated with the foreground, so I decided to outline the features of the mountain, which I felt more confident painting. I love that mountain and have been painting it for decades. I wanted to paint a portrait of the prominent peaks, so I defined the details.

5 >

**Image 6**

Now I was slowly making progress. I formed some shapes of the rocks trees. Later, I scraped most of this middle and foreground off. In fact, I have lost count of how many times I've scraped this painting down.

6 >

**Image 7**

Several iterations later, I carefully and slowly repainted the rocks and trees. I was pretty satisfied with this stage, and yet, I couldn't leave well enough alone and made more changes after the image you see here. At this point, I declared it a learning piece, giving myself the freedom to fail, which made it more fun. I felt free to try out what I'd been learning.

7 >

**Image 8**

I continued to define the foreground rocks and lightened the stand of trees, yet I wasn't satisfied with the trees being lighter in value. They lacked structure and looked repetitious. Again, the green was too saturated for Mesquites and Palo Verde trees. I also had repainted the brush on the lower right which now looked out of focus. The painting was probably better in the previous stage, yet I stayed the course and added the sky and the clouds.

8 >



The final painting



After deciding to pull it out of hiding this past August, I wanted desperately to get it “Done and Dusted”. I’d lost interest, but wanted to finish it as best I could and get it in a frame. While I considered entering it in a show, I decided to hang onto this painting for myself as a reminder of all I’ve learned from it. Over time it’s become a friend.

You have probably never heard of...

Frederick McCubbin



Frederick McCubbin
(1833-1905)



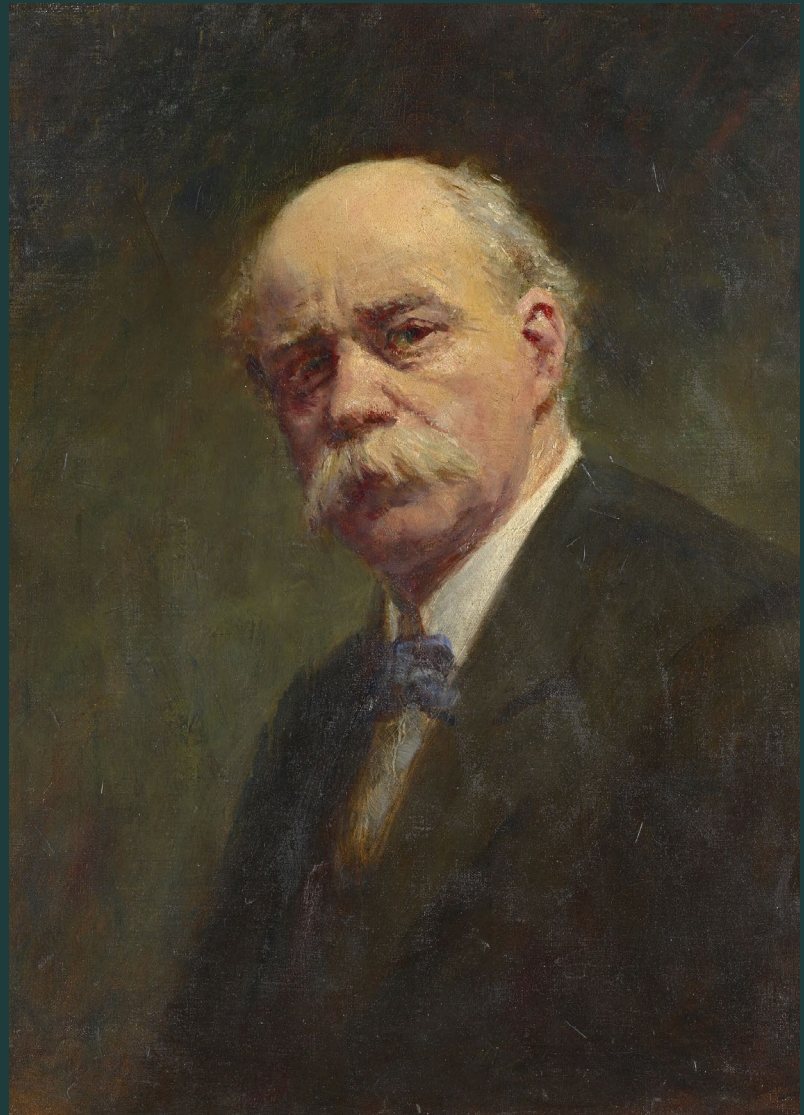
Frederick McCubbin was right there in the formation of Australia's Heidelberg School. These painters were pivotal in shaping Australian culture and celebrating life and landscape in the late 1800's and early 1900's. When I first came across his work I was floored! There are several of his works in the Art Gallery of Western Australia that have made me stop in my tracks. One such work is "Down on His Luck".

McCubbin, 1855-1917, grew up in the state of Victoria and studied under Eugene Von Guerard. His fellow classmate was the great Tom Roberts, known as the "Father of Australian Impressionism." The Heidelberg School, of which McCubbin would be an important member, featured such artists as Roberts, Arthur Streeton and Charles Conder. These intrepid artists would often venture outside with all their gear and paint En Plein Air.

One thing I particularly appreciate about McCubbin's work is the restraint he shows when it comes to details. After studying his work closely, I thought about how to apply similar techniques to my own work, and what triggered the approach of "Strategic Detail". This is where you hold back, painting only a little detail here and there. The essence of the scene is not captured by tiny little strokes over the entirety of the surface, but rather, a few specific places here and there - the story is miraculously completed in the viewer's mind!

I have several images of McCubbin to refer to here in the studio, and it'd be well worth adding his work to your inspiration files. May he inspire you to utilise "strategic details" and get a bit more paint out!

Each issue we'll bring you a new artist that you may not have heard of, to expand your art history knowledge and add to the inspiration!



Frederick McCubbin; self portrait. (1833-1905)



A big THANKS for reading this newsletter, and thank you for being a part of the Tisch Team. See you in the community!

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