

Advice for New and Aspiring Artists

Barb Wills, April 2021

- ✚ Learn to see not just look: trees are green but how many colors of green can you find?
- ✚ Like playing sports or a music instrument: the more you practice, the better you get. Try drawing the same tree every day for 3 or 4 months. Go back and look at the first one and compare to the last one.
- ✚ If possible, take a 2-dimensional design class. This will help if you want to paint, draw, do graphic design or 3-dimensional work. You learn about the elements of design and you can also learn this from books.
- ✚ If you want to enter your work in shows: start locally. Nonprofit and community centers, libraries and coffee shops are good places to get experience.
- ✚ Go to art shows and to the artist receptions. Talk to the artists and ask about how they work, what inspires them and look at the work in the show. Ask, what do you like and what do you not like. You may not know why, but trust your instincts.
- ✚ Take a sketch book with you and do quick sketches of things you see.
- ✚ Volunteer at local art centers and nonprofit galleries to learn about entering shows, hanging the art, attending opening receptions. You will also meet other artists.
- ✚ Having your art accepted into a show takes time and is subjective to the person choosing the pieces for the show. Be prepared for rejection. Remember it is not about you as a person but about that individual's subjective opinion.
- ✚ Visit galleries: what kind of art do they show? Would your work fit with these pieces? How is the work presented (framed, on stretcher bars etc). If there are red dots that means the piece is sold – look at the piece and how it is priced. Too many beginning artists price their work very high.
- ✚ Your job: think about what you do in your job (if you work) and can any part of what you do be incorporated into your art? Most jobs have something you can use when you are making art.
- ✚ Talk to other artists – most are very willing to share their experiences and offer advice.
- ✚ Just make art – even if you do it for yourself. It is a wonderful way to turn off the noise of digital media and just experience the joy of creating.
- ✚ My favorite quote is from Steve Jobs in a Stanford commencement address:

LESSON PLAN

“Your time is limited so don’t waste it living someone else’s life. Don’t be trapped by dogma- which is living with the results of other people’s thinking. Don’t let the noise of other’s opinions drown out your own inner voice. And most important-have the courage to follow your heart and intuition. They somehow already know what you truly want to become.”