

A Painting A Day on Pluto

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There are many artists who take on the goal of painting a painting every day. If I lived on Pluto where the day is 6.4 days to 1 earth day this would work very well for me.

Whenever I see someone doing that I often felt pretty inadequate; there was no way I could finish a painting in one day.

Here's why: do we know what to look for to assess that a painting is complete? At some point it will be finished but it takes me more time to check it and come to that conclusion.

I often work on several paintings at once. I need to wait for a section to dry, or I am getting frustrated, or even bored! I switch to another unfinished piece and start afresh. If I continue flogging the first painting I will overpaint it and my frustration will show in the marks I make.

Unfinished paintings get put in a place in my home and studio where I will come upon them unexpectedly. When that happens I can see immediately what I still need to "fix" and the direction it needs to go.

As I paint I often look at what I have done so far in a mirror and sometimes upside down! Why? That gives me a fresh perspective: have I nailed the values, is it a strong composition, does the bear look like a bear, and so on. Then I have my next steps firmly in mind and am excited to pick up the brush or pastels again.

The trick is not to let the painting be abandoned for too long because then the freshness may be stale or my original inspiration and excitement for the subject has left the building. Trying to get it back can be challenging when that happens.

I know that painting every day is valuable practice and is the way to get better and that is what I do. It just takes me a bit longer to feel good about what I have produced and to finish it before it finishes me.

Are you stuck on an unfinished painting? My next Zoom appraisal/critique sessions are Jan. 22, 2023 10:00 am PST and Feb 5, 2023 10:00 am PST. Check out my website for how to register.

