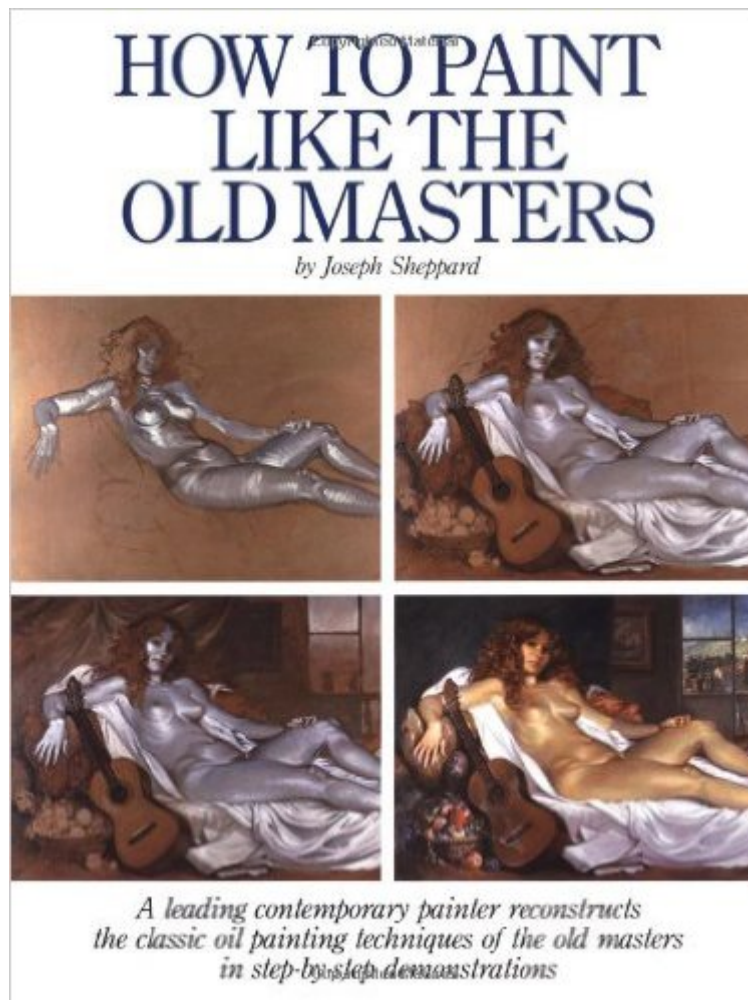


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How To Paint Like The Old Masters



Synopsis

Generations of artists have learned from *How to Paint Like the Old Masters*, the classic volume that explores the techniques used by the great artists of the 16th and 17th centuries. Now Watson-Guption proudly presents the 25th Anniversary Edition. Each chapter is devoted to a different Old Master—Dürer, Titian, Veronese, Caravaggio, Vermeer, Hals, Rubens, and Rembrandt—and is divided into two sections. The first part describes the artist's techniques and discusses how artists can incorporate these methods within their own personal style. The second part is a full-color demonstration. Author Joseph Sheppard traces the artist's working sequence, colors and mediums, surfaces and tools, as he creates a new painting. With today's resurgence of interest in Old Master techniques, this unique, practical, and inspiring book is sure to teach countless artists exactly *How to Paint Like the Old Masters*.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Mr. Sheppard has turned his considerable talent and experience to recreating the materials and techniques that may have been used by the Old Masters of oil painting--Rubens, Rembrandt, Caravaggio, and Titian, to name a few. Rather than apply thick paint on the canvas, the Masters developed their works slowly, over a period of weeks or months, applying layer upon layer of translucent glazes to a gray or brown underpainting. The result is color that is more luminous and vibrant than paint straight from the tube. Mr. Sheppard also provides directions for recreating the Masters' painting medium, a mixture of oil and varnish with the consistency of jelly. I myself did not have the patience (nor, given the obvious health risks in using the powdered lead and high

temperatures the recipe requires, the inclination) to create this medium at home, but I am told it is available commercially. Mr. Sheppard is also thoughtful enough to provide recipes for substitute mediums, for those of us of a less adventurous spirit. As for the techniques themselves, there is no denying the author's pure talent, and his prose is both engaging and informative, but make no mistake: this is not a book intended for the beginner. The reader can see the progression of each painting in a series of illustrations, but several crucial steps are completed in the space of a paragraph, and only a practiced eye can see precisely how the author has completed each step. I was also disappointed that Sheppard has chosen to create one or, at most, two paintings in the style of each Master. His Titian nude, for example, fairly glows on the page, and his sole Rembrandt recreation, that of an old man, rivals and perhaps exceeds many of Rembrandt's own paintings. I would relish the opportunity to see him create more.

The first thing that struck me as I browsed the book is the woeful quality of many of the images, with some being out of focus. This problem is also apparent in the other two books by Watson Guptill that I think compliment this one well. Kreutz "Problem Solving for Beginners" and Cateura "Oil Painting Secrets from a Master". If you are looking to paint in a realistic style in the vein of Caravaggio, Rembrandt etc. then you will find plenty of information in these three books. However all three deal with technique and for me the ability to discern the brushstrokes is a critical part of the learning exercise i.e. is the artist using impasto or thinned paint? With these images it's impossible to tell. Hopefully WG will revisit each of these books and bring the images up to scratch. Joseph Sheppard provides "how to's" allowing the reader to emulate the techniques of: Durer, Titian, Veronese, Caravaggio, Rubens, Hals, Rembrandt and Vermeer. Information on how to create specific paint mediums used by that particular artist, mixing paints, painting surfaces etc. He makes no claims that any of the information offered is absolute. As well as conducting his own studies on how to achieve a certain painterly effect he has also drawn on technical information published by the various "art experts" (listed in the bibliography). Results of recent studies of old master paintings indicating that the current thinking on techniques might be wrong. The old masters would typically have a team of apprentices working alongside them, mixing paint, painting parts of the painting that the master was probably too bored to bother with (as well as good training for the apprentice) etc. The Master/Apprentice setup allowed for a continuous stream of knowledge being passed along the generations.

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