

From Setting Up To Cleaning Up - An Acrylic Painting Session

by Aliah Selah

Materials I use:

- Canvas Gesso-ed and sanded smooth
- Acrylic paints (choosing the colors for a harmonious palette of colors)
- Retardant/Flow, Heavy Gel Gloss (rubber squeegee to take off excess)
- Palette with paper palette on top or a glass one where paint can be scraped off.
- Brushes (a variety that are ready to use if needed) + palette knife & subtraction tool.
- Spray can of varnish for layers
- Cup of water
- Painting Apron
- Put plastic/drop cloth down around the easel
- Have paper towels & baby wipes ready if you need it
- Your "Source Image" that inspires you, you don't have to paint it exactly, just use it for proportions and what ever it is that inspires you about it.

18 Steps (start to finish)

1. Say a prayer for the joy of painting and put on the painting apron.
2. Set up the canvas on the easel & make sure good lighting is on it.
3. Choose the colors you are using today and squeeze out small amounts of paint onto the palette, leaving space to mix colors.
4. Fill a water cup halfway and place it on the table next to paint & easel where brushes can be rinsed easily or kept there until clean-up time.
5. Put retardant/flow with the paints on the palette to dry more slowly.

6. Looking at the white canvas with excitement and squint your eyes and see if you see something there. This step is the foundation, and you get to choose the creative variable - do what you feel ∞ listen to your intuition and trust that you know the way.



Remember, there are no mistakes - only "happy mistakes" and "lucky accidents" ∞ it's a process that keeps evolving, so allow the painting to let you know what it needs next. Follow your muse and "Source Image" and continually exploring many possible choices - choosing is what makes you an artist:

a) Sketch a simple outline on the canvas with pencil & go outside to spray varnish on it & let it dry so you can paint over it still have the drawing.

b) Or cover white canvas with light paint as your background and subtract the image with a subtraction too.

c) Or start with an abstract painting (let it dry) and then pencil in a figure & lock it in with spray varnishing outside.

d) Or put some textured or decorative paper on the canvas with Heavy Gel Gloss & a rubber squeegee to collage on it for a mixed media painting.

7. Once you have your foundation, focus on 3 things:

- 1) Add paint moving from the background towards the front - from - big to small (brushes getting smaller too) and blurry to details - decide how the subjects are going to interact with that background, tell a story.

2) Play with the colors and - how do they respond to each other (**see color theory graphic below**). What do they do - contrast, blend, complement, how do the colors make you feel? Color theory is in your head, yet listen to your heart first - if you get stuck - then you can use your head... your love of color makes you a painter.

3) Think of a focal point, doorway, window, a pathway, what calls viewers into your painting? Give them a way in to see what you do.

8. Continue painting and allow layers as you feel them.
9. Remember that if you paint something you don't like - you can wipe it away with a paper towel, baby wipe, or just paint over it.
10. Step back often to check the painting from a distance - to get more insights as to what is needed next. Continue establishing far away images first, and then the closer images, and painting the details last.
11. Use white to help turn outlines into 3D forms. Also, for highlights - paying attention to where the light is in the painting. Know that you know when it feels finished, at least for this session.
12. Make sure to paint the sides of the painting too and if finished, sign your name.
13. Rinse brushes thoroughly in water, then wash with brush soap till clean.
14. Wipe the brushes dry, clean the palette & table area with paper towels.
15. Put the painting in a good place to dry, if not left on the easel.
16. Form the brushes with conditioner & let brushes dry flat, and hang up your apron for next time. And be grateful, for the creativity that was birthed that day.
17. Keep looking at the painting over time to see what it may need next.
18. Always collect "Source Images" that inspire you for the next layer of painting or a new one. And remember what a gift creativity is in your life. Let the process heal you with symbols, ideas, and images that are healing to you. Continually be on the lookout with your artists eye for inspiration. Gathering "Source Images" is a quest that enriches our lives.

Going beyond color theory And Playing With Color***
Yet having it there if you need it. Like a safety net.



When you know how Color Theory works - it can help you get unstuck - or know just what color to add to the mix. What color to add to skin tone - yet mostly - feeling how the colors get you to feel. Or if you prefer - you can plan and mix up all the colors and stick with that - every one has their own way. It is all playing with colors - exploring what color would look good next to another color. Playing with colors is just asking what colors we feel with our heart... and all the symbolic meaning colors chapes, images have for us the meanings that form when we choose. Choosing is what makes us an artist. I think that is my favorite part of being a painter. There are always more ideas to explore.
peace