

Excerpt below is taken from :

"Traditional Oil Painting— *Advanced Techniques and Concepts from the Renaissance to the Present*"

by Virgil Elliott

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*In regards to Style...*

"Perhaps too much has been made of the need for originality and individual style in educational institutions offering art classes. In the early stages of an artist's development, it is more important to concentrate on mastering the skills that will be needed to facilitate self-expression. There is no real danger of an inspired individual with a strong personality losing any of his or her distinctiveness due to thorough training in the technical aspects of art-making. All too often, focusing too much on style and too little on skills results in a set of handicaps that place a low limit on what a person can effectively express through art. These handicaps are sometimes equated as if they were elements of a person's style, but that view is harmful and should not be encouraged.

It is indeed true that each artist's style is, and should be, unique; however, this idea is often used as an excuse for whatever is lacking in a given artist's technique. Style should be the result of choice, not of limitation. It should not be a concern at all for the student, whose primary goal must be to master every aspect of drawing and painting exactly what he or she sees, until it is all second nature. At that point, it might be appropriate to give consideration to what one's style is to be as a professional, but not until the lessons have been learned and learned well. With a full range of choice available, any choice one makes is valid.

Style will evolve naturally. As in Zen, the direct pursuit of this goal is pointless. It will happen when it is Time. Its Time will not be until all obstacles of perception and all limitation of technical ability have been removed. Then it will be there, as it is always there in each of us, awaiting the development of our ability to recognize and express it. Until we have mastered every aspect of our medium, there will be things inside us that cannot be expressed. These things are elements of each artist's individual style."