

Teaching in drawing and painting – Harry Birkholz

<http://www.harrybirkholz.net>

After a long period of oil painting and watercolors, Harry BIRKHOLZ was working in a non-conventional way using many different quality papers and techniques: watercolor, acrylic, pencil, inks, pastels, collage...

His mastering of painting allowed him for an immediate and spontaneous expression, as well as for figurative and sophisticated compositions. To adopt only one single approach was a too narrow limitation to him. The spirit in which he created was that of freedom: "I am the style". The way his vision manifests had many facets, each of them reflecting the humanity of his artistic individuality.

The themes he loved to deepen were:

- The perfection of the first moments of life
- The ancient cultures
- The city as a meeting place for humans
- Memories from American landscapes
- Visual realization of music.

Harry BIRKHOLZ devoted his professional life in Belgium to the teaching of painting, within the framework of the USHA organization, the "Ligue de l'Enseignement et de l'Education Permanente" and the "Service de la Culture de la Province de Namur".

His approach was playful, dynamic and very modern of how to transmit techniques. Harry has guided dozens of students to open and develop their artist souls and exhibit their work in many places.

Harry wrote in September 2008 a mail to Judy, our very dear friend of NYC :

"I checked some books about how to learn to do abstract paintings in the net but even a five-star book didn't convince me much. I KEEP ON LOOKING FOR IT!
Oskar Kokoschka did explain once how to start an abstract painting, first with watercolor:

Take a sheet, maybe 20 x 30 inch.

Wet the paper as you did for the first "patches" painting, really much.

Then you take a brush, not too big (I think you got already the good ones.)

Work only with the tip of the brush, very light and try to find out what's your natural way of writing/painting.

You start with bright-yellow an imaginary writing like calligraphy on the whole sheet of paper. The brush should not be too wet.

Then you continue with orange on the bright-yellow layer. The best way to do it is that you accentuate partly the first yellow layer OR you do an independent orange calligraphic "writing" (the second layer) on the first yellow layer.

After this you add a third red layer in the same way then the previous two ones.

So you continue with magenta or rosy layer, then with violet, blue, turquoise, emerald and green.

This sequence is in the beginning very important!

You can also start only with the sequence: yellow, orange, red, magenta, violet and blue. In this way, the painting will not be overcharged.

Then you let it dry without to interfere. You cannot make any mistake!!!!

There will be some special effects like aureoles or diffuse parts.

You will like them maybe immediately or maybe later, don't worry about it.

As a really great artist you are, the painting will be great!!!

On further paintings you can experiment with less or more water, different sequences of colors, and different abstract forms like squares circles, lines, invented forms or combinations of all this elements.

Or you begin in a very light way and further paintings will be more intense.

And again, as a wonderful sculptor and drawer you are, everything you do will be great!!!

In the next time I will take photos of every step of a painting I do (this idea just crossed my mind) and I will send it to you.

Well, I hope the description above can help you a little bit.

Please don't hesitate to ask me any question.

It will be a great joy to answer them.

And it is a beautiful experience for me to write about what I'm teaching.

Harry.”