

O L V E R A R T S T U D I O

Master Tutorial Series

From Classical Foundations to Postmodern Frontiers

I
Classical Atelier

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Impressionism

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“Art is not what you see, but what you make others see.”

— Edgar Degas

Acts of Imagination



Classical

Grounded in traditional techniques—oils, landscapes, portraits, still life—honouring fundamentals while incorporating modernist vocabularies.



Contemporary

Engaging with creative destruction and assemblage theory. Exploring points of intervention in complex systems through layered abstractions.



Challenger

Digital manipulation, AI augmentation, and generative processes creating new textures and multiplicities of perspective.

“Deep connections, rhizomatic networks, people, materials, machines become entwined, braided and entangled into generative, long-lasting living systems.”

TUTORIAL I

Classical Atelier

Drawing is the honesty of the art — Salvador Dalí

Classical Atelier – From the Olver Art Collection



Image 18

Still Life with Vase

Classical arrangement with ceramic vase, glass, and fruit on blue drapery. Full tonal modelling.



Image 17

Interior with Mirror

Echoing Hammershøi and Vermeer. Light as subject, atmospheric mystery.



Image 11

Reclining Nude

Golden ochres against dark ground. Luminous classical rendering of the human form.

Classical Atelier – Essential Materials

Material	Details & Recommendations
Surface	Linen canvas (portrait grade) or hardboard panel, primed with lead white or acrylic gesso
Drawing	Vine charcoal, compressed charcoal, kneaded eraser, plumb line, knitting needle
Paint	Limited palette: Titanium White, Yellow Ochre, Raw Umber, Burnt Sienna, Ivory Black
Medium	Lean to fat: turpentine (early layers), increasing linseed oil. Liquin for faster drying
Brushes	Hog bristle flats (2–12), sable rounds (0–6) for detail. Palette knife for mixing

Classical Still Life – Step by Step

1

Arrange & Compose

Select objects with varied textures. Single light source at 45°.
Create triangular arrangement for dynamic stability.

2

thumbnails & Block-In

3–5 small studies in three values only. Transfer to canvas with vine charcoal. Map shadow shapes as flat masses.

3

Imprimatura & Grisaille

Tone canvas with thin Raw Umber wash. Build monochrome underpainting: highlight, light, halftone, core shadow, reflected light.

4

Dead Colouring

Over dry grisaille, apply thin layers of local colour at middle values. Match basic hue identity of each object.

5

Colour Temperature

Warm light = cool shadows. Build form through temperature shifts, not just value. Observe reflected colour bouncing between objects.

6

Impasto & Edge Control

Thick paint in lights, thin in darks. Hard edges at focal points, soft edges in periphery. Final varnish after 6–12 months.

“

The secret of good drawing is to observe the relationships between things rather than the things themselves.

— Charles Bargue

Impressionism

I perhaps owe having become a painter to flowers —
Claude Monet

Impressionism — From the Olver Art Collection



Image 14

Sunflowers in Vase

Bold impasto sunflowers against cobalt blue. Conscious Van Gogh dialogue with textural intensity.

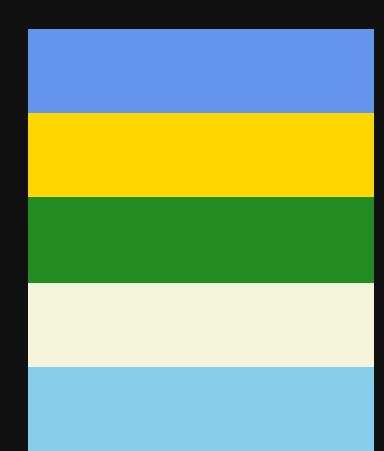


Image 4

Sunflowers (Ethereal)

Scratched-surface technique creating delicate graphic quality within impressionist colour.



Image 15

Cypress Trees

Swirling Post-Impressionist energy channelling Van Gogh. Upward spiralling strokes.

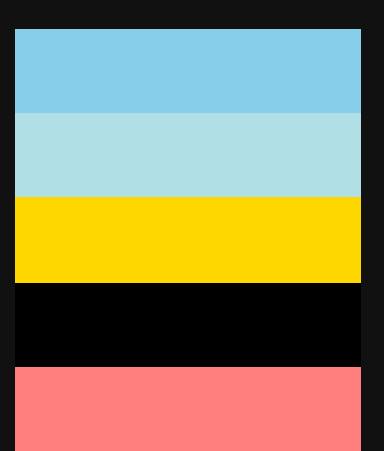


Image 9

Harbour Scene

Gestural marks pushing Impressionist observation toward expression. Black structures against luminous sky.

Impressionist Floral – Step by Step

1

Squint & Simplify

Half-close your eyes. Paint masses of colour and value, not petals and leaves. Each flower head is a single warm mass.

2

Toned Ground

Cover canvas with thin wash of complementary colour. For sunflowers on blue: tone with dilute violet or warm grey.

3

Block In Colour Masses

Large filbert, paint straight from tube. Blue background, golden flower mass, green stems. Cover canvas within 20 minutes.

4

Broken Colour

Place distinct strokes of varied colour side by side. Into blue: violet, teal, pale blue. Into yellow: orange, lemon, ochre, green.

5

Directional Brushwork

Let strokes follow form. Upward spirals for trees, circular for sky. The brush becomes the form's energy made visible.

6

Sparkling Highlights

Thick, confident strokes of pure colour for final highlights. The thickest paint on the canvas. Know when to stop.

“

Colour is my daylong obsession, joy, and torment.

— Claude Monet

TUTORIAL III

Fauvism

Exactitude is not truth — Henri Matisse

Fauvism – From the Olver Art Collection



Image 7

Yellow Face

Pure Fauvist expression. Green-blue eyes, crimson mouth on blazing yellow. Face as colour-field.



Image 6

Profile in Orange

Limited warm palette creating psychological intensity through temperature rather than detail.



Image 8

Reclining Figure

Hot pinks against deep blues and greens. Matisse would recognise this temperature dialogue.

Fauvist Portrait – Step by Step

1

Choose Dominant Colour

Every Fauvist painting orbits a dominant colour. Hot cadmium yellow creates maximum energy. Choose bold and non-naturalistic.

2

Plan Complementary Structure

Map colour relationships by emotional logic, not observation. Green eyes against yellow cheek = depth through colour push-pull.

3

Reject Tonal Modelling

Conscious decision: no light/dark for form. Colour contrast only. This is the fundamental Fauvist leap.

4

Lay In Background First

Saturate the field with dominant colour. Apply broadly, confidently. Let brush strokes show. This is the environment.

5

Build Face with Colour Planes

Construct face from coloured shapes. Each plane meets neighbours with crisp or bleeding edges. Like stained glass.

6

Push to Extremes

When you think it's bold enough, push further. Allow drips and accidents. Trust expression over description.

“

There is nothing more difficult for a truly creative painter than to paint a rose, because before he can do so he has first to forget all the roses that were ever painted.

— Henri Matisse

Modernism

Every good painter paints what he is – Jackson Pollock

Modernism — From the Olver Art Collection



Image 1

Abstract Seaside

Gestural energy of de Kooning. Churning whites and blues suggesting oceanic force.



Image 5

Geometric Abstraction

Rothko colour fields combined with cruciform structure. Fire and geometry.



Image 10

Green Forest

Between landscape and pure mark-making. Vertical strokes as both trees and autonomous rhythm.



Image 12

Nebular Composition

Floating luminous orbs in cosmological space. Turner meets Richter.

Gestural Abstract – Step by Step

1

Set Intention, Not Plan

Enter dialogue with medium. Consider energy, emotion, or idea to explore. Not reproducing a pre-determined image.

2

First Assault

Largest brush or palette knife. Attack canvas with darkest values. Work quickly and physically. Marks carry bodily energy.

3

Build Layers

Without waiting for drying, lay in secondary colours. Let colours mix on canvas. Embrace accidents. Turquoise arcs, amber warmth.

4

Dominant Element

Introduce the core gesture. Loaded palette knife, maximum energy. Partially obscure underlayers while allowing glimpses through.

5

Dialogue & Response

Step back every 5 minutes. The painting has momentum. What does it need? More energy? A calm area? A sharp accent?

6

Order vs. Chaos

Maintain tension between control and abandon. Total chaos is as uninteresting as total order. The painting lives between.

“

*The painting has a life of its own. I try to let
it come through.*

— Jackson Pollock

Collage

Art is either plagiarism or revolution – Paul Gauguin

Collage – From the Olver Art Collection



Image 13

Geometric Collage

Precisely cut shapes on hot-pink ground. Circles, triangles, rectangles in a tripartite structure suggesting figuration while remaining abstract.

Geometric Collage – Step by Step

1

Prepare the Ground

Paint support with bold, flat colour. Hot pink, vivid blue, or deep black. Two coats for even coverage. The ground IS compositional.

2

Cut Your Elements

Create library of geometric shapes: circles (3 sizes), triangles, rectangles in varied colours. Cut more than you need.

3

Arrange Without Gluing

The most important phase. Experiment freely. Photograph each arrangement. Try tripartite structures, rhythmic groupings.

4

Balance Colour Weight

Black circles = heavy anchors. Orange = warm accent. White = pause. Distribute asymmetrically for dynamic balance.

5

Glue Background to Foreground

Largest elements first. PVA or gel medium evenly applied. Press with brayer to eliminate air bubbles. Layer overlaps intentionally.

6

Integrate & Seal

Add painted marks to bridge cut elements and surface. Apply thin gel medium coat over entire surface for protection.

“

*I begin with an idea and then it becomes
something else.*

— Pablo Picasso

TUTORIAL VI

Postmodernism

Assemblage, Layering & Conceptual Practice

Postmodernism – From the Olver Art Collection



Image 19

Figure from Darkness

Dubuffet's Art Brut meets neo-expressionism. Figure constructed from accumulated layers of paint.



Image 16

Atmospheric Tree

Liminal space between representation and abstraction. Image hovering between revelation and dissolution.



Image 2

Abstract Grid

Red, yellow, blue through grid structure. Dark frame containing chromatic energy.



Image 3

Bird in Darkness

Single white form against dark field with red and yellow borders. Luminous presence within absence.

Postmodern Layered Painting – Step by Step

1

Conceptual Foundation

Begin with an idea, not a subject. What are you investigating?
Write intention in a notebook. This is a compass, not a prescription.

2

Gather References

Assemble images, texts, objects. Pin to board. Work from a constellation of references. Art history, photographs, theory, memory.

3

The Ghost Layer

Apply figurative or abstract image loosely, knowing it will be largely buried. This provides structure and creates depth in final surface.

4

Obliteration

Cover the first layer with different medium, colour, tool. Creative destruction. Not erasing but creating palimpsest. Allow fragments to survive.

5

Re-Emergence

Bring elements back. Repaint figure over obliterated surface. Each version carries memory of previous layers. Body built from history.

6

Conceptual Completion

Assess surface as archaeological record. Introduce heterogeneous elements. Title as conceptual element that opens meaning.

The Assemblage Framework



Heterogeneity

Different media, levels of finish, registers of meaning coexist within a single work. Paint, collage, text, gesture, and found materials in productive tension.



Lines of Flight

Moments where work escapes its boundaries and connects to something larger—social, historical, philosophical, experiential. Art as open system.



Contingent Completion

The assemblage can always be reconfigured, added to, or seen differently. Completion is a temporary state, not a final one.

“Artworks are assemblages—heterogeneous arrangements of elements that produce emergent properties not reducible to their individual components.”

— After Gilles Deleuze

“

I am for an art that takes its form from the lines of life itself, that twists and extends and accumulates and spits and drips.

— Claes Oldenburg

Recommended Resources



CLASSICAL

Bargue Drawing Course • Andrew Tischler • Florence Academy • Harold Speed: Practice and Science of Drawing



IMPRESSIONISM

National Gallery: Monet's Technique • Gurney Journey: Colour Temperature • Kevin Macpherson: Fill Your Paintings with Light



FAUVISM

Tate: Matisse and the Fauves • John Elderfield: The Wild Beasts • Jack Flam: Matisse on Art



MODERNISM

MoMA: Abstract Expressionism • Gerhard Richter Painting (doc) • Robert Hughes: The Shock of the New



COLLAGE

MoMA: Picasso and Collage • Tate: Matisse Cut-Outs • Brandon Taylor: Collage: Making of Modern Art



POSTMODERNISM

Deleuze & Guattari: A Thousand Plateaus • Hal Foster: Return of the Real • Basquiat: Radiant Child

Full video links, reading lists, and exercises available in the companion document: Oliver Art Master Tutorial Series

O L V E R A R T S T U D I O

Acts of Imagination

People, Passion and Paint

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“Have no fear of perfection, you’ll never reach it.”
— Salvador Dalí