



Community Outreach

Oakland VA | March 7, 2018

Start with an abstract underpainting for surprising results

April 2018



From left to right;
Libby, Joyce, Nancy,
Rudy's hand and
glasses, and George.



While Sheila is on vacation, she asked me to fill in for her with the veterans in Oakland. I thought that a fun thing to do would be this exercise where we start a painting with a completely abstract, unrelated underpainting. It's a good way to 'get out of our own heads and preconceptions' about 'what' might constitute an interesting background for a painting... and very often ends up with surprisingly interesting combinations of shapes and colors in the finished painting.

A fun way to arrive at 'what' that background might be is to cut out a pair of paper croppers, get a magazine, turn it sideways and look at photos using the croppers for a pattern of shapes that's interesting... I used the shapes from an ad for bedding.

Once we've identified the pattern, we wet our paper and slash away, loose as can be, keeping the values light to medium adding texture... salt, splatters, whatever you like. For this, I decided to make the background using only cool colors and then paint the subject over it using warm colors. When the background is dry, we paint our subject, in this case I decided to use a simple landscape with a barn and a big tree that all could easily draw.

I brought the first painting in along with magazines, croppers, and explained the process. The group had fun with it and did a great job. It's always interesting and enjoyable to see the different results and work of this group.

Michael Friedland
for Sheila Cain