

Options For Failed Paintings

The sad truth for most artists is that not every painting we start turns out the way we would like.

There is no shame in that. We probably learn more from our failures than we do from our successes. But what can be done with failed paintings if we don't want to keep them as a record of our artistic journey?

I believe there are four options.

1. **Destruction.** – Complete destruction: burning them or adding them to landfill is one option for failed paintings. This is my least favourite option. What a waste of canvas.
2. **Resurrection** – Often times a painting can be resurrected by doing something radical. Fiddling rarely works in solving problems, so be bold. This may be hard to do because sometimes good parts of paintings have to be sacrificed in order to fix the whole. If you are unhappy with a painting nothing is lost by radical action.
3. **Demolish and rebuild.** – If you are unable to successfully resurrect a painting the simplest option is to give it a coat of gesso, or cover it with an opaque base colour and then paint a completely new work over top of the old.
4. **Recreation.** – The fourth option is what I call recreation. This can be challenging, but also a lot of fun. Painting something completely different directly on top of the failed painting, allowing texture and colour of the previous image to show through. This often leads to much more interesting paintings through 'happy accidents'.



Demolish and Rebuild Demonstration/Project

Materials

Support – A 20'x 16" canvas was used for this demonstration

Chalk

Brushes – #12 Flat Hogs hair bristle brush

#6 Flat Hogs hair bristle brush

#2 Liner brush

Colours – Titanium White, Dioxine Purple, Red Gold

Arylamide Yellow Light, Yellow Ochre, Light Red Ochre,

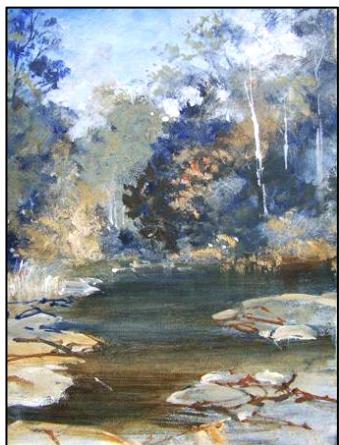
Raw Sienna,Cobalt Blue Hue

Mediums - Regular Gel Medium

Impasto Painting Medium

Reference-





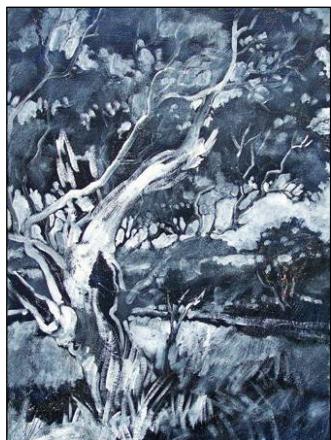
Step 1. Demolition

Start with a painting that is no longer wanted and give it a coat of gesso or an opaque colour, to give a fresh surface to work on. In this demonstration Paynes Grey was used.



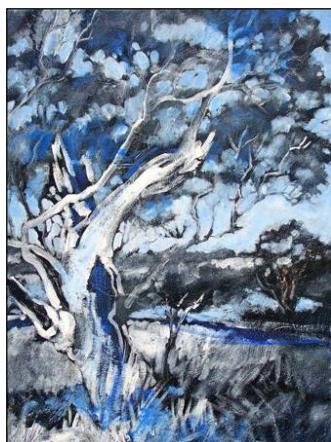
Step 2. Establish new composition.

Map out a new composition with chalk.



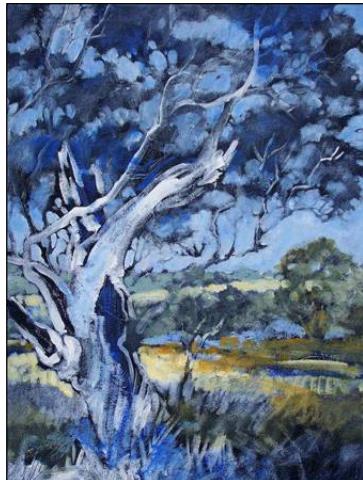
Step 3. Tonal Map.

Use a single colour to create a tonal map of the subject. In this instance the base colour is dark so white paint was chosen. If painting on white gesso a single dark colour would have been selected.



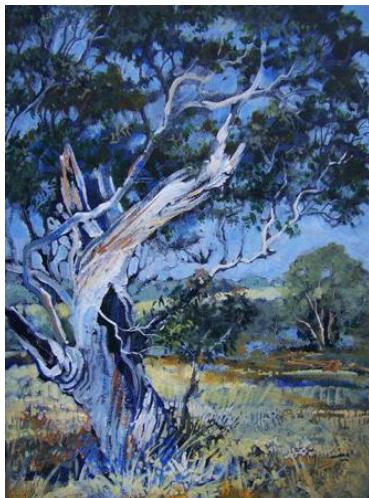
Step 4. Sky.

Add colour beginning with the sky. Here Cobalt Blue and White were used Adding traces of the blue to other areas helps create a more unified and interesting painting.



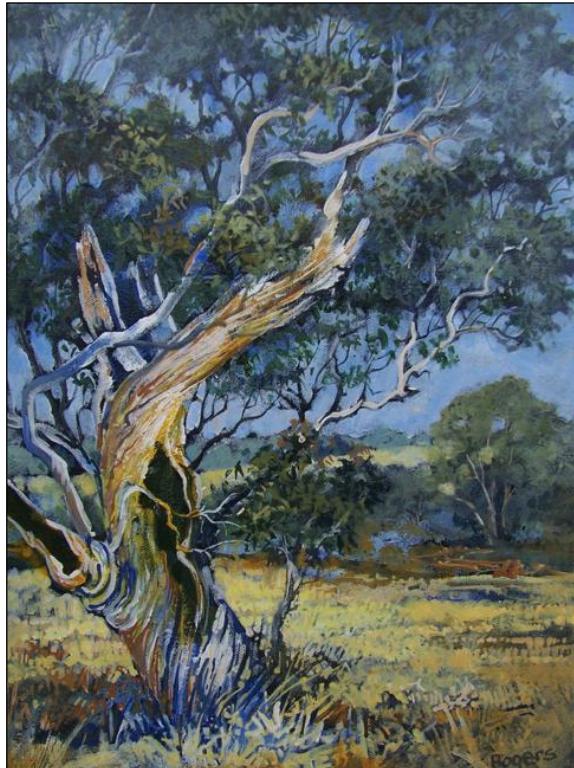
Step 5 More colour.

As more colour is added, maintain the tonal pattern already established. The greens are made with Cobalt Blue mixed with the various yellows and/or Red Gold.



Step 6. More detail

The first layer of colour is a block in, the paint applied as broad shapes using a large brush. As the painting develops a smaller brush can be used and details added.



Final Step. Detail and refinements

Final details are added using a liner brush. A transparent haze is used toward the edge of the painting to make sure it doesn't compete or attention with the focal area of the tree trunk. This haze is created with tiny amounts of Cobalt Blue and White mixed with regular gel medium,