

Guidelines for Developing Painting Skills Using the Technique of Imitating Classical Paintings

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Abstract

This study, titled "Guidelines for Developing Painting Skills Using the Technique of Imitating Classical Paintings," aims to develop technical skills in oil painting and establish learning approaches to aesthetic appreciation and conceptual understanding among second-year students enrolled in the Painting 3 course at the Faculty of Fine Arts, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. A qualitative research method was employed, involving classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and an analysis of student portfolios. The study engaged 28 second-year students in a semester-long program where they imitated masterpieces by artists such as Henri Fantin-Latour, John Singer Sargent, and Camille Corot. The research process included three main stages: theoretical introduction, guided practice, and reflection through critique sessions. The findings reveal that imitation significantly enhanced students' technical skills, particularly in blending, glazing, and layering techniques. Additionally, the practice deepened their appreciation for classical artistry and fostered analytical skills through reflective critiques. Despite challenges like time limitations and varying skill levels, the results underscore the method's value in building foundational artistic competencies. This research contributes to the development of effective pedagogical strategies in art education by demonstrating how classical imitation can bridge historical methodologies with contemporary practices. It offers practical insights for educators aiming to inspire technical mastery and creative exploration among art students.

Keywords: Imitation techniques, Oil Painting

1. Introduction

The Faculty of Fine Arts at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University is renowned for its dedication to nurturing creativity and technical skills in various art disciplines, including painting, music, and performing arts (Jirajarupat, P., Wanta, C., Vasinaron, M., & Phetruchee, M., 2022). As part of the Painting Department's curriculum, the "Painting 3" course focuses on the practice of oil painting techniques. The course emphasizes still life, figure, and landscape painting while providing foundational training in preparing materials and mastering oil painting techniques. This ensures students acquire basic and correct oil painting skills essential for artistic development. Integrating the imitation of classical artworks into the "Painting 3" curriculum offers students an opportunity to deepen their understanding of traditional methods and develop essential technical skills. Smith (2023) highlights that imitating works by master artists provides students with valuable insights into techniques and compositions, enabling them to grasp complex artistic principles. Similarly, Brown and Taylor (2022) assert that the process of analyzing and replicating classical art fosters problem-solving abilities, particularly in areas

like texture manipulation and light representation. However, Jones (2021) cautions against over-reliance on imitation, as it may limit students' creative autonomy. Combining imitation with opportunities for innovation is therefore critical. This balanced approach aligns with Lee et al. (2020), who emphasize that fostering creativity alongside technical mastery yields the most comprehensive educational outcomes. By incorporating these strategies into the "Painting 3" course, the Faculty of Fine Arts aims to provide a well-rounded education that equips students with the technical expertise and creative confidence to succeed in the contemporary art world.

1.1 Research Objective

1.To develop technical skills in oil painting through the imitation of classical artworks among second-year students.

2.To develop learning approaches to aesthetic appreciation and conceptual understanding through structured imitation.

1.2 Research Methodology

This research adopts a qualitative approach, utilizing classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and analysis of student portfolios. The participants comprise 28 second-year students from the Painting Department, Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. The curriculum involved a semester-long program where students imitated works by classical masters such as Henri Fantin-Latour, John Singer Sargent, and Camille Corot

2. Research Results

The findings reveal that the steps involved in Painting Using Imitation Techniques consist of the following:

1. Selection of Classical Artworks: Students began by selecting a classical painting, such as works by Henri Fantin-Latour, John Singer Sargent, or Camille Corot. This step involved understanding the context and background of the artwork to appreciate its significance. This stage ensured students connected with the artwork on a conceptual level, fostering deeper engagement.

2. Preparation of Materials: Students prepared their canvases, brushes, and paints to match the requirements of the chosen artwork. Proper preparation was critical for replicating classical techniques, such as using specific brush types for blending or glazing.

3. Initial Sketching: Using charcoal or pencil, students sketched the basic outlines of the selected painting. This stage helped students understand composition and spatial relationships within the artwork.

4. Layering and Underpainting: Students applied an initial underpainting layer to establish tonal values and basic color composition. This foundational step allowed students to focus on the structure before moving to finer details.

5. Blending and Glazing Techniques: Students practiced blending colors and applying glazing layers to achieve the depth and texture characteristic of classical paintings. This step emphasized technical mastery and precision.

6. Final Touches and Detailing: Students added intricate details, highlights, and corrections to complete the artwork. This stage taught the importance of patience and attention to detail in achieving a polished final piece.

Figure 1: Initial Sketching



Source: Photo and demonstrated painting by Cheerawat Wanta, 2024

Figure 2: Layering and Underpainting



Source: Photo and demonstrated painting by Cheerawat Wanta, 202

Figure 3: Blending and Glazing



Source: Photo and demonstrated painting by Cheerawat Wanta, 2024

Figure 4: Completed painting with imitation technique



Source: Photo and demonstrated painting by Cheerawat Wanta, 2024

After following these steps, students improved their skills in various aspects, as follows:

1. Technical Skill Enhancement: Students exhibited significant improvement in blending, glazing, and layering techniques, aligning with prior research on the effectiveness of imitation for technical training.

2. Enhancement of Observation Skills: Students developed the ability to analyze intricate details in classical artworks, such as tonal variations, light and shadow placement, and texture creation. This practice sharpened their observational skills, enabling them to discern subtle differences and connect these with fundamental principles of art and design.

3. Emotional Engagement with Art: By replicating classical masterpieces, students formed emotional connections with the works and their creators. Understanding the intentions and emotions behind the original paintings inspired students to infuse their own work with deeper emotional expression.

4. Refinement of Technical Precision: The structured imitation of techniques like glazing and layering allowed students to improve their technical accuracy and craftsmanship. These skills translated into higher-quality outputs and a more profound understanding of classical methodologies.

5. Development of Aesthetic Sensitivity: Students learned to appreciate the beauty of key elements such as compositional balance, harmonious color selection, and unique artistic perspectives. This enriched their ability to create artworks with high aesthetic value and appeal.

6. Building Creative Confidence: Observing their progress throughout the training process boosted students' self-confidence in their artistic abilities. This newfound assurance encouraged them to experiment and integrate classical techniques creatively into their personal art styles.

7. Bridging Historical and Contemporary Practices: By comparing and analyzing classical techniques alongside modern approaches, students gained the ability to create distinctive works that combine traditional methods with contemporary innovations.

This process not only provided technical training but also nurtured a holistic artistic development, preparing students to approach both classical and modern art forms with competence and creativity.

3. Conclusion and Discussion

This study demonstrates that incorporating the imitation of classical paintings into the Painting 3 curriculum is an effective approach for developing both technical skills and aesthetic appreciation among students. Through the structured steps of selecting artworks, preparing materials, sketching, layering, blending, and adding final details, students achieved notable advancements in their artistic abilities. The findings indicate several key outcomes worth discussing.

First, technical skill enhancement was particularly evident in students' ability to handle complex oil painting techniques such as blending, glazing, and layering. This aligns with the pedagogical benefits of structured imitation highlighted in prior research. Second, the practice of closely studying classical artworks fostered a deeper understanding of aesthetic principles, such as compositional balance and the effective use of light and shadow. Students' ability to perceive and replicate these elements contributed significantly to their overall artistic growth. Moreover, emotional engagement emerged as a critical benefit of this method. By

connecting with the intentions and emotions behind classical artworks, students developed a greater capacity for artistic expression. Reflective critique sessions further enriched this learning process by enabling students to analyze and compare classical and contemporary techniques, thereby bridging historical methodologies with modern practices.

Despite these positive outcomes, challenges such as time constraints and variability in prior experience among students were noted. To address these issues, future iterations of this program could incorporate more flexible timelines and personalized guidance to accommodate individual learning needs. Additionally, ensuring access to high-quality reproductions and materials is essential for maximizing the program's effectiveness.

In conclusion, the integration of classical imitation techniques provides a comprehensive pathway for developing well-rounded artistic competencies. By combining technical mastery with opportunities for creative exploration, this approach prepares students to navigate both traditional and contemporary art forms with confidence. Future research could explore the long-term impacts of this methodology, particularly its role in fostering creative autonomy and innovation in students' artistic careers.

4. Acknowledgment

The authors would like to express their gratitude to the Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, for their support and resources throughout this study. We extend our heartfelt thanks to the Painting Department for facilitating the implementation of the "Painting 3" curriculum and to the second-year students who actively participated in this research. Special appreciation goes to the academic advisors and colleagues who provided valuable insights and constructive feedback that enriched this study.

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