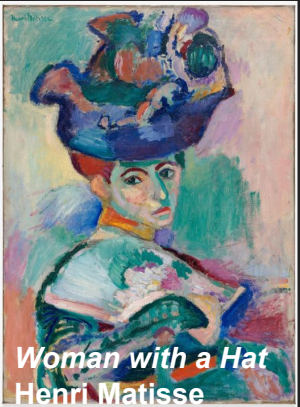


Art Journal 3 (SL)

Joseph Sullivan

Acrylic Painting



With my first acrylic painting, I strived to emphasize the texture of the pineapple through high (even unrealistic) color contrast between the bright pinks, bright yellows, and dark cyans. Additionally, recognizing my own unfamiliarity with painting, I decided to maximize painterliness as opposed to pursuing tighter brushwork. With my second painting, I further familiarized myself with the art form and experimented with creating shadows through a shift in hue rather than solely value.

My pineapple is most inspired by many post impressionist and fauvist works, particularly *Woman with a Hat* by Henri Matisse. This work comes from the Fauvism movement, which was heavily inspired by the Post-Impressionism movement. The Post-Impressionism movement, like its predecessor, sought to capture the impression of its subject. However, Post-Impressionism came with greater abstraction and a freer, less naturalistic depiction of light. Fauvism was even more painterly, and it continued to abstract and put emphasis on the artist's vision and emotions rather than a representative depiction of the subject. With greater abstraction and emphasis on the author's view, Fauvists painted with far bolder colors.

Fauvism and its predecessors all originated in France and occurred during the midst of a rapidly changing Europe. During the later half of the 19th century, German and Italian unifications occurred, reshaping the political order of Europe. Additionally, these artists lived in a world shaped by the industrial revolutions of the 1800s took place. In a world filled with factories and political tension, Fauvism turned the focus from the accurately representing the world to the artist's own expression, in a time where individuals often found little voice.

In contrast, I live in an era dominated by individual expression through the advent of mass medias such as instagram, flickr, etc. While I tried to used vibrant and even unrealistic colors to create art similar to Fauvists, I was instead motivated by fascination of famous artists throughout the past.

Acrylic Painting



While working on my third painting, I documented my progress through pictures to show my thought process. With acrylics and oil, one typically works from the background to the foreground, so I started by creating a gradient from a pale blue to a light orange in the sky. In retrospect, I probably should have tried to blend the colors more to make the sky more convincing, but it appeals aesthetically. Then, I jumped to the foreground to create the lot. Instead of starting with the hills first, I created the lot because I wanted the acrylics to dry so that the dark color would not mix and darken the hills too significantly. I started with far too dark of a color before realizing that the lot itself is rather purple, so I added more blue and red to dilute the black color.

Acrylic Painting

Overall, my painting, once finished, is clearly more vibrant than my reference piece, but is by no means Fauvist. Either from lack of boldness or thought, I kept the colors fairly similar, but in retrospect I think it could have turned out well using purple for the shadows on the hills in the background. Furthermore, as to not divide the painting in half, compositionally I should have continued the fence in the foreground.

This painting in particular holds some similarities to Impressionist and Post-Impressionist works as evidenced by the visible brush strokes and painting only capturing the essence and the light rather than every detail. For example, *Impression, Sunrise* by Claude Monet is the defining work of the Impressionist movement that captures only the "impression" of the sunrise than every detail. As stated before, the Impressionist movement occurred during the later half of the 19th century, amidst the second industrial revolution and the unifications of Germany and Italy. If I were to keep my artwork more inline with traditionally impressionist works, I would use smaller brush strokes, as seen in Monet's works. Furthermore, Impressionist works typically have a more detailed sky.

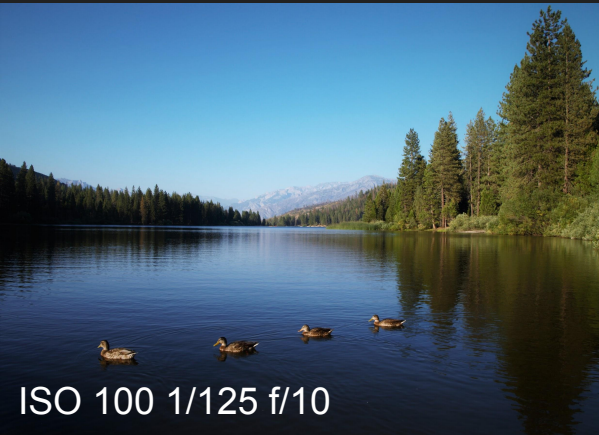


ISO 100 1/125 f/6.3



Impression, Sunrise Claude Monet

Acrylic Painting



As I continued to paint, I experimented with different techniques. With the painting of the smooth hills, the lot, and the fence, I found it difficult to create a gradient in the sky, but with this painting I found I had to create multiple gradients. In creating the gradient in the sky, I used similar techniques as before: I simply continued to add white to my palette as I got closer and closer to the horizon. But for the water, I realized I could create a better transition by first painting the basic colors, but then slowly mixing them by going over the canvas with water. Having watched multiple Bob Ross videos, I found that I could make trees just by filling my brush with paint and tapping the edge of my brush against the canvas continually until I reached the bottom. Then, I added different shades of the original green to make it more convincing. I mimicked my process upside down to create reflections. Finally, I slightly blurred the reflections by going over the lake with a clean brush full of water.

Looking at my painting now, I see that I could have made it more aesthetically pleasing by adding in little bits of orange at the horizon to make the scene in the evening. Additionally, I should have created more contrast by having a darker blue and darker greens. Finally, the ducks would have added a really nice touch to the painting as a whole.

Bokeh

Meanwhile, with photography I took pictures with bokeh. Bokeh, being the way the lens of a camera renders out of focus light, is produced by scattered light from out of focus areas. To maximise this effect, I used the largest possible aperture/f-stop and a longer focal length.

Bokeh is frequently used in macrophotography and portraits, but I specifically used it for capturing elements in nature. Bokeh is useful for photographers as it allows unimportant details to be blurred out, removing clutter and distractions from the photograph. Furthermore, the blur of the bokeh (in addition to shadows) creates a sense of depth.

In my picture of a flower, the flower seems especially close and big, even though in reality there is not very much of a difference in depth between the flower itself and the bush. In my picture of the plant (below) the bokeh allows the crisp green strands to be especially evident in juxtaposition to the smooth, blurriness of the background.





Kashmir, Steve McCurry

On the same topic, bokeh is absolutely necessary for my photograph of a friend's arm (below). His arm, the paints, and his pencil are all clearly distinguishable, but the cluttered background suddenly becomes irrelevant because of the blur. Rather than detracting from the picture, the background has no such effect. Furthermore, the juxtaposition between the blurriness and the focus emphasizes the focused area. For example, photographer Steve McCurry uses bokeh in his portraits to emphasize features of the subject. In this photo in Kashmir, McCurry emphasizes the texture of the subjects face which contrasts from the smooth blurring of the background.



ISO 400 1/60 f/5.6

Bokeh



Still working with bokeh, I experimented with choosing my focus. In this picture of a tree, I tried focusing on the foreground and the background, but I ultimately found that focusing on the foreground is more effective. As the background consists of smaller objects, there is inherently more clutter. As a result, focusing on the background emphasizes distracting features while blurring the simple yet aesthetically pleasing texture of the tree in the foreground. Therefore, I find that in general I can create a better image by focusing on the foreground.

Bokeh

While bokeh is really effective in minimizing distracting features, I found that it does not apply in all situations. For example, in this picture of a fence (left), I focused on the closest post and allowed the rest to blur. While still interesting, I think that the blur detracts from the leading line of the fence. For example, in the picture on the right without much bokeh, it is far more natural for your eyes to trace the fence, which adds to the overall aesthetic appeal of the image.



Post Process Assignment 1

When looking through the photos that I had taken at Agoura, this one really appealed to me. The upwards angle makes each of the runners seem bigger and more dominant, and the tilt of the caution tape could not help but remind me of the tilted frames of comic book strips. With all of this in mind, I could not help but try to create a comic book aesthetic.

Before applying a halftone filter—which imitates the way CMYK color printers would print comic books using varying size dots of cyan, magenta, yellow, and black—I first tried to make the colors appropriate for the comic book aesthetic. I adjusted the curves to increase the contrast, and I posterized the photo with 6 different levels. Once I applied the halftone filter, nothing was really that distinguishable, so I decided to select out the first few runners and have them appear without the halftone filter. To really create the comic book look, however, I found it necessary to create outlines around each runner.

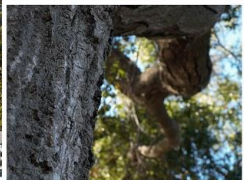




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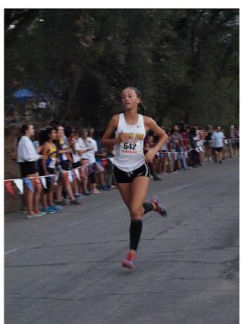
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P1013611.jpg



pineapple.jpg



plant.jpg



satwiwa.jpg



water.jpg

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