



THE RSOA COURSE HANDBOOK

HallooOOO!

Welcome to the Real School of Art, and thank you sincerely for taking this step towards your immense creative potential with me – it is going to be a beautiful, gentle adventure. I want you to know that this school has very few rules set in stone: first and foremost, this is all about your artistic expansion, and so you're absolutely encouraged to adapt and change, develop and hone all of the exercises and guidance, as you feel inspired to.

Here are a few practical suggestions for getting the most out of the school:

- **TECHNICAL GLITCHES** If you have any trouble with the platform that the school is on, you can troubleshoot by looking up their help section – or Googling the specific problem and 'Teachable'. Their support team are super-helpful, and there are lots of videos and easy-to-understand answers to issues. Many glitches can be resolved by logging out and logging back in again, or by changing browsers.
- **ORGANISE, ORGANISE, ORGANISE!** The downloaded course material is best stored in neat folders on your computer: there are several sections, and over 60 videos and worksheets, and they're best kept clearly-labelled, so you can reference them easily. The course platform on Teachable helps you to keep track of what you've already finished. Don't forget that the **first edition RSOA** course comes offline at the end of 2019 – be sure to download everything before then.
- **FOLLOWING OR SPONTANEITY?** The school is laid out in an artistically-logical way, to support creative expansion, but everyone has a unique creative logic. So you can use the course either in chronological order, or if linear doesn't work for you, use your spontaneity and divination skills to move from lesson to lesson.
- **DO I HAVE TO DO THAT?!** Again, each task is set to push you beyond fears, and to get you to extend yourself into a bigger artistic mind-set. BUT life is not

always accommodating to adventure, and if you need to simplify any exercise, be it for practical or economic reasons, do.

- **PACE YOURSELF!** Only you can know your own best rhythm, and the course can be used ever-so-gently, or as a super-intensive means of transforming and rejuvenating your passion. This is about harmonising your discipline too; art can be a fickle beast, and won't always perform on demand, but equally, if we don't push ourselves methodically towards action, the lethargy can set in. The school aims to support you in finding the ideal rhythm, your rhythm, that gets you into your fully-inspired artistic flow... you can do this!
- **REALLY BLOCKED?** This can happen, especially with some of the more intense emotional exercises. Please try to go for progress rather than perfection, and if something is truly stopping you in your tracks, or making you slip backwards down the path: do something about it quickly – like relax/ take a walk/ scribble a spontaneous flow-of-thoughts out.

The intense energetic chaos that creativity can bring up, this needs to be grounded and supported to move outwards. Especially when we come across a deep knot of blocked energy or feeling; just the fact that our awareness is on it, this usually means it's calling to be loosened or healed. We can do that by moving, walking, changing the atmosphere and activity, breathing more deeply, expressing ourselves, stretching gently... Learn to know what's right for you by listening to what works, and what doesn't work.

There's a relaxation exercise in Part 5, Lesson 8 of the school – a guided meditation - that will help calm and realign you, if things are intense. And you're encouraged to know your own limits and needs; one of the great myths about art is that it's all 'waving-a-paintbrush-about-happily' - when in real life, the primal act of putting our inimitable marks down on paper, this can bring up literally everything that has ever been suppressed within us. Creative flow is like a great fountain of healing, but it also demands that we make room for whatever is blocked, to expand – allowing it to literally explode out of us can be overwhelming at best.

- **THINK EVEN BIGGER.** Each task in the school can be used as the foundation for a more ambitious project, e.g. the starting point for a bigger painting/ book project/ pop-up event. Even if you don't make something more adventurous, do take notes of any ideas that come to you in your journal or sketchbook: it's amazing to have a record of inspired ideas, later on – they often need the right season to come along, before they blossom.
- **DON'T LET IT PILE UP!** If you do find that a few exercises pile up behind you unfinished, set yourself a deadline and/ or make a shorter, smaller version of

the challenge BUT *do not* avoid gently pushing yourself forward, each and every exercise.

- TRUST YOUR GUT. You'll be asked to do more and more of this throughout the school. If you can't find your inner voice, imagine it. And if you can't do that, use a random opening of a book to find a picture or word to stimulate you, or to answer a question.

Developing one's intuition at first can be more 'fake it 'til you make it' than immediate crystal vision, but I promise that the more you use your gut feeling, the more it will speak to you. Sometimes intuition can be as simple as – mmmm, I like that colour better. It doesn't have to be a mysterious echoing voice booming from the depths: find how *your* inner knowing speaks to you.

I'll be updating this handbook as the school evolves, and as I get more feedback about it – please feel warmly welcomed to contact me, if you feel there are any areas that need clarification, on: student@thersoa.com

A final note: the RSOA FIRST EDITION is currently being evolved: new classes, worksheets and podcasts will be released as they are made, via my Patreon pages. I hope to launch this ambitious project around the beginning of 2019 – or sometime that year!

Loads of good wishes to you

