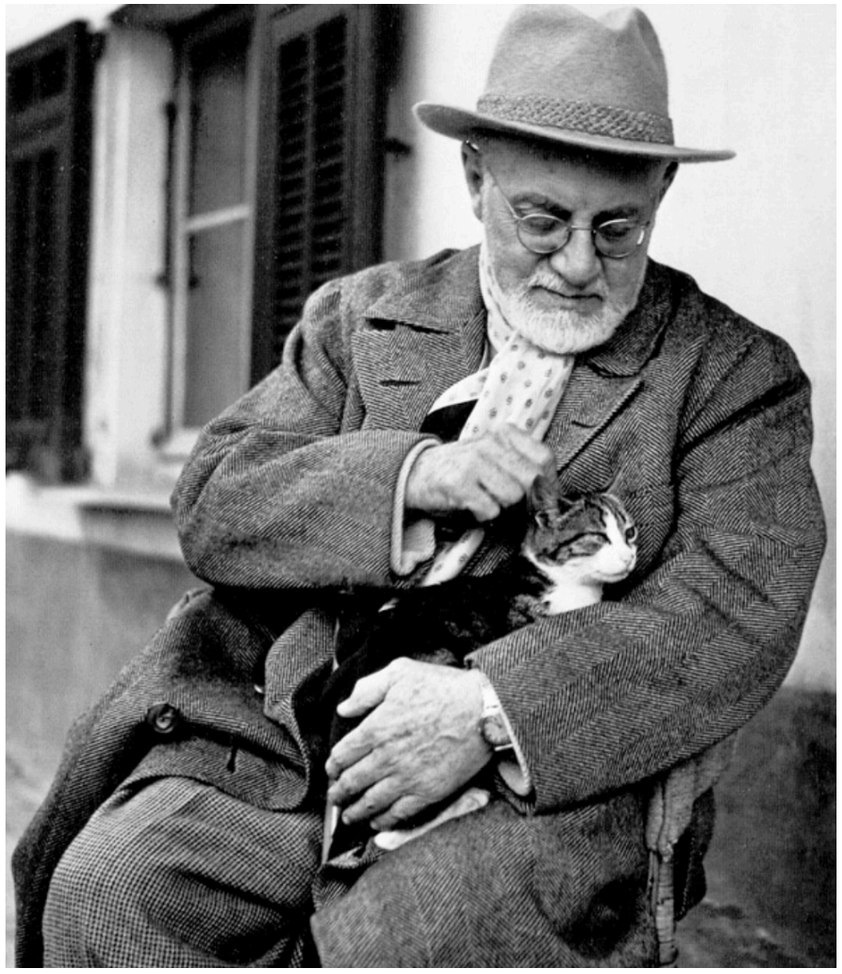
HOW TO FIND & DEVELOP YOUR ART STYLE

Pt.3-
How to Hone +
Evolve Your Art Style



Symphony in White No.2,
James Abbott McNeill Whistler, 1865.



“An artist should never be a prisoner of himself, a prisoner of style, a prisoner of a reputation, a prisoner of success.”

-Henri Matisse

INTRODUCTION



- So, you've arrived at your own unique art style and you've honed it so that the quality is there, along with the originality—great! What happens next? Are you expected to keep creating the same type of art forever?
- **As you continue to grow and evolve as a person, your interests and tastes will likely change. This curiosity will lead you to explore new ideas, express yourself in different ways, and you'll naturally want to communicate new messages through your art.**
- **Your style will also naturally evolve as you acquire new skills, learn new techniques and continue refining your craft.**
- The person you are today is not the same as who you were when you began on your drawing/painting journey. Your artwork is very likely not the same either. As you evolve, so will your art.

WHY YOUR ART STYLE CHANGES OVER TIME



There are three main reasons why you can expect your style to change over the years.

1. Skill Development:

As your technical skills improve, you'll explore new techniques that will naturally alter your style.

2. Personal Growth:

As you experience life and gain new perspectives, your interests shift, influencing your artistic expression. Your artistic style will evolve with you.

3. New Influences:

Exposure to different artists, cultures, and mediums inspires changes in your style.

Whether you're aware of it or not, your art style is always evolving.

EXAMPLES OF ARTISTS WHO EVOLVED THEIR STYLE OVER TIME



Henri Matisse

Early Work: *The Dinner Table* (1897)

This early work by Matisse is characterized by a realistic and detailed style, reflecting his academic training and influence from artists like Gustave Moreau.

Later Work: *The Lute* (1943)

This piece, created during Matisse's later years, shows more abstraction and stylization in shapes, a departure from realism and bold exploration of color.



Evolution:

Matisse's style evolved significantly from his early realistic and detailed paintings to a more abstract and colorful approach. His transition was marked by a move towards Fauvism, where he used bold, non-naturalistic colors, and later, his innovative cut-outs, which represented a simplified, yet vibrant way of expressing form and space. This evolution reflects his growing interest in color as a primary means of expression and his desire to simplify his work while retaining emotional depth.

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Georgia O'Keeffe

Early Work: *Blue Hill No.II* (1916)

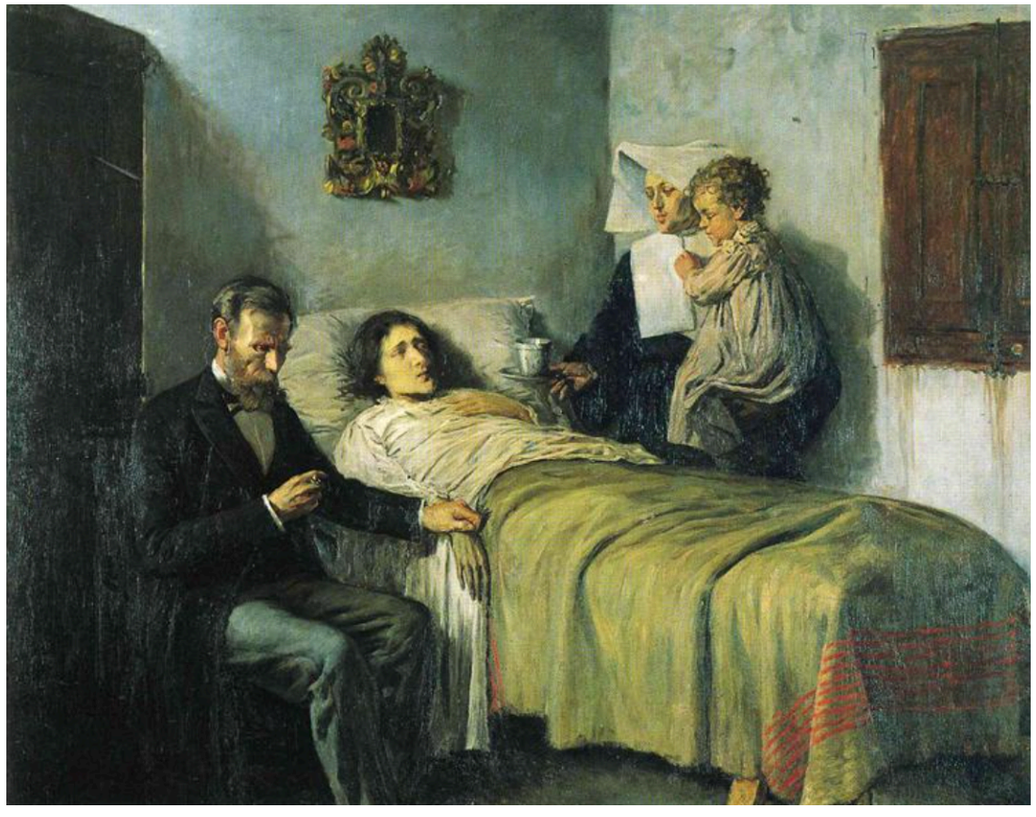
This early abstract work by O'Keeffe is characterized by fluid forms and emotive color, representing her initial exploration of abstract expression. These paintings were simple and minimalistic.

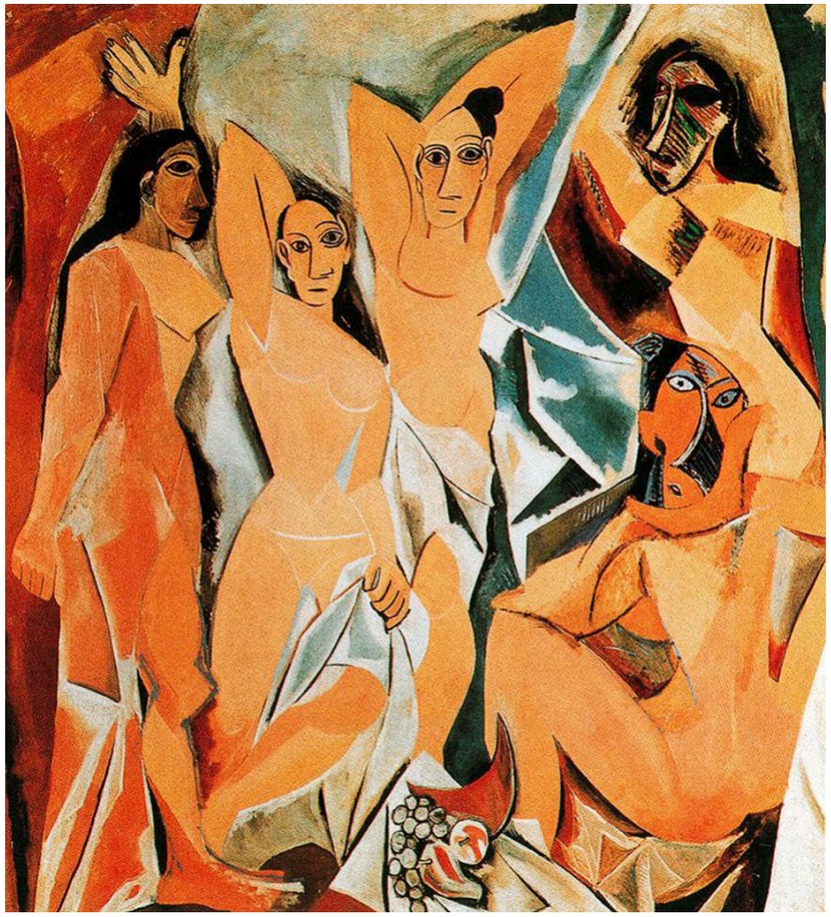


Later Work: *Poppy* (1950)

In contrast, this later work is more representational and realistic. She became well known for her paintings of blown up flowers.

Evolution: O'Keeffe's style evolved from abstract expressionism to a more representational approach, reflecting her desire to depict the essence of her subjects with clarity and emotion.





Pablo Picasso

Early Work: *Science and Charity* (1897)

Painted when Picasso was just 15 years old, *Science and Charity* is a prime example of his early realistic style. The painting showcases his technical skill and traditional approach to composition, reflecting the influence of academic art.

Later Work: *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* (1907)

Les Demoiselles d'Avignon marks a significant shift towards Cubism, characterized by fragmented forms, abstracted figures, and a departure from traditional perspective.

Evolution:

Picasso’s style evolved dramatically from realistic and academic works to pioneering modernist movements like Cubism. This transition reflects his constant experimentation and willingness to break away from convention, pushing the boundaries of art.

WHEN IS IT TIME FOR YOU TO EVOLVE YOUR ART STYLE?



- **If you follow the 6 phase process shared in class 2, over time, you'll have honed your process and improved the quality of your work.**
- **Honest self-evaluation and obtaining feedback from others will have also helped you improve on weaknesses and enhance your strengths.**
- **Some changes are going to happen naturally, but the overall direction will still be the same.**

- **What are the tell tale signs that you're ready to evolve, or even change direction *completely?***

These are signs you're ready to do something new:

1. Lack of Challenge:

- If your work has become too easy and you no longer feel challenged, it's a sign that you might need to push yourself in a new direction.
- **Why It Matters:** Growth as an artist comes from pushing boundaries and exploring new techniques or concepts. When things feel too comfortable, it can lead to stagnation.
- **What to Do:** Consider setting more ambitious goals, experimenting with different techniques, or tackling more complex subjects to reignite your sense of challenge.

2. Loss of Excitement:

- If your work no longer excites you and you feel stuck or "in a rut," it might be time for a change.
- **Why It Matters:** Passion and excitement are crucial for creativity. When these feelings fade, it can result in uninspired work and a lack of fulfillment.
- **What to Do:** Reflect on what initially excited you about art and explore new mediums, subjects, or styles that could rekindle that spark. Sometimes, a fresh perspective is all it takes to reignite your passion.

<u>Important Reminder:</u>

- As discussed in a previous class, it's crucial to commit to specific medium(s) and subject(s) for a solid period of time before deciding to move on.

WHEN YOU SHOULDN'T CHANGE DIRECTIONS

There will likely be times throughout your journey at which you'll feel compelled to change your style for the wrong reasons. *Don't do it!*

Create for Yourself, Not for Others:

- It's important not to change your style just to please others. If someone suggests you should evolve your style, only do so if it genuinely resonates with you. You should *never* feel pressured to keep things the same, or to change, because of other people.
- **Why It Matters:** Your art will always be more authentic and fulfilling when you create what you truly love, rather than trying to fit into someone else's expectations.

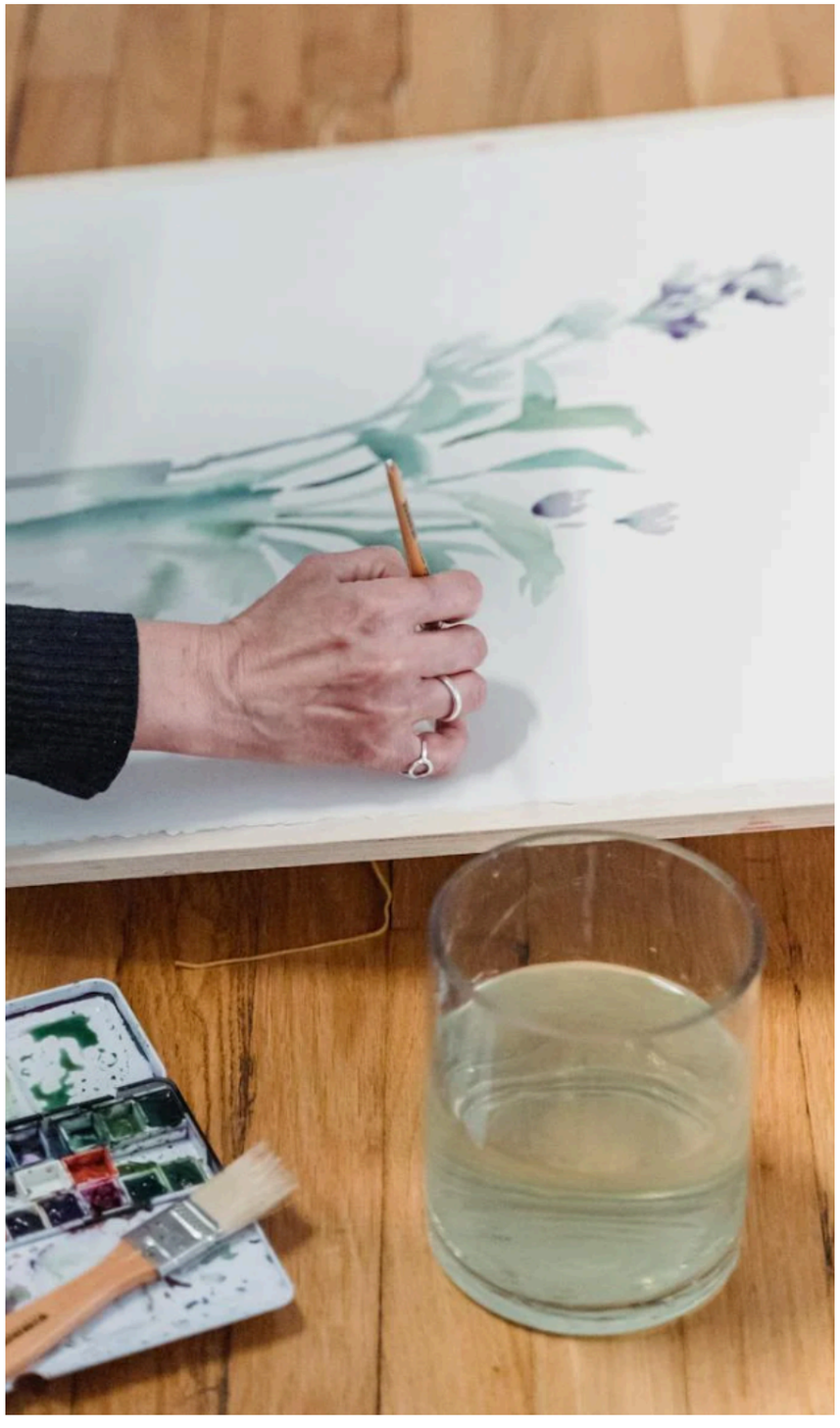
The Difference Between Evolving and Changing:

- **Evolving** means allowing your style to grow naturally as you gain experience, skills, and insights. This kind of growth comes from within and is driven by your own artistic journey.
- **Changing** just to meet external demands can lead to a disconnect between you and your work, making it feel less personal and less meaningful.

Honor Yourself and Your Vision

- Your artistic voice is unique to you, and staying true to it is crucial for creating work that you're proud of. Don't sacrifice your vision for the sake of trends or outside opinions.
- As your style evolves, let it be a reflection of your own experiences and inspirations, ensuring that your work remains authentic and true to who you are.

PRACTICAL TIPS FOR EVOLVING YOUR ART STYLE



Change Slowly:

- If you feel ready to evolve your art style, start by making gradual changes rather than overhauling everything at once.
- Revisit the components of an art style discussed in class 1, such as your format, color palette, or subject matter. Begin by tweaking one or two elements—like trying a new color scheme or changing to a new type of subject matter—while keeping the rest consistent.

Embrace Experimentation and Play:

- Set aside dedicated time for creative play, focusing on the process rather than the final outcome.
- Experimentation is key to discovering new facets of your style. Work with materials or techniques that are unfamiliar to you, such as switching from watercolor to acrylics, or experimenting with abstract forms if you usually create realism. This playful exploration can lead to unexpected breakthroughs and new directions in your work.

Study and Incorporate New Influences:

- Broaden your horizons by studying the work of an artist whose style is different from your usual influences.
- Create a piece inspired by this artist's style, but don't just imitate—infuse it with your personal touch. For example, if you admire an artist known for their bold use of color, try incorporating more vibrant hues into your own work while maintaining your unique approach to composition or subject matter.

PRACTICAL TIPS FOR EVOLVING YOUR ART STYLE

Develop a Routine for Continuous Learning:

- Dedicate regular time to enhancing your skills and knowledge through art education.
- Continuous learning prevents stagnation. Enroll in online courses, attend workshops, or engage in self-study by reading art books or watching tutorials. Make this a routine part of your artistic practice, whether it's a weekly class or setting aside time each month to explore new techniques or concepts.

Work on a New Series:

- Develop a series of artworks focused on a new theme, concept, or technique.
- Working within a series allows you to deeply explore an idea or style over multiple pieces, giving you the opportunity to see if it's actually something you'd be interested in honing long-term or if it's a passing curiosity.

IMPORTANT NOTES TO CONSIDER



- **If you've been growing an audience (online or off) and have started to sell your work, be aware that when you change directions, you may lose people.**
- **If you're being represented by a gallery, they will also want your style to stay the same because it's why they took you on.**
- **If your mind, heart and soul are needing a change, you shouldn't let this stop you, but you might have to approach evolution more slowly.**

ART ASSIGNMENT

- **Analyze the body of work you've created over the years. Take notes on how your style has evolved over time, as you've continued learning and honing your drawing/painting skills.**
- **Look for changes, not just in the mediums you've used and subjects you've drawn/painted, but also in the mood, themes, and messages conveyed in your art. **Both objective and subjective aspects.***
- **Consider how your art has progressed technically—such as your skill with different techniques—and creatively, including the originality and depth of your ideas.**
- **What has led to the greatest progress when it comes to your technical growth? What life experiences have led to the best ideas/concepts? What have you discovered about how you like to work, and your creative process overall, which you'd like to take with you as you move forward?**
- **Finally, where would you like your art to go in the next couple of years? What new directions, skills, or themes do you want to explore and develop further?**