

Here's Some Information From Wikipedia About *The Joy of Painting* TV Show And Bob Ross

Bob Ross was born in Daytona Beach, FL, to Jack and Ollie Ross, a carpenter and a waitress respectively, and raised in Orlando, FL. As an adolescent, Ross cared for injured animals, including armadillos, snakes, alligators and squirrels, one of which was later featured in several episodes of his television show. He had a half-brother Jim, whom he mentioned in passing on his show. Ross dropped out of high school in the 9th grade. While working as a carpenter with his father, he lost part of his left index finger, which did not affect his ability to later hold a palette while painting.

The Joy of Painting was aired and produced by non-commercial, public television stations. The first season aired in early 1983 and was produced by WNVC in Falls Church, VA. Starting in the second season in late 1983, the show was produced by WIPB in Muncie, IN, until its end in 1994, and later by Blue Ridge Public Television in Roanoke, VA. The show is currently being distributed by American Public Television. Reruns began syndication at PBS stations in the United States in 1992, under the moniker *The Best of The Joy of Painting*, featuring a collection of Bob Ross's favorite paintings from past seasons. By the early 1990s, nearly 300 episodes of *The Joy of Painting* were on the air in the United States on PBS and in Canada on CBC Television. *The Joy of Painting* later began broadcasting in different places around the world, such as Mexico, Costa Rica, Colombia, the United Kingdom, Latin America, Greece, the Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Turkey, Iran, South Korea, Australia, and Japan.

During Ross' 20-year Air Force career, Ross developed an interest in painting after attending an art class at the Anchorage USO club. He found himself frequently at odds with many of his painting instructors, who were more interested in abstract painting. Ross said, "They'd tell you what makes a tree, but they wouldn't tell you how to paint a tree."

Ross was working as a part-time bartender when he discovered a TV show called *The Magic of Oil Painting*, hosted by German painter Bill Alexander. Alexander used a 16th-century painting style called alla prima (Italian for 'first attempt'), widely known as "wet-on-wet", that allowed him to create a painting within thirty minutes. Ross studied and mastered the technique, began painting and then successfully sold Alaskan landscapes that he would paint on novelty gold-mining pans. Eventually, Ross's income from sales surpassed his military salary. He retired from the Air Force in 1981 as a master sergeant.

Ross returned to Florida, studied painting with Alexander, joined his "Alexander Magic Art Supplies Company" and became a traveling salesman and tutor. Annette Kowalski, who had attended one of his sessions in Clearwater, FL, convinced Ross he could succeed on his own. Ross, his wife, and Kowalski pooled their savings to create his company, which struggled at first.

Ross was noted for his permed hair, which he ultimately disliked but kept after he had integrated it into the company logo.

In 1982, a station in Falls Church, VA, aired a taping of his art class as a pilot, and 60 PBS stations signed up for the show in the first year. In 1983, PBS station WIPB lured him to Muncie, IN, with the promise of creative freedom, and he found a kinship with the staff. He moved home to Florida in 1989 but continued to travel to Muncie every three months to tape the show. Ross



said he did the show for free and made his income from how-to books, videotapes and art supplies.

The show ran from Jan. 11, 1983, to May 17, 1994, but reruns still continue to appear in many broadcast areas and countries, including the non-commercial digital sub-channel network Create and the streaming service Hulu. In the United Kingdom, the BBC re-ran episodes during the COVID-19 pandemic while most viewers were in lockdown at home.

During each half-hour segment, Ross would instruct viewers in the quick, wet-on-wet oil painting technique, painting a scene without sketching it first, but creating the image directly from his imagination, in real time. He explained his limited paint palette, deconstructing the process into simple steps.

Artist and art critic Mira Schor compared Ross to Fred Rogers, host of *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood*, noting that Ross's soft voice and the slow pace of his speech were similar.

With help from Annette and Walt Kowalski, Ross used his television show to promote a line of art supplies and class recordings, building what would become a \$15-million business – Bob Ross Inc. – which would ultimately expand to include classes taught by other artists trained in his methods. Following Ross's death, ownership of the company was passed to the Kowalskis.

Ross also filmed wildlife, squirrels in particular, usually in his garden, and he would often take in injured or abandoned squirrels and other animals. Small animals often appeared on his *Joy of Painting* canvases.

Ross painted an estimated 30,000 paintings during his lifetime. Despite the unusually high supply of original paintings, Bob Ross original paintings are scarce on the art market, with sale prices of the paintings averaging in the thousands of dollars and frequently topping \$10,000. The major auction houses have never sold any of Ross's paintings, and Bob Ross Inc. continues to own many of the ones he painted for *The Joy of Painting*, as Ross himself was opposed to having his work turned into financial instruments. "A Walk in the Woods," Ross's first television painting, was sold in a pledge drive offering shortly after the first season aired; it is, as of September 2023, in the hands of Ryan Nelson, a Minnesota-based art dealer who acquired it from its original buyer and has been the primary dealer for the few Ross paintings that have reached the open art market. Nelson has placed an asking price of \$9,850,000 for the sale of the painting and has indicated he has other plans for the painting if it does not sell for that price.

In contrast to more traditionally famous artists, Ross's work, described by an art appraisal service as a cross between "fine art" and "entertainment memorabilia" - is most highly sought after by common fans of *The Joy of Painting*, as opposed to wealthy collectors. The artwork circulating among collectors is largely from Ross's work from before he launched the television show.



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