



Intuitive Painting Journey

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Step 9: The Magic of the “Ugly” Painting

The magical journey of Intuitive Painting isn't always “magical.” At times it's sad, at times infuriating, and very often it simply brings out what is actually there, and invites us to meet it. That's precisely the point. We want to meet the full range of our emotions, because Intuitive Painting lets us work with them through creative flow, a flow without explanations, without interpretation, without pauses, without judgment. Every emotion, even the most extreme, strange, distorted, or painful, needs transformation through creative action. That is what we give ourselves here.

We're in lesson nine. This session and the next will complete the quarter-sheet phase; the final two lessons shift to half-sheet, a larger format that prepares us for more advanced steps. Today's theme is dear to my heart: The Magic of the “Ugly” Painting. It may sound provocative, even rebellious, but it sits at the very core of this work.

Why “magic”? Because when we truly surrender, Intuitive Painting takes us to places everyday life cannot reach. It stretches our freedom, softens taboos, lets us touch the “forbidden” safely, and reveals that within what we once called “ugly” lives a tremendous amount of creative energy. In truth, there is no “ugly painting,” certainly not in this non-judgmental space where the psyche opens and tells its story in full color. “Ugliness” is a relative label, often a projection of fear. As we approach, a person, a part of ourselves, a painting, labels dissolve and inner beauty begins to shine.

So why paint “ugly”? Because the very permission to paint “not pretty,” “not correct,” “not acceptable” breaks ancient chains. When it is allowed, even required, to “ruin,” to scribble, to clash colors, to overload and disturb, suppressed parts finally get to come out. Fear transforms into power; shame becomes play; embarrassment twists into laughter. That is the magic: stepping through an intimidating gate that turns out to be a doorway to healing.

If you're new to this, you may feel stuck or uncomfortable at first. That's normal. With practice and full-hearted devotion to “doing it wrong,” a breakthrough happens. Many end up loving their so-called “ugly” paintings most of all, because that is where the raw pulse of life beats. Remember: this is not a performance. It's a personal lab of freedom. Put on music, work continuously, fill the page completely, and allow yourself to be surprised.

Painting Instructions, Lesson 9 (Quarter Sheet, Soft Pastels)

Painting 1, Free “Ugly” with All Colors

Use a quarter sheet of Bristol board and all your soft pastels (the more, the better). Put on energizing music. Work 10–15 minutes nonstop. Aim to make it ugly on purpose: overload, layer, clash, collide, smear, cross, “ruin.” Whenever you feel the urge to rescue or beautify, do the opposite. Keep going until the page is totally covered.

Painting 2, Geometric “Ugly” with Ten Colors

Pick 10 colors and restrict yourself to geometric forms only (circles, squares, triangles, grids, stripes, stacked angles). The challenge is to stay geometric and intensify the ugliness: absurd overlaps, choking densities, broken symmetries, extreme scales. Fill the whole page. Work a continuous 10–15 minutes.

Painting 3, Eyes-Closed “Ugly” (Layered Timed Sequence)

Lightly tape the sheet to the table with masking tape so it won’t slide. Set out many open sticks ready to switch. Music on. Close your eyes and begin.

- Minutes 0–2: first color, eyes closed, dominant hand.
- 2–3: switch color, keep eyes closed.
- 3–4: switch to the non-dominant
- 4–6: make it uglier, pressure changes, unexpected directions, bold crossings.
- ~6: open eyes for 10–15 seconds, greet the chaos with love, pick a new color, close eyes again.
- 6–9: continue eyes closed, switch color about every minute, switch hands again if you like.
- 9–13: open eyes and work another 3–4 minutes; now you don’t have to stay ugly, finish however you wish (and still cover the page completely).

Throughout: keep breathing, let the body move, don’t peek outside the planned windows, and don’t “fix it pretty.” The focus is freedom.

Essentials for all three paintings:

- Cover the entire page, densely, obsessively.
- Music that sparks movement and feeling.
- Unbroken work time, no consultations with the inner critic.
- No “pretty/ugly”, only truth in motion.

When you’re done, don’t analyze. Let the paintings rest. Look again tomorrow; often, a new kind of beauty appears exactly where “ugly” used to be.