

# HOW TO PUSH PAST THE UGLY STAGE



It's very interesting that all artists struggle with this topic but at different stages of the painting process. You will either have trouble getting started, or be bored in the middle or just can't seem to finish anything.

I think the first thing to do is know your personality and at what point in the creative process you start to get bored or find it difficult. The start, middle or end.

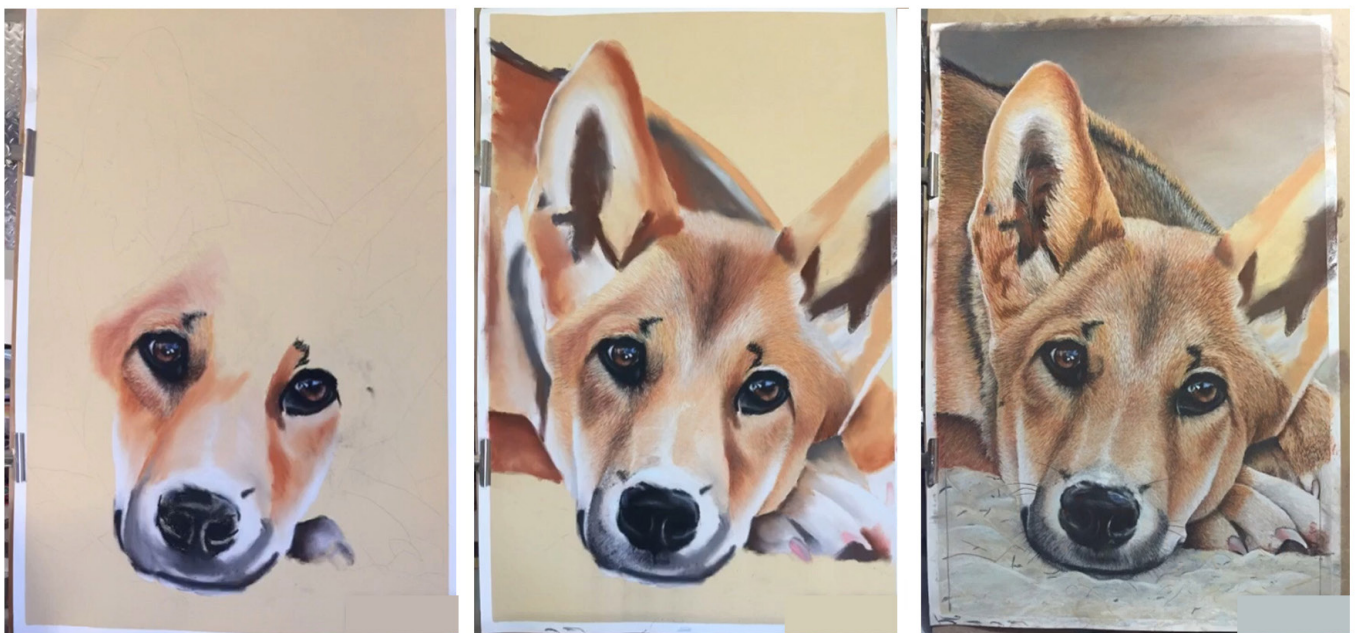
Some of us can never finish a project and seem to self-sabotage while others struggle to get started, that fear of a blank canvas maybe or a fear of failure, they don't have all the right materials, what if I make a bad painting and so on.

I think to get started you need to stop putting the pressure on yourself that every painting you create is going to be a masterpiece and it's ok to just have pieces that might not work out but you have learnt something along the way and for every hour you are creating is another hour that you are improving your skills.

The middle is where you can get bogged down and bored. You lose your enthusiasm. I feel this is the type of artist I am, and the area you need to really keep going to push past that ugly stage when really you just want to get started on your next exciting painting idea you've had.

My process is to focus on small areas and finish them, I always need the eyes watching me work and I am inspired by how the animal emerges from my paper.

Although I do get bored with fur, but I know if I put in the time it will get finished.



Here are some tips to push past this stage.

1. Think of the end result and put a number to how many hours or how much time you have left to finish the painting, or even get past that stage of the process. Then you can just say to yourself "I only have so many hours left" or do a countdown, break it down into time blocks and mark them off as you go.
2. Work on more than one painting at a time, so when you hit that stage where your hating your work, give yourself a break and start working on another one. A lot of professional, productive artists work on roughly 3 paintings at a time.
3. Have a break, step away and come back tomorrow with fresh eyes. Take a photo because for some reason our art always looks completely different through the camera lens.
4. Take progress photos of all your art. Take one when you have your first under layer, than another as your painting builds. Then one when you want to give up on your painting, and of course one of your finished piece. You can then look back and see the early stage, ugly stage and then see what happens when you push through.
5. Rather than focusing on the whole painting, focus in on a small area and finish that to completion, then move onto another small area and finish that, before you know it, your whole painting will be completed.
6. Have a reason to complete your work, eg. painting it for a friend for a xmas present or a paid commission with a deadline, set yourself a goal date that you have to have it finished for.
7. Plan ideas for your next painting to get you excited but tell yourself you have to finish this one first. Look at the new skills you have learnt in the process and get keen to use them in the next painting.
8. Think about the feeling of satisfaction you'll get when you've finished this piece.

You need to be self-motivated as an artist. This makes the difference between success and failure. You have the power to choose how this turns out.

You can set yourself up for success. Once you know what your personality is like, then you can pre-empt where you'll struggle. Be aware of it and tell yourself this happens to you everytime and you know it will come together if you keep going.

And again remember, not every painting needs to be a masterpiece.

What type of personality are you? What area of the painting process do you get stuck on?  
Circle the one that applies to you

BEGINNING

MIDDLE

END

Dig deep and write down why you think you are getting stuck at this point?

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Now after reading some of the above tips, write down some of the ways you are going to move yourself past this point of being stuck. Make sure they are things that suit you, your lifestyle and you know you will do.

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Write down any other ways that are not listed in the above tips that might give you inspiration to move forward and overcome your point of being stuck.

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