

DEAR ERIC COLUMN - JANUARY

STUDYING WITH HELP FROM AN INSTRUCTOR

Dear Eric,
do you recommend studying with one workshop instructor, or trying a variety of them? It seems as though if I take a workshop again from a former instructor, I may have learned it all from before, and if I take from a variety of instructors, I may get confused.

What do you recommend? *Evie from Colorado*

Evie,

That is a good question anybody who takes workshops should ask. You, like others, want to make sure your investment in a workshop is a sound choice. As your concerns are appreciated, I think that you may be neglecting the most important element of learning: repetition.

At the American Academy of Art in Chicago, I studied under a master of watercolor painting- Irv Shapiro- for three years. Even though I heard him explain concepts and techniques many times, they didn't become part of my repertoire until I was ready to assimilate them. Countless times I remember saying, " Oh, now I see what you mean", even though I had heard it many times before. It takes hearing the info, putting it to practice, hearing it again, and practicing it again. There is a maturing process that has to unfold on its own timetable for the student to think like the master. The info and technique just doesn't gel for us in one fell swoop. And thankfully not, or the creative growth would be shortchanged.

So, my suggestion is to find an instructor whose paintings you appreciate -as that is what he or she, of course, is going to teach- and get as much instruction as possible. Layers of understanding will unfold at a depth unattainable in one course. It takes time.

Taking from a variety of instructors will expose you to a broad range of philosophy and technique, and can supplement serious study with one individual, but I think in the end, find your "hero" and study with him or her.

Note: I am providing a long-term study opportunity with my students via Skype or FaceTime. It has been very rewarding. If you would like further info, go to my website and look up "Virtual Critique" or send me an e-mail, I am happy to answer any questions!

Keep your brush wet!

Eric



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