

Title:

How To Produce An Abstract Image II - From Anarchy To Abstraction

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813

Summary:

I want to go into a little more detail of the different ways you can approach the enigmatic task of producing an abstract. In this article we will look at the Anarchist and the Abstractist.

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Article Body:

I want to go into a little more detail of the different ways you can approach the enigmatic task of producing an abstract. In this article we will look at the Anarchist and the Abstractist.

If you have an anarchistic attitude within you then abstract art is for you. You will never run out of ideas - in fact even if you had NO ideas then your temperament alone would find a most fundermental mood swing or dark (and maybe on more rarer occasions - light) moment to enrap you within its aggressive drama and painful colours. Willem de Kooning's "Gotham News" is a good example of anarchistic abstraction - just look at this picture - <http://www.albrightknox.org/ArtStart/sKooning.html>. Wild movement mixed with such vigorous aggression.

Anarchists tend to be wildly demonstrative in their approach to ... everything! They have the potential to be able to utilize almost anything at hand that might provide them with contradictory ideas and totally original materials.

However, there is a big "down" side to what might be seen as the almost perfect abstract artist. An Anarchistic attitude tends to come from a tremendous sense of lacking in many areas. So things like confidence can be a very fearful barrier to the power of a creative flow. Therefore I believe that by working on

some of the practical ideas written below obstacles like shyness and fear can slowly be weakened until finally the real artist begins to rise out from the depths of darkness or light in an increasingly "louder" manner.

The Abstractist is in many ways similar to the Anarchist. The difference here is that the Abstractist mind has a colder capability of "seeing" completely non-representative imaginings. And although both the Abstractist and the Anarchist generally produce work from deep within. The Anarchist cultivates a more physical "anti" approach, whereas the Abstractist appears to have the knack of actually visualizing dots, lines, and shapes when looking at every day objects.

Notice the similarities between de Kooning's "Gotham News" and Peter Lanyon's "Wreck" - <http://www.ablot.com/wreck.htm> Then take another look and seek to find any differences. "Wreck" is very anarchistic, but there are at least two variants. First the colours of "Wreck" give off an almost tangible "landscape" feel. And secondly, Lanyon seems to have made decisions when placing of lines and shapes. This is a classical abstract attitude. Another fine Abstractist example would be Howard Hodgkin.

OK lets practice. Get yourself a large piece of paper - any paper ... even newspaper will do. You will need plenty of Red, Blue, and Yellow (remember the practicals in Part I) acrylics or cheap powder paints will be fine. A one fairly thin paint brush, and one fairly thick. With the first attempt do not "think" of anything other than lines. Place the paints in easy reach for you to work quickly. Ready? Thin brush first - dip it deep into any colour then quickly bring the brush into contact with the paper - do not stop moving. Move in any direction. Paint faster. Paint one continual line. As soon as the brush starts to run dry dip it into paint - any of the colours. Keep doing this until you have filled the paper with a mass of scribbles. Try this about five or six times - not caring what is produced (you can throw it away - no one needs to see it ... or you might want to frame it!).

Now repeat the above practical only this time try using what is sometimes called "short stroke" - which is precisely that. Rather than one continual line, produce lots of short lines - you decide on the length. But make sure you are still acting as though it is one continual line - you are just lifting the brush at the appropriate time. Repeat this a few times.

Next decide which you felt more at home with. Produce another image in that way only this time look for shapes. When you see one, load your brush and paint the outline of the shape - very quickly. Finally get the thick brush and load it with a colour and roughly fill in the shape. Carry on mark making - even if it runs over any painted shapes.

Finally try again with line and shapes, and this time adding something else - you decide. If you really cannot think of anything try choosing any of the following: Screwing up the whole paper, then unfolding it and carrying on painting; rip or cut holes into the paper - and carry on painting; spatter (a well used favourite) paint onto the paper; find rice, spaghetti, sand, earth, dust ... anything - pour it or sprinkle it - then carry on painting ... the list is endless.

Of course you might not be at home with this ... too messy you might say. Then, perhaps you might be a Surrealist - or maybe a Visionary ... that will be the next article.