

Pat Dews AWS D.F., NWS - Learn to Paint Better Abstracts Five Day Plan

Day 1

- Design talk review of Pat's paintings.
- 3 painting starts - morning - shape making, over lapping shapes (15" X15") - afternoon - strata design format (rock/rock water design, 15" X 18")
- Texture, color, composition, masking, spraying and dripping covered
- Demo using transparent, opaque watercolor, inks and acrylics
- Students paint their own starts - all unique - no clones - non objective or realistic elements included - flowers, figures, trees
- Daily critiques as I circulate

Day 2

- Use a view finder to find good design images - full sheet painting
- Use a view finder image, which is actually the already found image
- Demo and then students paint their own unique paintings - no clones
- All view finder starts are seen on an easel - construction paper and my collage pieces used to make next step suggestions
- Students paint
- Daily positive critiques, based on good design, as I circulate

Day 3

- Video presentation of Pat's paintings - design talk - 10 minute break
- Use a drawn grid or view finder image or abstract understructure to plan a new design on a failed full sheet painting
- Demo - Finishing techniques - using acrylic paints - line work, scumbling, transfers, sgraffito (scraping through the top layer to reveal the underpainting, texturing with newspaper, wax paper transfers, plastic wrap transfers, gesso washes and special effects using rubbing alcohol
- Students paint
- Daily positive critiques, based on good design, as I circulate

Day 4

- More finishing techniques - demo of paintings that need just a little finishing and starts I did in class
- Gluing collage pieces to alter a failed painting
- Using collage to start a painting
- Cropping a painting for better design
- Students paint

Day 5

- Group critiques - groups of five - students can watch all critiques or continue to work and listen to only their group
- Quick walk around offering comments to students, who will be critiqued later
- Depending on class size there may or may not be a demo

I provide reference materials, but students are encouraged to bring their own photo references of abstract shapes, as well. Look for extreme close ups of interesting shapes - think junk yards, boat yards, plant life, food, rusty pieces, parts of buildings that have interesting shapes, angles and rock walls.

Some paintings will be finished, others in different stages of completion. In a workshop it is important to try new techniques and get a lot of work going. Finishing pieces and finishing touches can come later in the studio, as the student works quietly on his/her own. Students will leave with many new ideas and new excitement. Many students write later saying how their work has grown and they will never work the same way again.