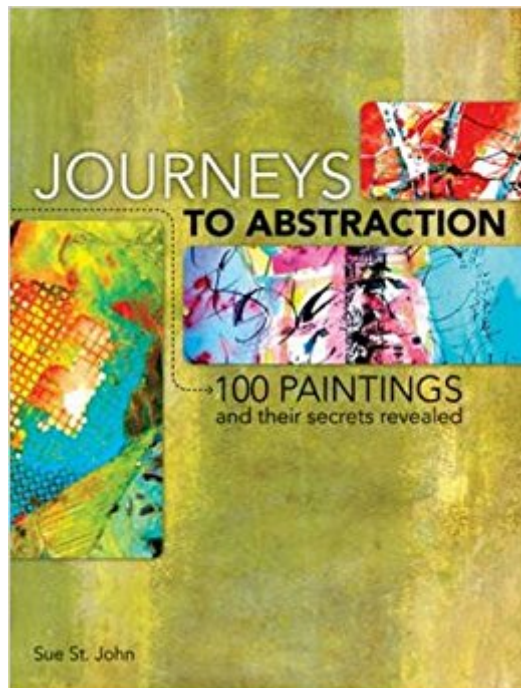




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# Journeys To Abstraction: 100 Paintings And Their Secrets Revealed



## Synopsis

We don't have to know what a painting is if we know how it makes us feel. A fun, fascinating survey of abstract art, *Journeys to Abstraction* offers a behind-the-scenes look at how contemporary artists break free from literal depiction to rejoice in the pure expressive power of color, line and texture. 58 artists share 100 striking abstract paintings, along with the ideas, inspirations and diverse working processes behind them. Covers a wide variety of traditional and non-traditional media and techniques, including watercolor, collage, acrylics, ink and more. Four step-by-step demonstrations show how abstract pieces come together from start to finish. Discover how artists paint, pour, scrape, spray, carve, stamp, collage and otherwise build complex layers of texture and meaning. Painting with egg cartons, turning acrylic paints into shards of "stained glass," incorporating old "failed" paintings into fresh finished pieces...anything goes in abstract art! Marked by an inspiring freedom of form and content, this is a liberating book for any artist in search of new, dynamic forms of self-expression.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Sue St. John has been painting for more than 40 years. Sue is a Signature Artist member of the Kentucky Watercolor Society, and is affiliated with the Louisiana Watercolor Society, the Missouri Watercolor Society and the International Society Of Experimental Artists. Visit her online at [SueStJohn.com](http://SueStJohn.com).

This book is terrific for any artist interested in the experimental and abstract painting process. The quality of work from well known artists is exceptional. The images are large and excellent. The

thought processes and painting procedures written by the artists themselves are detailed and illuminating. This is a very well designed book filled with textbook information as well as some step-by-step demos. This can be your workshop without leaving home.

I hated almost all of the art in this book. Almost every piece looked like it was composed of pure color with very little neutrals or sophisticated color mixing. This is what artist James Gurney referred to as suffering from the "fruit salad" disease. Sure, red, blue, green, and yellow are pretty colors, but unless you know how to neutralize them with complementary pigments, they can never really stand out in their full glory. A good percentage of the reproductions were extremely low quality (i.e. low res), so you couldn't really see the technique anyway. I think this book was well-intentioned, and the text is probably okay, but personally I wasn't inspired by any of the images, so I didn't care about the technique described and didn't end up reading much. It's too bad, because there really aren't any good books on this subject that I know of. If anyone knows of one (or even a website), please comment on my review.

There are a lot of art books out there, but this is one that you'll find yourself referring to time and time again. Sue St. John has done something amazing for artists (and art lovers): she sought out, selected, and compiled abstract works by dozens of contemporary artists and allowed each artist to describe HOW the piece was created. It's a celebration of the creative process and shows the variety of ways that strong paintings come together, guided by the artist's hand (and mind). As a bonus, she includes a few step by step exercises at the end of the book--I can't wait to try these! A very well designed book and essential reading for all abstract/experimental painters.

I have found this book to be one that you cannot lay down. I am looking and reading in the wee hours of the morning. Sue St. John has made this beautiful and educational.

This book was just okay as far as describing certain techniques used in the paintings provided in this book. It is not really a book for beginners, more for intermediate artists who can understand certain applications explained in one or two sentences. This book often repeated descriptions in a couple of different places, almost as if you were reading the same exact explanation for two different paintings by the same artist. Although I found some of the descriptions to be helpful it seemed too repetative and not enough variety. There are definitely better books out there about techniques. "Acrylic Revolution" is by far one of the best acrylic painting technique books I have purchased. I

also really love "Acrylics Unleashed", written by one author about only his techniques and his style of painting, but quite informative and very easy to understand.

Love this book, but it is NOT a teaching aid, very little instruction but great for inspiration and I highly recommend it to get ideas and kind of understand what it takes to do abstract. I am definitely going to experiment with my watercolours now. SIDE NOTE AND A GREAT FIND!!! Benjabelle Mini Brush Tree: I know these are made for make up brushes, but the key word here is "brushes". As Artists we need to keep and dry our brushes tip down, especially watercolour brushes as a size 12 in Pure Kolinsky Sable will cost you up to \$400 retail and around \$300 on sale!! When water gets into the brushes' ferrule, it degrades the brush and the brush also CANNOT be left with the tip down or standing in water. This is the perfect solution. A Must have!!! And it comes in different sizes and colours. I have mine assembled and then I mounted each one on a block of styrofoam to make it even taller. Just cut in a cross and used glue to keep it there. I will decorate the styrofoam to make look better LOL

Yes, I was. After reading some of the disparaging reviews (I always like to see why some people diss a book when 90% of the other reviewers loved it), I was quite pleased with the content. Someone "didn't get it" in a review...whatever. Another reviewer said all the contributing artists were women - not so. There was at least one male artist. And, dear sir, go read the new book by Phil Garrett - most of the contributing artists are men. Anyway - I got the kindle version because I thought if I didn't like it at least I hadn't spent a terrible lot. Well, guess what - I am going to end up buying the hardback version anyway because it's much more useful as reference tool in my studio. If I get paint on it, it's not the end of the world - like it would be with my iPad. But that's how much I enjoyed this book - and I learned a lot. I really like the whole introductory part where she spends a good deal of time on symbols, color, emotions evoked by color and/or symbols, etc. And to see the different working processes of each artist was quite valuable. The step-by-step processes revealed at the end were great. I am new to abstract...coming from a realist background, and wanting to know what all the fuss is about. I have a LOT of books on abstract art - but this one has been the most helpful to my understanding of "why make abstract art at all?" and a great springboard to getting started.

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