

Art Avenue

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PAINTING IN THE LIFE OF...

LALITA HAMILL, AFCA

The following is a brief overview of the steps Lalita Hamill, AFCA will discuss in depth during the FCA weekend workshop "Classical Luminous Oil Paintings" at the Holland Croft Studios in North Vancouver on May 30-31, 2015. For more information on our education program and to register online, visit our website at www.artists.ca/education.

For me, painting with oils is akin to savouring dark chocolate, touching velvet fabric, sipping merlot wine, and being enveloped by music at a live concert; they are rich, full, and deep. They are sumptuous! I encourage you to explore this wonderful medium further.



STEP 1 – COMPOSITION, ORIENTATION AND SIZE

I usually spend a great deal of time setting up and/or developing compositions. However, at times a photograph stands on its own, and can be used 'as is'. Mine just needed a bit of cropping, and a bit more height. In the interest of painting time, workshop participants will transfer an image (to be determined) directly onto a small canvas.

STEP 2 – SETTING THE INTENTION

When I teach I include aspects of psychology, philosophy, heart, emotions, and intention, because to focus only on knowledge and technique is to miss the fundamental purpose of creating art. It is worthwhile to spend (at least) thirty minutes reflecting on why you paint, what you want to express, who you are painting for, and so on.



STEP 3 – TONAL VALUE MAP

Instead of doing preparatory sketches, we will draw directly onto a black & white photograph using geometric shapes that clearly block and simplify the lights and darks.



STEP 4 – UNDER PAINTING

While looking at the tonal map created in step 2, I sketched Bonnie onto the canvas with my brush and burnt sienna. I then blocked in various areas that were similar in tonal value. I use under paintings like this for several reasons, the main one being that it simplifies the decision-making process. I can concentrate on the accurate placement of light, mid, and dark shapes as compared to the shapes around them. In so doing I figure out how everything will sit within the canvas edges, especially the background.

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STEP 5 – ASSESS

Although I continuously reassess, design changes are conveniently made at this point because the paint is thin and easily removed. I find that many students become impatient at this point, and are eager to apply colour. But for anyone who has completed fewer than 100 paintings, I highly recommend creating detailed, developed under paintings. The benefits are too numerous to mention here.



STEP 6 – COLOUR & SCULPTING FORM

The next decision to make is which colours to use. This is strongly connected to Step 3, for your intention affects your colour choice. I encourage students to use 4-6 colours, excluding black and white. Knowing how to translate tonal values into colour, and how to use your brush, are key to creating paintings full of light, atmosphere, gradation, and space.



STEP 7 – FINISHING

The entire process involves working from large to small, general to specific, loose & blurred to controlled and crisp. Note: we will not use any glazing techniques during the workshop because there is not enough time for the paint to dry in between layers. We will discuss what it means for a painting to be 'finished'.

ABOUT LALITA:

Lalita received classical training at the Vancouver Academy of Art, and is a sought-after instructor, demonstrator, and juror. She has facilitated monthly art critiques in Langley for nine years, and according to C. Evans, "Lalita is not only an outstanding artist, she is one of those rare people with the ability to teach". To learn more about Lalita and view her work, please visit www.lalitamill.com or <http://artistretreats.ca/>