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Layer and Scratch

Is it finished? Multiple layers and materials allow an artist to find buried treasure in a constantly changing composition.

Contemporary artist Jesse Reno considers himself "a contemporary outsider art brut, a self-taught raw art outside- the-establishment artist."

For Reno, the process of painting is about finding treasure. He looks for imagery that's buried and unknown. He uses trial and error, changing directions, persistency, and intuition to guide his process. He lets his intention be his guide and doesn't chase outcomes. The practice of painting has helped him make connections between his past and present and to realize his own desires about what he chooses as his life's work.

Fanciful images that express personally meaningful imagery are often at the center of Reno's work. To create meaningful work, it's sometimes necessary and important for us to access our emotions in an unrestrained way. In this way, the emotion that the painting possesses is open to viewers in ways that can be personally moving for them as well.

Reno's process allows him to find himself in his work. He follows feelings rather than logic to arrive at imagery that is often hidden and revealed as his painting unfolds. A whale becomes a figure, a face becomes hidden, and a wing is revealed. He focuses on techniques that "reveal imagery rather than struggling with perfection."

Start with a blank canvas panel. Add paint, wax pastels, modeling paste, and marker lines. Use brushes or fingers to apply paint, and then scratch through with a fettling knife to create patterning and outlines. Follow intuition and see what appears!

GRADES 3-12 Note: Instructions and materials are based upon a class size of 24 students. Adjust as needed.

Preparation

1. Study the artwork of Jesse Reno and his process.
2. Provide each student with a canvas panel.

Process

1. Begin by accessing an emotion or feeling that might require expression. Use wax pastels to create an initial sketch on the canvas panel. What does the emotion look or feel like? Can it be expressed using something figurative or animal-like, or is it completely abstract?

Materials (required)

Blick Economy Canvas Panel Classroom Packs, pkg of 24, 9" x 12" (07015-1023); one panel per student

Reeves Watersoluble Wax Pastel Sets, Set of 24 (21951-1024); share three sets across class

Kemper Fettling Knives, Hard (30349-1020); share 12 across class

Blickrylic Student Acrylics, 6-Pack Basic Color Set (00711-1049); share one set across class

Blick Scholastic Short Handle Golden Taklon Flat Wash Brush (05859-); one per student

Optional materials:

Liquitex Modeling Pastes (00609-)

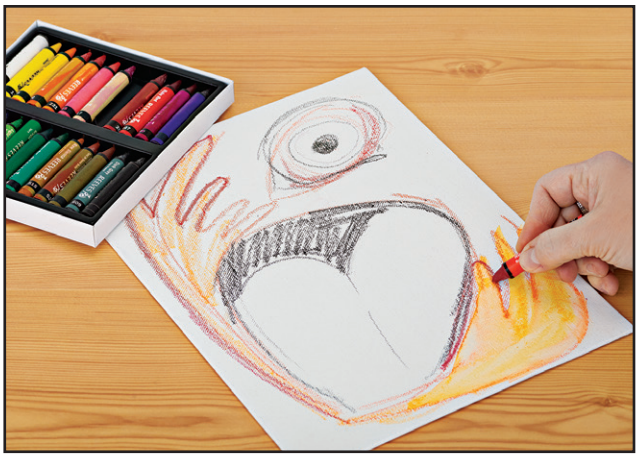
Sargent Art Liquid Metal Acrylics (00730-)

Blick Studio Markers (22148-)

Blick Palette Knife (03115-1003)

Process, continued

2. Build up areas of color using wax pastels. Add water to a brush to use the pastels more like paint and to fill in areas.
3. Cover any areas that aren't successful by creating new imagery in their place. Start over. Undo. Cover. Reveal.
4. Use fingers or a part of the hand to add texture or detail with acrylic paint. This also adds a very intimate "mark of the artist."
5. Add areas of light modeling paste to build up texture as well. Apply it in areas with a brush or palette knife, then use a fettling knife to add texture.
6. As a final step, use the fettling knife to scratch through areas of wax pastels to reveal the white of the canvas panel beneath. Add symbols or marks that are personal to you.



Step 1: *Sketch a feeling or emotion onto a canvas panel using wax pastels.*

National Core Arts Standards - Visual Arts

Creating
Anchor Standard 1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

Connecting
Anchor Standard 11: Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.

Step 2: *Moisten the areas of wax with a damp brush. Add paint or other media. Use tools such as a brush, fingers, a fettling knife or palette knife.*

Step 3: *Use a fettling knife to scratch through the wax. Scratch on symbols and create white outlining by revealing the white canvas panel.*

Watch the Lesson at:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VxBXf4KjLqo&feature=youtu.be