

ia 126 April/
May 2019

The magazine for artists by artists from around the world • Le magazine pour les artistes par des artistes du monde entier
• Das Magazin für Künstler von Künstlern aus der ganzen Welt • La revista para los artistas por artistas de todo el mundo •
La rivista per gli artisti di artisti da tutto il mondo • 由来自世界各地的艺术家创办的艺术家杂志 • 世界からのアーティストによるアーティスト
のための雑誌 • 세계 각국에서 예술가로 예술가 잡지

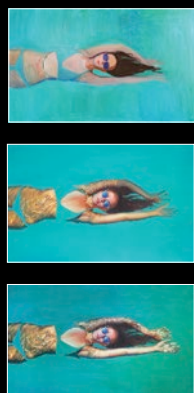
international artist



INSIDE THE STUDIOS OF THE
WORLD'S BEST ARTISTS



DIRECT PAINTING
with Sasha Sokolova



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Deborah Friedman

STUDYING THE COLOR FIELD



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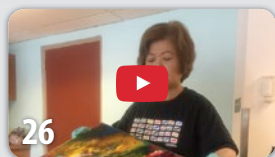
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Ginny Page

It's All in the Preparation

Meticulous planning allows Ginny Page to paint cohesive and dynamic compositions

For all of my paintings, a great deal of preparation and thought is involved. The most important stage of a new painting is by no doubt the thinking period before even starting anything at all. There are so many elements to consider. What should I paint and why? How do I paint it and on what and with what? Does my subject matter evoke a special memory or emotion? Will the viewer feel the same connection or familiarity with the subject? What kind of mood do I want to create? Then comes the all-important lighting, composition, sketching, adjusting, photographing and experimenting. Is there a story to tell or not, what is it that makes me so passionate about this particular idea and do I really love it?

The process of clearing the brain and letting your thoughts just “play” is of utmost importance to any artist. I compare it to a child spending hours arranging furniture in a dolls house and becoming increasingly involved and passionate in their little fantasy bubble. Once all the careful planning is decided the painting can begin. From that point I always feel like I can relax, and it is almost like plain sailing from then on. My larger works are always painted on Belgian portrait canvas No. 13. The surface is wonderful to paint on and the quality is fantastic. My smaller works are often on gessoed panels. I use five to seven layers of thinned gesso sanded between layers using silicon carbide waterproof abrasive paper grade 1000—and some spit and hand polish, which really gives a super smooth surface (and



Composition with lemons and bees, oil on Belgian linen, 60 x 78 cm (24 x 31")

These lemons were fallen fruits rescued from the kicking feet of visitors at a garden center. They were knobbed and “ugly,” with thick yellow skins, but very beautiful to me! I piled them into a beautiful glass bowl to reflect their beauty even more. One of the bees is alive and one is dead to remind us of our short circle of life and to seize the day despite “sour times.”

DNA). If gilding, I continue the layers with red bolus for gold leaf or black gesso for copper leaf.

I use different brands of paint but only the best quality. My brushes have to be hogs hair flats—here I prefer cheap ones that make a scraping noise and can push the paint around quickly. For finishing, I use the finest up to 10x0 tiny brushes for fine details. My colour palette is very basic. It includes three primaries, black and white, and possibly an earth colour or two depending on my subject

matter. My paintings are built up in thin layers of paint using many glazes allowing overnight drying between each layer. The most important tool for me is my proportional divider. I use it all the time to check every little measurement. I have several in different sizes. My day is ruined if I can't find it.


My paintings always start rather messy. I feel the need to “whack” on paint over the whole surface right from the beginning just to get rid of the scary white canvas. Instead of using a



All We want is Love, oil on Belgian linen, 96 x 134 cm (38 x 52")

The title explains the painting. It's about safety, contentment, warmth and the feeling of being loved. The woman is half sleeping but feeling the first warming rays of sunshine on the skin. This is a painting depicting simple pleasures, using a limited, uncomplicated colour palette. There is lots of titan white and ivory black used here with just tints of three primaries "dirtied" with an earthy brown.

palette, but somehow, I know where things are by remembering the shape and placing of the blobs. Having only few colours makes it so easy to find my way. I never mix large quantities and never clean my brushes when changing from one colour to the next. But my apron is filthy! The most rewarding part for me as a painter is to see the painting gradually come to life after many months of hard work and intensive observation.

The challenges of illusions in paint are endless and fascinating. For me there is no "recipe" for a good painting but I often compare it to cooking. A little of this and that until it suits your own individual taste. Painting for me is a sheer joy and a necessity, therapeutic and highly rewarding. I believe that anyone can learn to paint and draw but not without the passion, a loving eye and a good portion of "positive nerdiness!" 

grisaille technique as many artists do, I go straight into colour and block out all the shapes. In this way, I can get a general idea about whether the painting will work as a whole. I always "isolate" the subject first by blocking out the background whether it is a figure or still life. My brushstrokes are bold and broad in the first stages of for example a large figure painting. The overall effect at this stage is rather like a shoddily painted flat cartoon. In fact, it looks terrible!

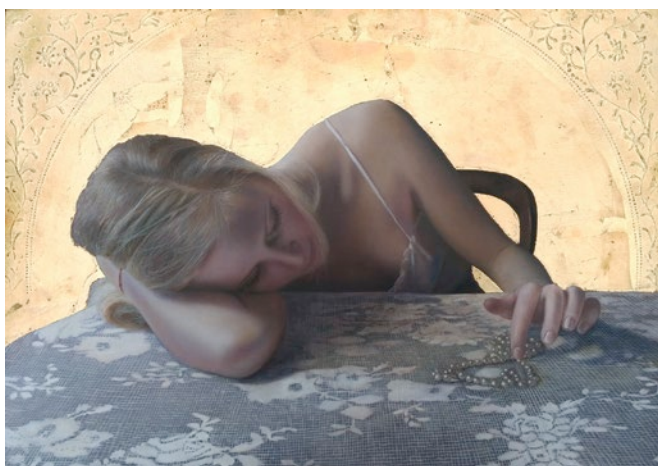
Each day I add another layer of paint trying not to focus on one particular area as to keep a flow and harmony over the entire surface. After several weeks of blocking in, I gradually start to see the details and my brushes become smaller and smaller. It is important for me to sometimes see the whole painting from a distance then squint, then to go up close with my strongest reading glasses with nose up to the canvas. It is also essential for me to keep turning the painting upside down and turn it on every side,

so I can "get at it" and see shapes and proportions from a completely different angle. This method also helps break the monotony if I start getting bored or can't figure out an especially complicated piece of the painting. Instead of getting angry, I move onto another area until I am in the mood to continue with the problem. I usually paint my figures life-size to give the impression that they are about to jump out of the canvas at you.

I must admit that I am a very unstructured painter when it comes to colour mixing. My paint is all over the place in no order whatsoever on my

The Broken Thread, oil on panel with gold leaf, 31 x 44 cm (12 x 17")

For the painting, I was inspired by beauty, youth, the fragility of life and how easily things can break. I tried to depict these elements by painting a fragile young girl in deep thought. She is leaning on a delicate lace cloth, observing her broken pearls and contemplating on how to mend them. I gilded and decorated the background to give the look of an ancient icon painting.



My Art in the Making Come Undone

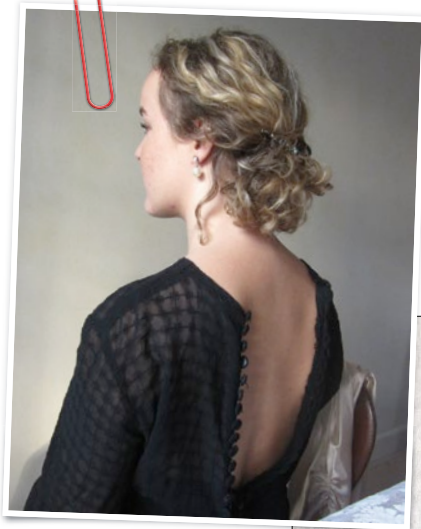


Photo reference

STAGE 1 THE SKETCH

I started the painting by adding a splashy abstract background with ultramarine, burnt sienna and yellow ochre. I changed the angle of the head and chair, removed the earring, then sketched the finished composition on top of the abstract background and fixed it with fixative.

I loosely sketched in paint (ultramarine and black) the basic shape of the dress and shoulder and included the buttons using a flat hogs hair brush diluted thinly with paint medium. I wanted at this stage for the dress to disappear into the background.





STAGE 2 SKIN TONES

I blocked in the pale skin tones in a watercolour like technique so I could compare the pale tones to the dark dress. I used titanium white, burnt sienna, yellow ochre and a touch of ultramarine here.

WHAT THE ARTIST USED

Oil Paints

- » Alizarin crimson
- » Burnt sienna
- » Cadmium red
- » Cadmium yellow
- » Ivory black
- » Titanium white
- » Ultramarine blue
- » Van Dyke brown
- » Yellow ochre

Paint Medium

- » Skovgaard and Frydensberg; A Danish brand of medium that is turpentine free and made from cold pressed linseed oil, light mineral oil, plus 3 percent cobalt siccative

Brushes

- » Hogs hair flats in different sizes
- » Size 0-10x0 round synthetics for details
- » Feathers and old toothbrush to make abstract background (spattering and mark making)
- » Flat varnishing brush

Additional Supplies

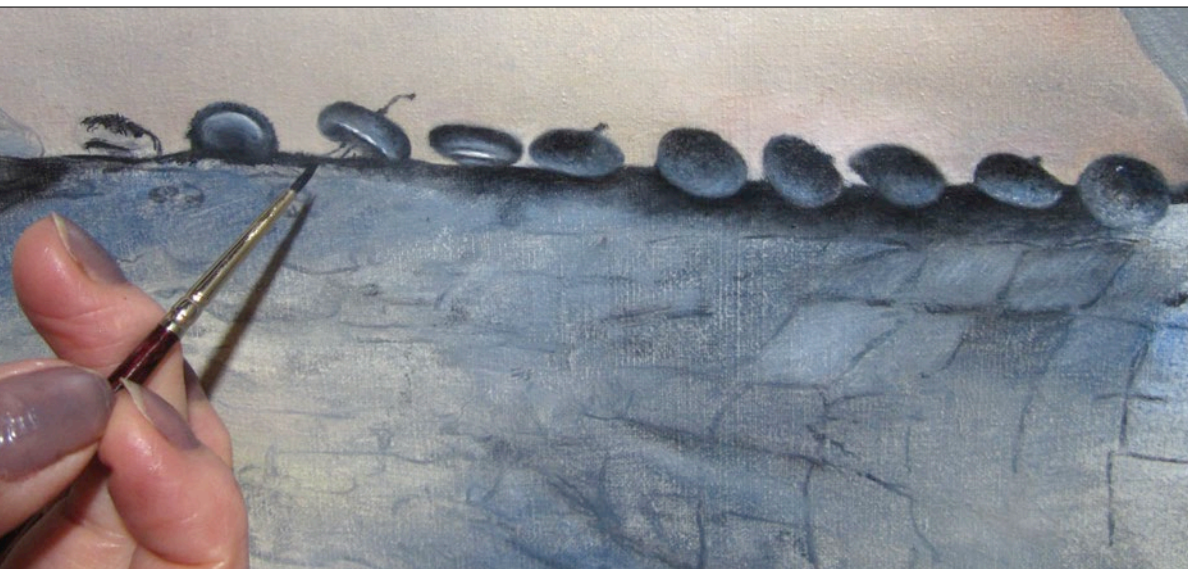
- » Soft pencil and rubber for the drawing
- » Fixative
- » Proportional divider for measuring
- » Cloths and toilet paper
- » Aluminum food tray with lid for palette
- » Dammar crystals dissolved in French turpentine to make varnish
- » Old stockings to sieve impurities out of varnish
- » Dead beetles (for the dress buttons)



Continued ▶

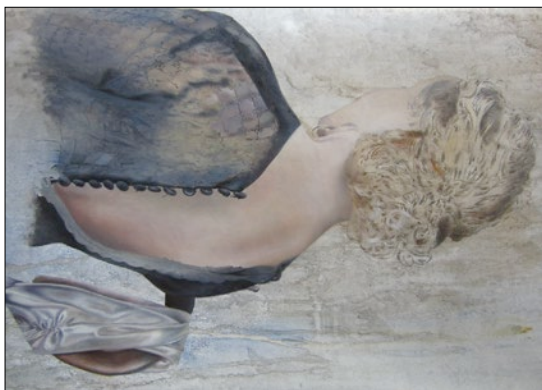
STAGE 3 AMENDING THE PAINTING

I gave the chair back a bigger gap between the right shoulder so lighten the composition a little and make the painting slightly wider. I roughly painted the first layer of the silk chemise draped over the chair back. I still haven't stretched the canvas onto the stretcher as I hadn't quite made my mind up about how far down the dress should go. Notice the creases in the canvas in the skin area. Not to be recommended—they were a devil to get out!



STAGE 4 EXPLORING THE ANGLES

Here, I already flipped the painting over, so I could see the angle of the buttons from a different viewpoint. I used a small brush here but still only two colours: ultramarine and black.



STAGE 5 FIRST LAYER FINISHED

With the painting still on its side, the first layer of thing paint is over the whole motif and I am happy with the composition, so far...



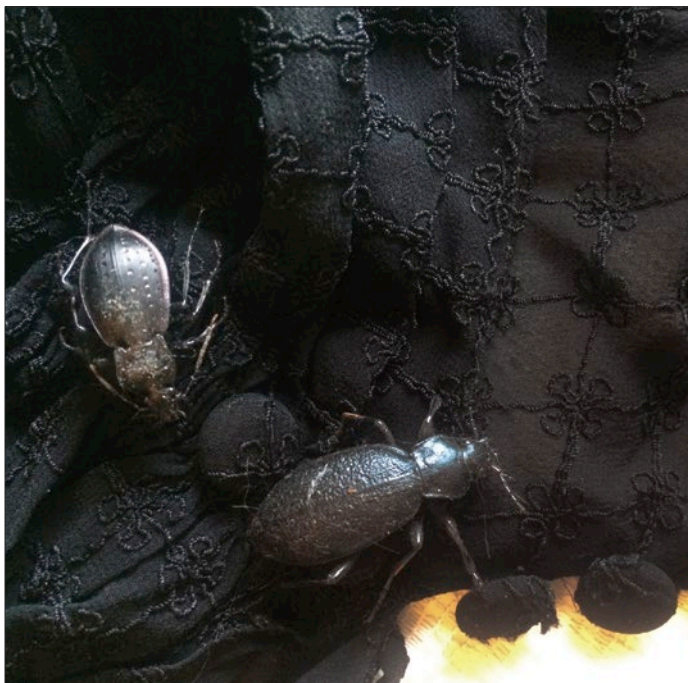
STAGE 6 THE CURLS

I am dying to get started on all the curls in the hair. It was like finding my way round a labyrinth of crazy plant forms—a place I enjoy being. I try to see simple light and dark clumps to start with and take my glasses off so I am not tempted to paint each hair at this stage.



STAGE 7 ADDING UNIQUE ELEMENTS

Now it is just a layer a day, and I am adding more and more details. Toward the end of the painting I noticed that the gray-black-blue buttons resembled beetles. The frayed strands of cotton sticking out of the buttons looked like the feelers and legs. I decided to transform the bottom three buttons into beetles busily trying to sew the frayed vintage dress back together again. Thus, the title *Come Undone*. I collect insects and find them fascinating; I set up dead beetles for the photo reference that is seen here.



ABOUT THE ARTIST

After leaving art school very speedily at only 17 years old, I chose my own path. I began customizing motorbike tanks, illustrating books, magazines and designing greetings cards with a specialization in botanicals and wildlife. I was a watercolourist up until 1999. Between working as an independent painting restorer over a 10-year period, and as a decorative painter (marbling, faux effects, Trompe l'Oeil, gilding) plus teaching art, I decided to focus solely on my oil painting.

I have exhibited in many galleries in Denmark and abroad, including the Karen Blixen Museum with a solo exhibition of bird studies from life, in pencil, gouache and egg tempera. I am a four-time finalist of Portrait Now, which is the Scandinavian version of BP portrait competition, and many other exhibitions and publications specializing in both realism and surrealism including International Artist.

I've been working as an independent artist in my own home for more than 32 years and besides creating my own contemporary works, I paint portraits and other commissioned works.



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VIDEO

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STAGE 8 FINAL PAINTING

Come Undone, oil on canvas, 78 x 60 cm (31 x 24")