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# Brave Intuitive Painting-Let Go, Be Bold, Unfold!: Techniques For Uncovering Your Own Unique Painting Style



## Synopsis

Adopt a spontaneous, bold, and fearless approach to painting as a process of discovery— one that results in lush and colorful finished works that will beg to be displayed. This inspiring and encouraging book for both novice and experienced painters teaches how to create colorful, exciting, expressive paintings through a variety of techniques, combining basic, practical painting principles with innovative personal self-expression. Flora S. Bowley's fun and forgiving approach to painting is based on the notion that “You don't begin with a preconceived painting in mind; you allow the painting to unfold.” Illustrating how to work in layers, Flora gives you the freedom to cover up, re-start, wipe away, and change courses many times along the way. Unexpected and unique compositions, color combinations, and subject matter appear as you allow your paintings to emerge in an organic, unplanned way while working from a place of curiosity and letting go of fear.

- Learn techniques for working with vibrant color and avoiding mud.
- Make rich and varied marks with a variety of unexpected tools.
- Break compositional rules.
- Embrace nonattachment as a way to keep exploring.
- Keep momentum by moving your body and staying positive.
- Work with what's working to let go of struggle.
- Connect more deeply to the world around you to stay inspired.
- Embrace layers to create rich complex paintings.
- Find rhythm by spiraling between chaos and order.

## Book Information

Paperback: 128 pages

Publisher: Quarry Books; 46152nd edition (May 1, 2012)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1592537685

ISBN-13: 978-1592537686

Product Dimensions: 8.6 x 0.4 x 11 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 170 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #63,327 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #98 in Books > Arts & Photography > Painting #1319 in Books > Crafts, Hobbies & Home > Crafts & Hobbies

## Customer Reviews

Flora Bowley is an internationally celebrated painter, workshop facilitator, author, visionary, and inspirationalist. Her soulful and transformational approach to painting has inspired thousands of

people across the globe to "let go, be bold, and unfold" as they move through fear and welcome joyful spontaneous expression back into the creative process. Combining twenty years of professional painting experience with her background as a yoga instructor, massage therapist, and lifelong truth seeker, Flora infuses her teaching and painting style with a deep connection to body, mind, and spirit. This unique fusion offers up a truly transformational experience - one that honors intuition, self-discovery, and the perfect, ever-changing present moment. Flora's vibrant original paintings are sold in several galleries throughout the United States and her licensed product lines and prints are available worldwide. Flora is also the author of the book, *Brave Intuitive Painting*. She lives in Portland, Oregon.

**Getting Perspective and Working with What's Working** We often look at the world through a critical lens. Traditional art school critiques encourage us to find what is not working in order to learn from these "mistakes." What I am presenting here is a new approach. I am kindly asking you to reprogram your response style; instead of focusing on what is not working, ask yourself, "What is working?" This is an extremely important step in this process. It keeps you focused on the positive aspects of your work and offers you a starting point or a portal back into your painting. "Working with what is working" is especially useful when you are feeling stuck or uninspired.

**What is Working?** After you have built up a few layers with a variety of marks and colors, spiral out by moving to the opposite side of the room, or to an entirely different room. Now soften your eyes and take a fresh look at your painting. Ask yourself, "What is working?" What is the first thing you notice? It can be anything. It may be one square inch of your canvas where the colors blend together in a certain beautiful way. It may be one interesting shape, a small area of etching, a dynamic line, or the way two colors vibrantly react next to each other. I also encourage you to ask yourself, "What has been the most enjoyable or interesting part of this process?" You may find that you really love spraying water, using your fingers, rendering certain images, or dragging your rag through wet paint. Pay close attention to these joyful moments... they are an essential part of "what is working" no matter what your painting looks like.

Be easy on yourself at this point. You are deep in the process of creating. Your paintings are not finished. They may feel ugly, chaotic, or overwhelming to you, but remember each and every mark is simply an opportunity. Most new creations go through an "awkward teenager" phase as they mature and figure out who they want to be. Don't judge them. Support them. Be patient with their process, and remember there are no mistakes. Growing up takes time.

This book was an recommendation and I went in blind since there was no "look inside" feature; I decided to invest because I researched the author and found that I enjoyed her style, artwork, and energy. That said, this book certainly won't be everyone's flavour. It focuses on aligning mind, body, and spirit more than on painting pictures. And the pictures you're asked to produce aren't necessarily photorealistic (or even illustrative), more ambiguous--almost abstract. The book begins with a basic introduction and offers some advice on treating yourself gently, then it gets into a list of supplies:  
\* Painting surface  
\*\* Acrylic paint  
\* Palette (not to be confused with 'colour palette')  
\* Foam brushes  
\* Small bristle brushes  
\* Fingers :)  
\* Rags  
\* Etchers (anything that can scratch or make marks on the painting surface)  
\* Stampers (anything that can be pressed onto the painting surface)  
\* Spray bottles  
(And a personal suggestion: a basic colour wheel if you don't already own one.) Each section which discusses the individual supplies offers some prompts on how to use it, such as (taken from the section under "Small Bristle Brushes"):  
\* Play with creating thick and thin marks in one continuous line  
\* Skip the brush across the canvas to make smaller hash marks  
\* Write the first word that comes to mind  
However, from section to section, some of these prompts overlap. I also noticed some repetition throughout, especially when it came to (literal) movement. Since the style is also about painting big (\*she recommends at least 30"x30" surface to start, and doing two+ paintings at a time) and going bigger (she recommends a 36"x36" glass palette), it would be helpful to have either a dedicated art studio or enough space in your room to fully express the suggestions offered in the book. While the \*essence\* of the book (i.e. paint from intuition) may be adapted for other mediums such as oil or watercolour or pastel, this book is all about acrylics because of how easy layering acrylic is--and the style is all about layering. There isn't much advice on paint selection other than "experiment". This is both good and bad--if you already have some experience with acrylics, you probably already know which paints you like best; if you're brand new, then you can be overwhelmed by the choices (some of which are truly expensive). The brief section on colour/theory/mixing is nothing new if you've taken an art class or two, but definitely a great refresher and broken down into easily understood terms. I loved how she broke down the "colours that don't make mud" and "colours that make mud" sections. Aside from that, she offers exercises to help you connect with your inner self to include stepping away from the work and literally moving your body, or dance while you paint, or paint blind-folded. However, she doesn't offer much by "how-to"--it's basically a go-with-your-gut thing. At the end she offers a series of stills of her painting a picture from beginning to end. When I reached this section I was a bit disheartened. Sure it was nice to look at, but I wish it was granted its own chapter with larger photos and maybe some commentary on her in-the-moment process. If you go in expecting a workshop or a step-by-step

painting guide, you'll be disappointed. Mostly, this is an inspirational art book that offers a new way to approach painting. It won't teach you how to paint pictures like Flora Bowley, but it may help you better paint pictures like \*you\*, or, at very least, shed a few painting inhibitions. I hope this review was helpful to you, but if I've overlooked something or you have a question about my experience with this book, please leave a comment and I'll do my best to answer.

This book is visually beautiful and the author does a good job of describing her approach to "painting as a process of discovery". She has a calm and encouraging writing voice. There is not a lot of instruction in this book, compared to most art instruction books. Some might call that lack of substance; others would call it elegant simplicity. The author is all about right-brain and intuition, so maybe she intentionally kept the words to a minimum. There were some aspects of the book that disappointed me. First, the paper the book is printed on has a flat matte finish (not shiny). This has the effect of making the illustrations less vibrant than they could have been. I was puzzled by the inordinate amount of space devoted to large life-style photos, at the expense of actually illustrating the text. Even when there are illustrations of the text, there are no captions so you have to guess which concept or technique the illustration refers to. If you are wondering what I mean by "life-style photos", here are a few examples: a full page photo of the author doing yoga, another full page of the author swinging on a swing, and a page that has nothing on it except a photo of a candle and a short quotation. There are also some odd choices such as the (presumably intentional) out-of-focus close-up of a painting detail that takes up most of pages 18 and 19. I was left scratching my head asking "What does that add?" The part of the book that I found the most interesting is a series of 20 photos that show the author creating a painting from start to finish. But ironically (considering how much space is lavished on irrelevant life-style photos), the amount of space devoted to those 20 photos is two pages in total! Each photo is only about two inches square, and there is no explanatory text. What a missed opportunity! I wish the book designers had devoted more space to that process. I realize that the author did not want to write a "how to paint like me" book. But it would have been interesting and helpful to 1) be able to see the photos without squinting, and 2) have some explanatory text to go along with those photos.

Packed with ideas to tap into one's own imaginative creativity! Talks about going wild with color, accepting and running with accidents or mistakes! There are No Mistakes!!!! Flora Bowley is like a free style artist with perspective gone wild! There are a few projects to play around with. She is gentle and forgiving when she paints and conveys to an Artist to be the same! She explains

everything in a precise way. Flora wants the Artist to tap into their own unique style and love it in the end! She speaks of composition, color, tools, surfaces and everything in between! Most importantly bringing it together and when to stop. Also how to stay inspired! I love Flora's book with all of my heart and will share it with my Artists friends! This is important to me! Thank you so much Flora for this most informative book; "Brave Intuitive Painting" let go. be bold. unfold!!!! I love it!!!!

A feel good life style book, not a book about painting. Yes, the photos are gorgeous, but the author is not at all generous with her process. The reason? I believe it is to entice us into taking her on-line painting course (which I unfortunately fell for) for over \$1000.00. It is fun to watch Flora paint (check out her web site for a taste). I know many people love her, but honestly, her technique can be explained to anyone in about 5 minutes. Don't fall for it! This book can be read in under 30 minutes - just sit down with it in a bookstore.

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