



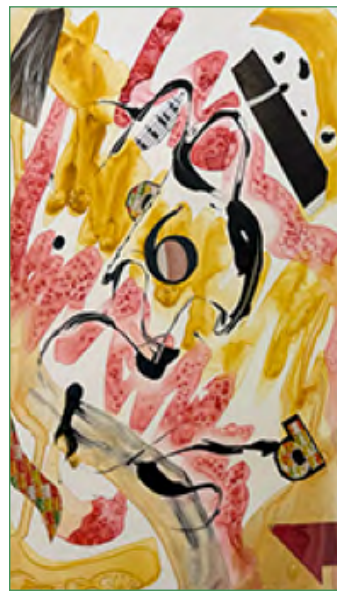
Community Outreach

Collaging and Painting with the Oakland Veterans



The choice was to finish an abstract collage on Yupo or work on the farm painting and possibly complete it. Those who chose to work on collages headed to a stack of magazines brought in by Pat Moseuk. They searched for colors, words, or images that would complete their artwork. Then they trimmed and glued the bits of paper onto their Yupo artwork.

The farm painters referred to their value studies and partially completed paintings and moved on from where they left off. In a previous session, we had painted a value study beginning with the middle values. The plan was to redraw the composition and paint in the lighter areas first. Then consulting the value study painting, add the mid to darker values in color. Finally concluding with the darkest value. Of course, there's the stepping back from the artwork to ascertain what's needed to pull it all together.



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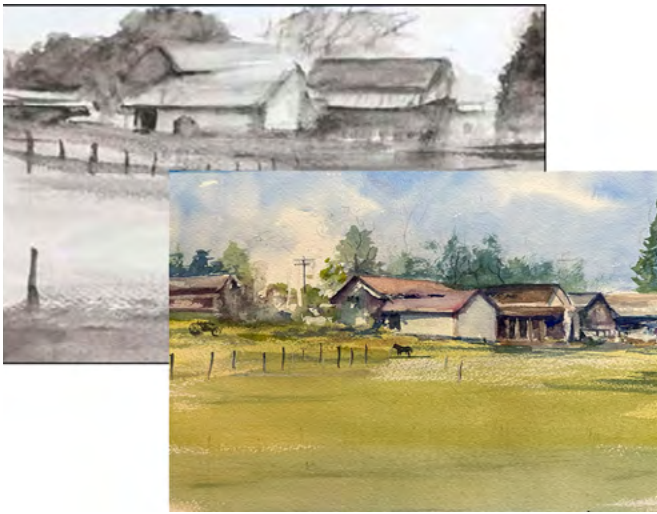
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This was a fun class. People were sharing scissors, magazines, and glue. The Oakland Veterans Group functions more like a painting group than a class with a leader. The CWA volunteers are learning a lot from the veterans and hopefully vice versa. We have mutual respect. Once these two projects are complete the plan is to move on to portraits and self-portraits. We all find the prospect both exciting and scary, a good recipe for drama and interesting paintings.

Sheila Cain

Co-Director, Community Outreach



Observations

The CWA Outreach programs bring art to a variety of groups. One of the best things about it is that people are happy to see you show up. Another thing is that artists, new to painting or professionals, usually have other talents. A person's life experiences contribute to the richness of what we experience when offering art instruction to others.

Many of our VA artists have musical talent and have performed and created in the music field. It is not uncommon for a veteran, painting or not, to spontaneously play the piano that is in the room. Some veterans who possess other talents just come and observe.

One such man creates his dreamcatchers to fly over his wheelchair instead of the more commonly used flags. The traditional feathers kept disintegrating so he melted down recycled metal cans to create metal feathers that are quite durable. He also crafts drums from salvaged wood. He taught us that dreamcatchers need an opening in the center to let the good dreams in while the outer portion traps the bad ones. On a recent trip to the Southwest, I spoke with a young man who affirmed this and said he'd had one since he was a baby.

Another veteran (who wasn't in our painting class), told us about his life experiences including being homeless for a year after getting out of the military. He had created a good life for himself and then sang us a hip-hop song a capella. He also played a version with music and background singers on his phone. It was profound.

Dale has the ability to coax paintings out of veterans who think they just can't paint. We've witnessed tears of joy more than once and it is always a reminder that what we do matters.

Dale Rutz & Maggie Metcalf

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