

To the Reader

If you consider yourself a computer “klutz” or say you can’t even draw a straight line, this book is for you! Likewise, scores of exciting challenges throughout it will appeal to you if you are a seasoned expert.

Most computers have a Paint application already installed. While Microsoft Windows® *Paint* is the drawing application used and described in this book, others such as Macintosh Mac Paint operate on similar principles, although they may offer a few different tools which are explained well on various websites.

Magical MousePainting™ is a great intergenerational tool for bonding with family, friends or colleagues. Children, parents, grandparents and caregivers can learn from, or teach, each other.

Introduction

Centuries ago, the ... most valued resources were fur, timber and land ... In the new economy, our most valued natural resources may be the creative workers among us.
—SANDRA YIN¹

We have become a society emphasizing and honoring science, math and technology. Are we significantly underestimating the value and impact of creating art?

Often, our first attempts to freely communicate our thoughts and feelings were as small children through drawing and painting on a blank page. We were spontaneously creative, without self-criticism or doubt.

Sadly, however, studies verify my observations as an elementary school teacher: our creativity diminishes over time. For various reasons, children steadily lose their creative thinking and abilities, as they grow older. In fact, research indicates by the age of twenty we have lost 80% of our innate creative genius.²



Mountain Top

¹ American Demographics. 2002

² *Radical Change Radical Results* by Kate Ludeman, Ph.D & Eddie Erlandson, MD. Dearborn Publishing. 2003

Today's world is changing so rapidly. If we pay heed to the media, read studies or follow statistics, it seems we must be superhuman to just keep up with the 'game' in any aspect of our personal or professional lives.

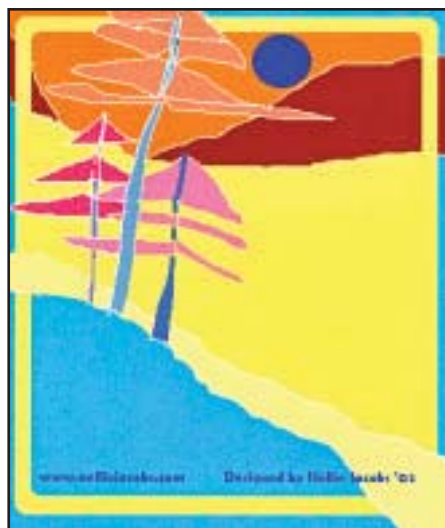
Mountain Top (inverted colors)

Demands, responsibilities and challenges face us at every turn. Yet, in every facet of our lives—our homes, parenting, gardens, meals, finances, how we market ourselves, and even the way we look and dress, “today, perhaps more than at any other time in history, the pressure is on us all to be more creative.”³

How might we ignite or heighten our creative thinking? We can start by focusing more on stimulating the creative, artistic and intuitive aspects of our brain.

I developed *Magical MousePainting™* as a simple yet effective device for unlocking and boosting creativity, innovation and self-expression. It is suitable for anyone of any age who can read or follow instructions and who wants to re-ignite or enhance their creative thinking.

This book is ideal for those who are wary of computers or drawing but are willing to learn in a way that is fun. It is filled with valuable tips and exciting challenges that will appeal to the seasoned expert as well.



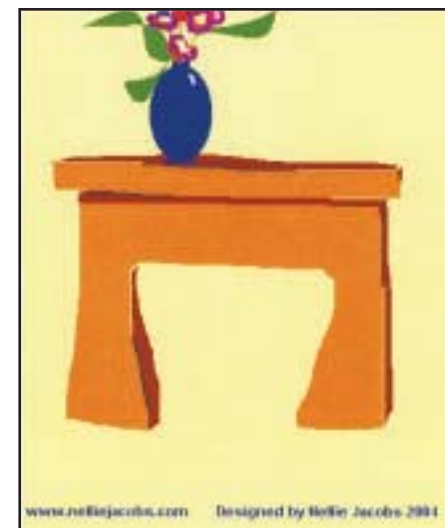
The exercises on these pages can provide hours of challenge and pleasure. Within minutes of learning the creative power of the mouse, *anyone* can be creating.

MousePainting, as I affectionately call it, features an adaptable skill which can open up limitless possibilities in a broad range of areas. The tools needed come already loaded on most computers.

I've written this book to share with you what I have learned so far about MousePainting and how I've creatively applied my new skills and knowledge. Hopefully, the instructions and challenges within these pages will inspire your creativity.

In the following sections, I will

- Take you step-by-step through the function of each Paint tool and menu item
- Illustrate points with examples of my own work
- Simply describe elements of design
- Show how to draw an adult's face
- Provide valuable tips
- Offer scores of challenges
- Suggest possible applications



Stonehenge

I would be pleased to hear about your own experiences and subsequent projects resulting from these pages.



Magical MousePainting™

Share your insights and discoveries on my *Magical MousePainting*™ blog at www.magicalmousepainting.blogspot.com.

Send your *MousePainting* illustrations to me at nellie@nelliejacobs.com. I may post them!

All the best.

Creatively Yours,
Nellie

Chapter 2

Why Paint with a Mouse?

Within minutes of learning the creative power of the mouse—and some practice—you can create exciting drawings without having to purchase paints, brushes, easels, canvases or cleaning up!!

No Drips! No mistakes! No ruining canvas or paper!!



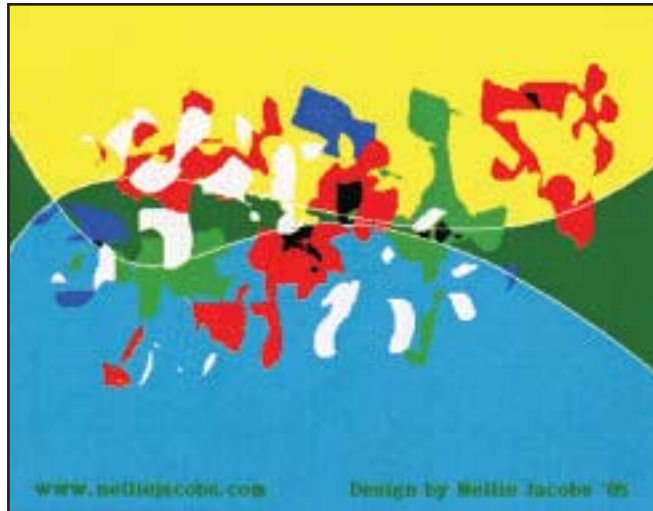
You can experiment on your own time in your own space.

If you don't like what you've done, you can save it to come back another time, delete or re-work it, create something else with it, or start over on a fresh canvas.

There are specific benefits to learning how to 'MousePaint.'

For the following reasons, it leads to what I call 'Mouse Power!'

- It's a new skill: learning something new keeps the brain stimulated. Since creativity uses energy, the very act of creating invigorates and energizes.
- Learning a new skill such as MousePainting 'draws' upon both rational and intuitive components of brain function. It particularly exercises the brain's creative thinking and doing which, in turn, helps you to become more creative thinking in other aspects of your life.
- It's simple and easy to use. This program has a small learning curve (each step is easy to absorb and follow). It's a good first step for the beginning digital artist.
- It's an opportunity to discover something—about yourself and what you can do.



Lightness of Being

- It provides countless hours of fun (kind of like playing solitaire or doing crosswords, number or word games, but differing in that it challenges the brain while being personally creative.)
- Unless you ask for it, there is no one else around to criticize your attempts! You can show or use only those pieces that are successful.
- The challenges presented are transferable to life, such as: how to master the things you want to do; how to make them work; and how to incorporate new elements.
- On the one hand, it's a great program to help you step out of your comfort zone. On the other hand, it's a friendly guide down the path of taking risks. Since no one needs to see your attempts you can delete—with one command—anything you don't like.



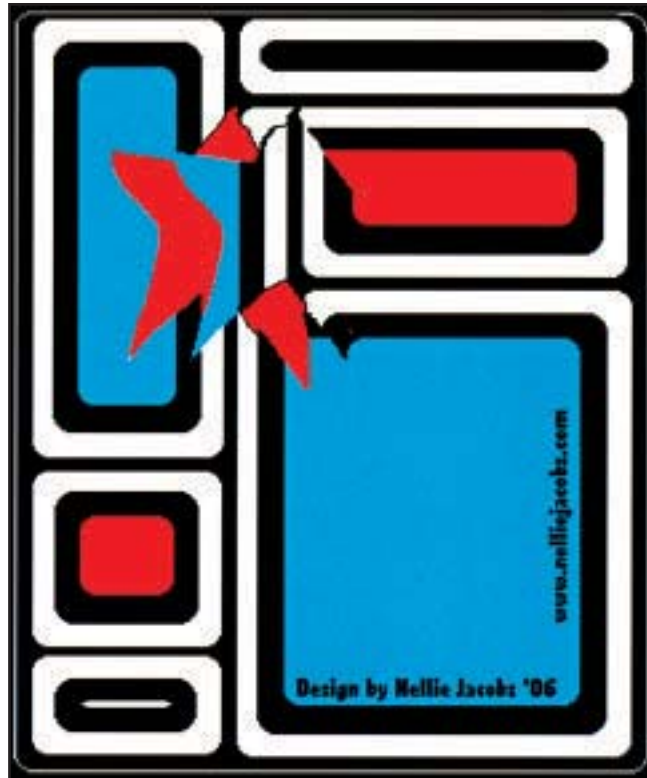
Laundry

- It may lead to a product. It inspires. Once you're into it, there is a spiritual aspect that connects you with your soul. It accesses and expands your Creative X-Spot® or core.¹¹ If you are fully into its creative process, you experience immense inner pleasure.
- It offers knowledge that can be applied to other programs. Paint illustrations can be incorporated into other programs. It can be used in different ways, many of which are described in the pages of this book.

The learning of something new is important for each of the reasons listed above.

However, it is the application of that knowledge—especially if it results in novel approaches and outcomes—as well as the very act of completing a project (whether first or final draft) that infuses one with a great sense of personal accomplishment and satisfaction.

¹¹ The state of being where imagination, passion and creativity meet and soar.



Star

Chapter 3

Facing the Blank Page

Most people look at it all 'screwy' ... They face a blank page and freeze. Instead, consider this:

The blank page, or canvas, is a metaphor for any problem we may encounter in life. Just as writers and artists can be intimidated by the blank page, so, too, can anyone facing a new challenge or experience.

In reality, facing the blank page, the new challenge or experience is basically about standing at the edge of opportunity. It can be viewed as a time for embracing endless possibilities.

Taking the time to learn a new skill opens a world of potential: we can learn more about ourselves; we can apply the results in different ways; we can network with and learn more from others who share our interest. We are restricted only by the limits we place on ourselves.

Great works of art, novels, ideas, theories, or inventions rarely arrive as a complete entity. Each project begins with the very first step:

Picasso started every painting with a stroke.

Dostoyevsky started *War and Peace* with a single word.

Mozart started each of his symphonies with one note.



Accordingly, consider each attempt to 'paint' as an unstructured, loose time to have fun, as a challenge to overcome, as a problem to solve, or a skill to apply.

The fact is, Paint is so easy to use, it can be a source of relaxation, a time-filler, a pause that refreshes, and a means to an end. It's possible to learn some or all of its mechanics in a very short period of time.

If you get stuck on any one unit in this book, leave it for another time.

With any project, there are several ways to keep motivated.

Be like Picasso: immediately before finishing one canvas he began the next one. He used the momentum of that first stroke to keep his interest and passion going.

You can do the same while learning to use Paint. Begin a new section, drawing or challenge just before you are ready to quit. Then you have something to get into without trying to think much about it. Keep going.

Whenever you've completed as much as you want or can on one 'painting', go on to another.

Or do as many artists, writers and professionals: work on several projects at the same time.

Once you 'get' the rhythm of the menu and tool bar, you may be anxious to jump forward or backward. Each unit stands on its own. So feel free to work at any section in any order you choose.

Take time to practise ...and to practise some more.

The key, however, is to just have fun.

PART TWO



Equipment