

# A Structured Approach

Paul Baldassini was the Second Prize winner of Internation Artist magazine Challenge No. 109, Florals & Gardens.



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For more than 25 years Paul Baldassini worked as a professional designer and digital image editor in Boston. To create his colorful floral paintings he combines that experience and technology with the classical techniques of the Old Masters. The structured approach is unique to the artist's background, which allows him to develop intricate source material.

"The paintings I create are based on a composite of many images. Like much great art, they are a combination of fact and fiction. I don't make layouts, use grids, formulas like rules of thirds, golden ratios or any other confusing theories and systems of design and composition," Baldassini says. "All of my source material is captured using a DSLR camera and macro lens and then digitally edited to compose my images. I find this critical



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part of the process most satisfying and spend many hours getting things just right. After I've arrived at a pleasing com-

position the image is transferred to the panel, the drawing of which can take several hours.



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1 Heirloom Alba Roses, oil on mounted portrait linen panel, 23 3/4 x 25 1/2"

2 Paul Baldassini painting Raspberry Clowns and Festiva Maxima

3 Little Climbing Beauties III, oil on mounted portrait linen panel, 24 1/4 x 35 1/4"

4 Parfait Peony Study No. 1, oil on mounted portrait linen panel, 23 3/4 x 25 1/2"

Baldassini began as a watercolorist before transitioning to oils, so when he does the monochromatic underpainting he uses a watercolor technique where he substitutes spirits for water. "A technique I learned from the study of watercolor painting was to use a wide variety of neutral grays in opposition to more saturated color passages to create artworks that are luminous and compelling," he says. "I do the same in oils."

Drawing is important to Baldassini's florals and his other subjects. "Over the years I have mastered the art of fast sketching and keep sketchbooks of figures at cafes and classrooms where I sometimes teach," he says. "I can't quite explain why or how, but being able to nail down gesture and character in minutes with an ordinary pencil on paper has proved invaluable to the marks I make with brushes and paint on canvas."

Paul Baldassini is represented by Addison Art Gallery in Orleans, Massachusetts. ●



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