



## Steps to Mastery

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*If you don't know how to get where you want to go, it is unlikely you will get there.*  
Alain Briot

### A - Introduction

Mastery is a process of gradual change and improvement. While the individual steps that take us through this process are different for all of us, the beginning and end of the process are similar.

The purpose of this essay is to point out what the beginning and end steps are, and to do this for 20 different areas of emphasis in the field of fine art photography in particular and of life in general.

There are therefore 20 separate areas of focus in this essay. Each area consists of a statement worded around a 'from – to' sentence structure. Each statement shows 2 things:

1. Where the photographer started from
2. Where the photographer arrived at

These 20 areas are only addressed in a single-sentence statement. No explanations are given. This approach is intentional. Rather than explain these statements away, my goal here is to have you reflect and think about them.



### B - Steps to Mastery

**1 - Artistic emphasis** - From believing that good photographs are technically perfect photographs, to knowing that a

good photograph uses good technique to express personal vision and emotions.

**2 - Technique** - From being at the mercy of technique to making technique second nature.

**3 - Learning** - From not being motivated to learn to believing that learning never ends.

**4 - Motivation** - From needing external motivation to generating self motivation.

**5 - Goals** - From not having goals to centering your career on achieving specific goals in a timely fashion.

**6 - Planning** - From relying on happenstance to prioritizing and planning in order to maximize the use of your time.

**7 - Equipment** - From believing that equipment is responsible for good photos to knowing that practice and personal skills are responsible for good photos.

**8 - Audience** - From believing that audience is unnecessary to understanding that having an ongoing relationship with a specific audience is essential to professional and artistic growth.

**9 - Areas of expertise** - From not having any expertise to being famous for your expertise in a specific area.

**10 - Work** - From believing a single photo is evidence of skills to believing that the completion of specific projects is evidence of skills.

**11 - Talent** - From believing that talent will generate success to believing that hard work will generate success.

**12 - Luck** - From believing that blind luck will generate success to believing that hard work creates your own luck.

**13 - Marketing** - From believing that photos will sell themselves because they are beautiful to understanding that photographs are products and that marketing is what sells products.

**14 - Personal expression** - From doing documentation to expressing personal emotions.

**15 - Criticism** - From resenting and rejecting criticism to understanding and valuing criticism.

**16 - Knowledge** - From acquiring academic knowledge to using and implementing specific knowledge.

**17 - Areas of focus** - From not having a focus to focusing on a specific subject for a specific reason.

**18 - Creative fear** - From being afraid of expressing yourself to feeling free to express yourself.

**19 - Creativity** - From not being creative to seeing endless possibilities.

**20 - Letting go** - From duplicating the work of other artists to creating artwork that is entirely yours.

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**Alain Briot** creates fine art photographs, teaches workshops and offers DVD tutorials on composition, conversion, optimization, printing and marketing photographs. Alain is also the author of *Mastering Landscape Photography*, *Mastering Photographic Composition, Creativity and Personal Style* and *Marketing Fine Art Photography*. All 3 books are available from Amazon and other bookstores as well from Alain's website.

You can find more information about Alain's work, writings and tutorials as well as subscribe to Alain's Free Monthly Newsletter on his website at <http://www.beautiful-landscape.com> To subscribe simply go to <http://www.beautiful-landscape.com> and click on the Subscribe link at the top of the page. You will have access to over 40 free essays by Alain, in PDF format, immediately after subscribing.

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