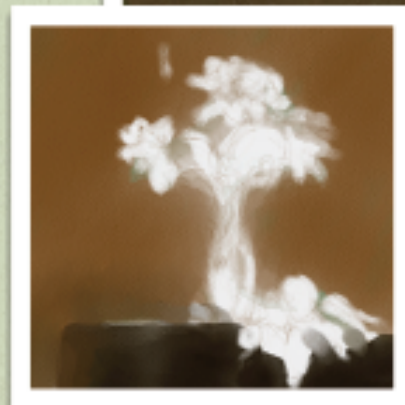
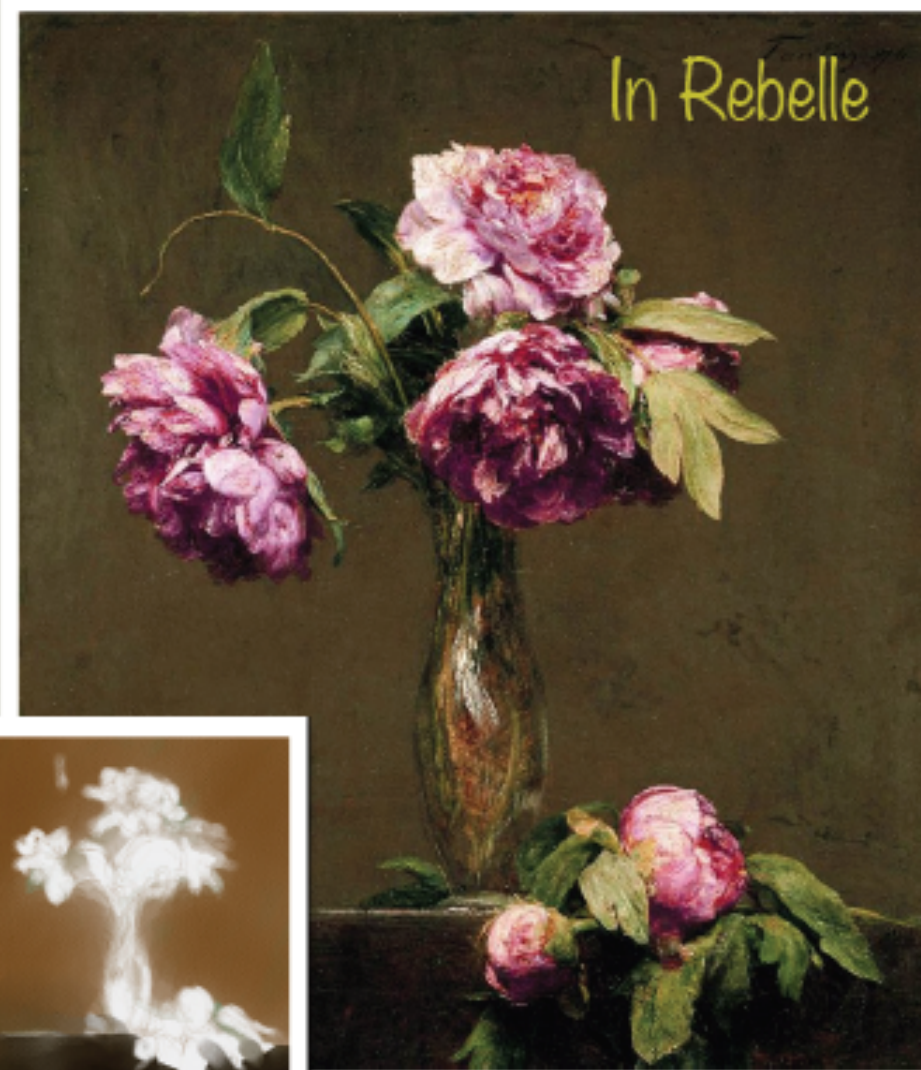


A tutorial in

DIGITAL FINE ART

D'après Red Peonies of Fantin-Latour



BY KHOBE

Volume 2
Beginners ©

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Introduction to deeper artistic insights

Art doesn't enjoy the same respect as it did in antiquity, before it was divorced from science and spirituality. The reason for this is not because it's less useful in fact it's the opposite, more like taken apart and turned into a beast of burden. As we go back in time, the more we see art being seamlessly integrated with these two other hallmarks of human intelligence mentioned above. New findings by professional engineers in alternative and revised archaeology reveal contrary to modern tenets, that old civilisations with their monumental architecture, shattered artifacts and artworks, were in fact way more technologically advanced than previously believed. It becomes embarrassing the further we go back in time when we investigate megalithic sites. We are forced to recognise in amazement, we can't reproduce with our modern technology this level of artistic engineering buried in our subconscious memory. Is found in the architectural concepts of these monuments a highly sophisticated scientific knowledge, revealing universal mathematical constants written in stone. Even more paradigm shifting and mind blowing is the fact they were built with the same fractal canonic qualitative space/time metrological system (preserved in classical arts to this day) elaborated in a single gigantic planetary network complex. This stunning planetary network complex can only be appreciated from above the earth, leaving us with a myriad of question marks. Established modern academia is stubbornly hanging on to darwinism and it's never proven theory of evolution, triggering it's own agonising crisis. Burying itself epistemologically in the nineteenth century strict materialistic mentality, dodging what it cannot explain. Art also caught in this deep ontological crisis, forced consequently to renew itself again, going back to the creative consciousness principle away from psychotic corporate slavery. Before anything else though, artists need to understand the nature of this crisis. I will do my best to sketch it, but each artist will have to wrestle with and surrender to their own muse. The objective is to recall the mystical integrating attributes basic to the eternal Beauty Way_ *harmony, immanence and wholeness*. Of all places paradoxically, it is in the middle of destruction that can be found the most profound «cathartic» transcendence or else.



DRAWING IS MAKING CONNECTIONS

- * *Chaos is the word used to describe a confused level of perception prevalent in a state of ignorance, until we gradually recognise the patterns of a certain order.*
- * *Pattern recognition is the fundamental and natural reading process of our nervous system.*
- * *That is why ancient cultures believed drawing and writing made people intelligent and was reserved for the few of merit.*
- * *True knowledge is perceiving everything is connected.*
- * *Wisdom is knowing how everything is connected.*



Perception is primary in fine art as in all traditional arts. Now going back to the original painting of Fantin Latour we must apply this simplifying strategy revealing it's fundamental patterns. The first level of perception must be the most inclusive with the simplest shapes possible, an oval comprising a pentagon. From these first shapes must be sketched lightly, loosely and fast like you see on the next page.

It took only a minute to do the first sketch below and nothing is missing from the general outlook. An approximation is all I need to start the best way possible. A good sketch preserves poetic spontaneity, warmth and fluidity of execution, in a word: natural elegance. Why elegance? Strangely our brain prefers this treatment because attention goes straight to the subject, not how it's been done. I build this illusion as a symbolic reality: a cognitive map from the psyche's geography, a topological metaphore. The subject is given the main stage serving the power of recognition; style is given the supporting role. A professional performance has only one star, a foremost and powerful artistic rule!

Linear sketch # 1



The subject must be placed and kept correctly in the general space of the canvas to the last stroke. This goes without saying, but how many times have I seen students inconveniently loose their subject's general proportions or part without noticing as they went along, only to find out at the end something is wrong. We all do this as beginners, Don't make a habit of succumbing to temptation of doing whatever, missing the challenge, so your skills won't grow. I started at the beginning like everybody else and had to do my homework to get better. Getting better at making art is measured by perseverance and fortitude.

In a sense our biggest decision is to stick or not to a discipline, with the logical results of this decision. If you do, you will be rewarded a hundred times for the efforts you put in. If you find this is something you don't have in your heart to do, that's okay. Maybe academic fine art is not for you, nobody is judging you. So have fun with art, do your best and be a good public.

The essence of art is_ REPETITION. Please don't count the times you start over. Actually if you like getting better you want to do this relentlessly like a positive addiction. Love of art is it's own justification or motivation; it's all inside, a calling from the inner voice. Not to be ignored or treated lightly because this is where we engage our artistic destiny and purpose. Otherwise we're bound for senselessness, boredom or worse, regrets. These are all dangerous spirit killers.

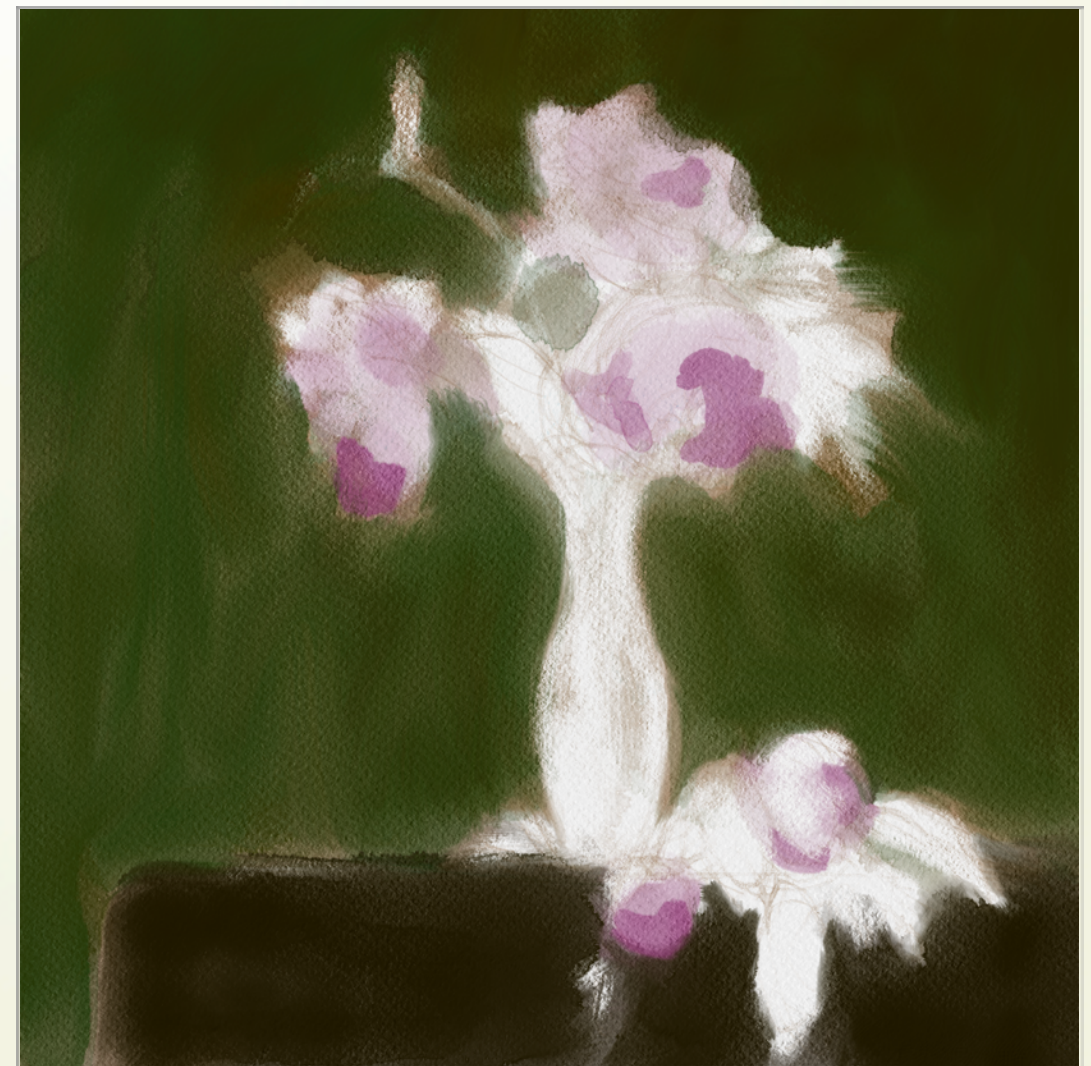


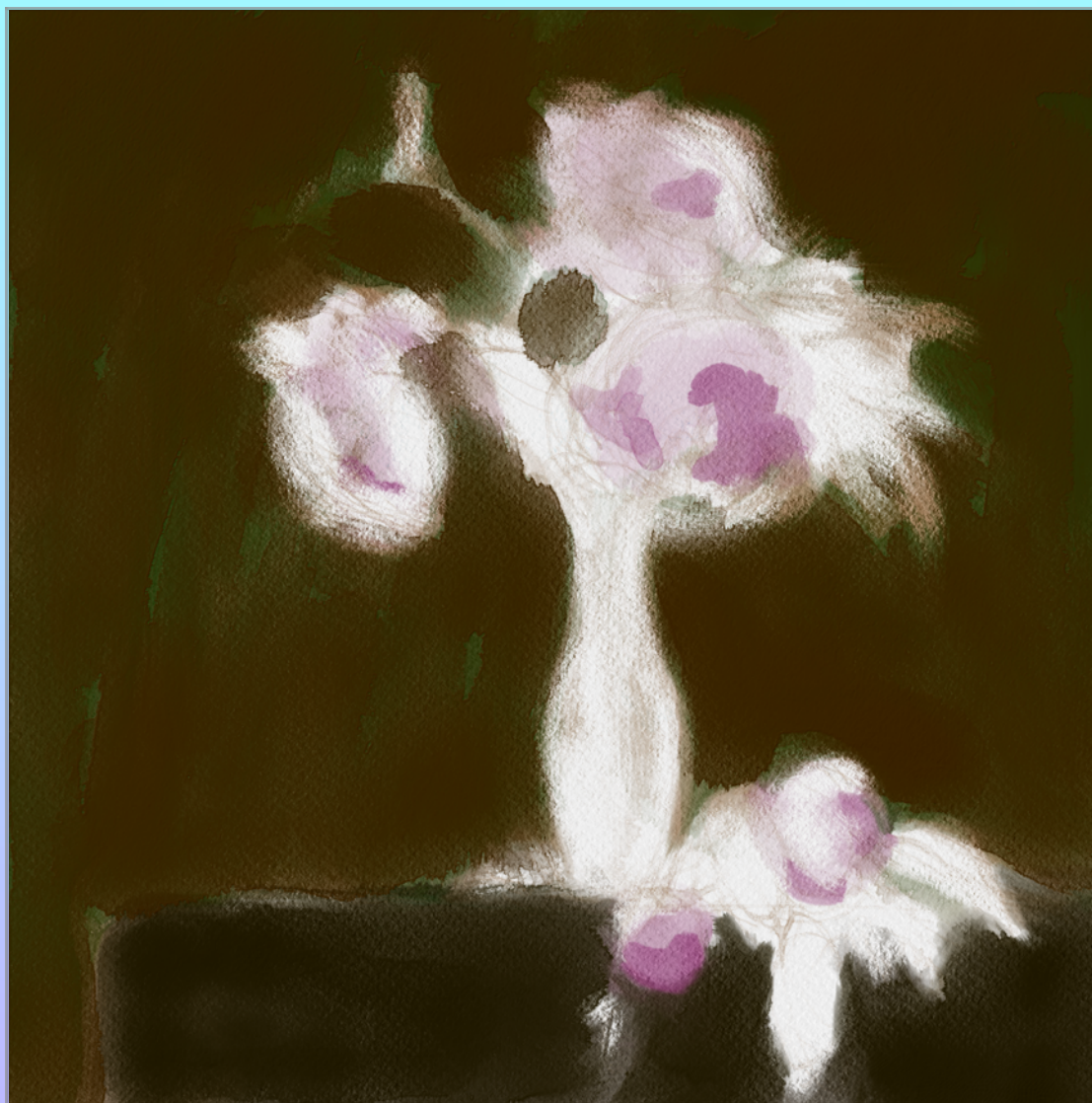
Painted sketch # 2

Blocking the entire surface loosely is done in a few minutes. Each step helps situate and keep in place the general subject in context while working the whole canvas, not getting bogged down with details. This classical process of execution to the final stages of the work was developed and refined down the centuries. This quality treatment called «bravura» is not easily mastered but greatly admired by contemporary artists and for good reasons.

Practicing correctly is paramount, beware of repeating constantly the same mistakes without correction, they become your training. Bad habits are hard to break. To make the appropriate corrections you need good models. You will find many in art books, art magazines, internet, libraries and museums. I would suggest classical masters of your liking. Surprisingly many artists have not had formal training in art schools and became masters all the same because they chose to work from excellent models.

Painted sketch # 3





Painted sketch # 4

Self-trained artists have my respect because it takes special dedication to become a master, more so by yourself. You have to believe in yourself and your talent even if others don't see it. Putting your work out there to be judged takes courage. People who don't do art could be oblivious to what you put in it of your soul. So go slow, take the time to learn well and follow your heart.

The secret behind a successful self-training mastery program is not only perseverance. I repeat, a judicious choice of great models is paramount. Making copies of masterworks is thus essential but also meditation on the same. Historical research is in the program too. A tree must grow strong roots in order to elevate its trunk and limbs higher. I can guide you so far with these lessons, only becoming obvious with your practice turned into experience. A good teacher, which I invite you to find, can put you on the best path possible, teaching you intelligent shortcuts that are not mere tricks. Investing time and effort on a regular basis to fulfill your artistic goal is testament to your art. Be proactive and humbly daring, take calculated risks and innovate. Who knows it might go faster than you think.

Art is about bringing forth your inspiration and visions, you will need to stand by them whatever. I want my tutorials to equally be useful for the self-trained as the formally trained artist, pointing not only on developing artistic skills, but on nurturing the necessary elements sustaining them.

You need a practical strategy, set clear parameters as the kind of art you want to do, let your preferred style be a compass. This will give you a direction. Then pace in your regular practice. First try your hand at simple geometric shapes of inanimate *round* objects in your immediate surroundings like vases, cups, drinking glasses, bowls, balls, lamps. Why round? The circle is the mother of all shapes. When comfortable with that, try your hand slowly at more complicated shapes of flora and fauna, one object at a time. I advise not to practice only one kind of subject to the exclusion of others as you get better. Don't be afraid to explore and extend your artistic territory, or even go back to perfect your approach because the goal is to become good at sketching techniques not at a subject in particular.

Subject, medium and size are secondary, technique must come first before other considerations when aiming for mastery... and mastery is the opposite of control! In any art expression true power is transparent and discreet, a strong invisible sustaining base. Beginners tend to concentrate on performance, this is a common mistake. Attention should first be put on breathing and muscle relaxation while sketching. Get a feel for shapes, not manic precision. Remember art is not a mental exercise, it's a gut exercise. Don't worry your head will follow. Great news is if you master anything in any field, it will ripple in any other discipline making it also easier to master as a bonus. As you can see here from one sketch to the next I build my painting very slowly.

I circumscribe a little tighter with every pass rather than hurry to the finish line. I deliberately take my time dabbling and adjusting the tone values and the colors chromatically on the whole as I go along. I insist on this kind of procedure because it's not the modern way. Excellence of execution and mental stress are enemies. Cultivate the capacity to be in a light trance at will, center on the feeling attention (alpha brain waves), no need for analytical attention (beta waves) coming last for artistic execution. Put another way, it is about getting really intimate with your art, it's a love relationship. Only when you feel your art people will start feeling it too. Rembrandt gave us good



Painted sketch # 5



Painted sketch # 6

examples of this, so did Vermeer, Velasquez and Degas. This way of sketching will prove it's worth every time but won't look like much action. You'd get bored pretty fast watching me paint, though this technique is the fastest. When you concentrate on deeper cognitive levels you enter into another chronicity altogether belonging to wider levels of consciousness. This is why the artistic mindset is so close to the spiritual mindset, both cultivate and focus on the act of contemplating, firing up the whole brain. After all the care I put into a work if I feel the need to redo a big part or the whole thing, I will not hesitate to erase or scrape it off. I can go as far as to start on a new surface if I feel the concept needs to be revised.

A faulty concept will collapse under the weight of our efforts and will not support our artistic intent. Today in the break neck paced world even artists tend to be ignorant of the time it takes to grow into artistic maturity. But isn't this a sad condition too often prevalent in all fields nowadays? Quality comes from the time we take to bring care to what we are and what we do. To attain a high level of mastery you have to become a poet, a storyteller, a seer, an architect, a knowledgeable historian, researcher and experimenter, and an eternal apprentice of the craft. From out looking in, people might think art is easy. Let's not confuse relaxed, mindful and psychologically concentrated with easy, these are light years away from easy.



Painted sketch # 7



Painted sketch # 8

A Feeling Communication Process through atmospheric rendering

Communication is much more than just sharing information. Look at the words _ act(ion) as one and in/form/a(c)tion, don't confuse their meaning. Communication is empathy, almost symbiotic. As drawing and painting use spatial structuring, lines, shapes, tone, values and colors to convey feelings at bioimpulse levels, analogous to a sound before making words. Beyond self-expression, art is an expression of a higher enigmatic "artistic entity", belonging to the realm of archetypes. The interplay of dark and light, negative and positive spaces, are the elements generating: comedy, drama and tragedy.

Comedy caricatures contradictions and paradoxes, drama highlights struggles, tensions, contrasts and oppositions, and tragedy is about the fatalities of an unforgiving destiny. Heroism is born of confronting drama and tragedy, in art's enigmatic mirror upheld to life.

Art tools and means are humble but designed to implicate far reaching meaning and significance, from basic unconscious instinctual levels, to semi-conscious, to deep kind of insights up to mystical levels.

Art has it's own alphabet, vocabulary, semantics and codes, in a word it is a metalanguage emanating from universal imagination hidden in the arcanes of nature. It has it's own mind, the "artistic spirit", we can open ourselves to. We cannot possess or force it, if we do, it leads us astray and fools us with our own petty pretenses. When we respect it, it can reward us with a new light on the mysteries of symbolism and discreet metaphors, reveal the workings of nature's creation laws. Learning the artistic language demands to educate ourselves with inspiring works of art and to surround ourselves with them as much as possible, be it with originals, prints, art books, videos, films and now internet. Practice silent contemplation of nature and immediate environment, searching for the laws of harmony beyond the pleasurable. Exercise openness of mind and focus without forcing, the more you do, the better you will become at it. When the mind is calm and focused, it's ready for the technical side of art. In a relaxed and natural deep breathing mode, the mind easily penetrates, holds and explores inspired visions.

The contemporary world is a big attention grabber, it pulls us outside ourselves constantly, it's distractions are a big waste conduit for our nervous energy. Artists need to set time aside for psychological replenishment on a regular basis. Stopping the outer world to go back to the inner world, back to the feeling world without drowning in it. Becoming skilled at identifying feelings and emotions. Mastering the alpha trance, commanding it at will to feed artistic awareness, nurturing the basic foundation of our craft because it is first and foremost a way of being before you do anything.

We don't live in the past

However we might admire the great works of art of the past, this is not where we live. We must make do with what we have now, and make it better to be fair to those who follow us. The past is a reference, a source of inspiration, teachings and understandings, but it is not our destination. Much was lost so we must search, much was filtered falsely so we must rectify, much will never be regained so we must create.

Human knowledge needs to be carefully protected but not worshiped. Every time we try to control in fear of loss we impoverish ourselves. Mastery is not about control, it's about the courage to honor the heart. It is always the most difficult choice, to which we must bring balance in the struggle we transform into a dance, pain into ecstasy, blindness into clear vision. We are only as good as our last work of art, we cannot claim anything else. Beauty is a subtle and powerful enchantress we behold in the sobriety of humble discipline, otherwise she doesn't keep bestowing upon us her elevating grace.

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