

Follow through means doing things carefully

This is another in a series of lessons on art and drawing by special columnist David Messing. He has taught for eight years and operates an art store, Art Store and More, 18774 Middlebelt, Livonia. Messing encourages questions and comments from readers. You may write him at his store or c/o Observer Newspapers, 23552 Farmington Road, Farmington MI 48024.

By David Messing
special writer

Well we're open in our new store, Terrance Corners is a beautiful place for an art store and school. As of this writing, however, parts of the ceiling are off and six of the 24 drafting tables have yet to be assembled. I even have to "beat it" over there before 10 a.m. to reprogram the cash registers. Even though we worked around the clock for two weeks, we still have a million things to do.

Moving stock around is kind of a joke in the store, and we will probably still be moving shelves and stock for the next month. Sandy's a good one for that. She wanted us to move an 8-by-12 foot mat board display, "just six inches to the right."

artifacts

"Six inches," I said, "we would need at least 10 men and a hi-lo to move that thing one inch." I swam the deepest ocean and climb the highest mountain for her, but I ain't gonna move that mat board display. Anyway, there is no way I could say that we are really ready to open, but we are.

COME TO think of it, this certainly is a bad week to continue my two part article on "follow through." I fell asleep three times writing it, I hope you don't fall asleep reading it.

Last week I ended my article with the "follow through" principle with the basic elements of No. 1, a good idea or subject. No. 2, the technical skill to rightly represent the idea or subject. No. 3, the presentation of the well-executed idea or subject. The lack of any one of the three will result as a flaw in your follow through. A good idea rendered poorly is no better off than a poor idea rendered well. Even a good idea rendered well is halted if it is poorly presented.

So first off I would like to briefly hit some of the top ten road blocks on your highway to successful follow through. In watercolor the easiest way to slifle

your follow through is to do too much. Over painting or scrubbing in watercolor or causing the beautiful bleeds to flatten out into boring shapes of solid color. New students in watercolor should "play" with "bleeds" or "wet in wet" techniques until they feel comfortable. Try with one brush or just wet the area you wish to color. Then with another brush full of color touch into the wet area. Enjoy the bleed and flow of color and resist adding in more color until the bleed of color has stopped.

Most new students just keep brushing or scrubbing the area and end up with a flat color. In pastels I tell my students that the first road block to their follow through is that of over bleeding. I think there is something therapeutic about rubbing our fingers on pastels. Maybe it goes back to when we used to rub the

sat in ribbon on our "high-nights" or "blankies."

WHATEVER, MOST students if not warned will rub their pastel pictures so much that the details are lost under a misty cloud of multicolored dust. Well it may help produce a better pastel rendering if you do not blend with your fingers as much and simply use the different colors of pastels to rub into each other and therefore, blend with each other. This technique in pastel will produce rich colors and relatively clear images. Charcoals are usually flat because they do not span the gamut of black enough then try using soft compressed charcoal to produce rich blacks and emphasize the grays.

Pen and ink short comings are usually due to lines that are not fine enough. Even in pen and ink "learn to draw" books, it looks like the artist should retire his quill tip in lieu of a technical pen. There are plenty of times I use quill tips and dip them in realistic magic ink. But for most of my realistic pen and ink, I prefer the regularity of a

good technical pen.

For beginning pen and ink, you should have a "20-by-0" and a "4-by-0" and work your drawing no larger than 11 inches by 14 inches. Air brushing has plenty of opportunities to stumble. One common goof is, over spraying your frisket or template. So much so that you see the light line of the outer limits of your template misted across your artwork.

Another common short coming is when you have a large dot or "grainy" spray pattern. This is always caused by either too heavy a consistency of paint or too little air to rightly atomize the paint.

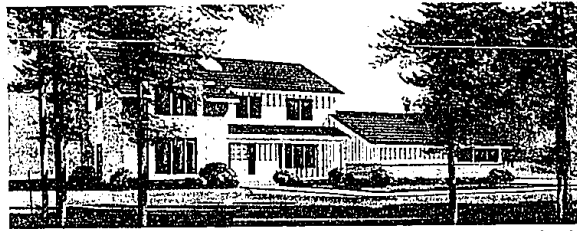
ONE LAST warning: when peeling frisket be sure you peel up all your planned too. Because frisket is transparent it is very common to not see some little section of frisket. Then when that over looked piece is painted it begins to show up. To better see your

frisket tip the illustration board so that the light reflects off from the surface of the frisket.

In gouache or opaque watercolor it is best, I feel, to keep your paint thin and start out with a transparent wash effect then move towards opacity. The biggest draw back to realistic coloring is that students do not carefully study the many shades and tints even in solid colors. Every color is affected by its surrounding colors and light source or reflected light from off of other objects.

Many first time scratch-boards seem to find their way into the circular file. Perhaps the fate of many could be changed if only the artist kept their lines tiny and accurate, and in addition learn how to sharpen a scratchpoint on a sharpening stone. A good scratchpoint drawing may require from three to 10 sharpenings.

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