
From Inspiration to Creation with Lauren Hooper

Chapter 1 - From Inspiration to Creation

Overview

(gentle upbeat music) - Hi, I'm Lauren. I'm an adventurer, crafter, and storyteller. Traveling the world, telling my story, and making art is my passion. In this class we'll work from a photo reference and pull out a color palette, isolate shapes and motifs, find movement, rhythm, and texture. From this, we will create a painting and we'll translate it into other mediums like stitching on fabric. I'll share more ideas for how to continue gathering inspiration to make multiple iterations of your artwork.

Materials

- For this course, we're going to be using a photo as reference, and we're going to pull all of our inspiration, our ideas, our color palette from that photo. So you're going to choose a favorite photo of yours. It can be one that you took or one that you found and make sure that it has color and movement and lots of yummy inspiration in it. For my main inspiration photo, I chose this photo of myself in Amsterdam and I have three supporting photos of the same setting at different angles with a little bit more of the color story in them. Next, I have watercolor supplies. I have watercolor paper, a round brush in four, and a 3/4 inch flat brush. I have my favorite watercolors. From here, you're going to be able to choose all of your own activities, but I'll be working in a sketchbook, which you're welcome to join me in. I've got some paint chips as supplies to use. This project leans to you being able to make a very wide variety of different mediums and forms of artwork that you like. I will be using stitching material to create a piece. I have a hoop, a fat quarter, tapestry needles, and embroidery floss. I've gathered my favorite supplies and materials that I work with frequently, so you can gather your favorites and we will find a way to work whatever your inspiration is into your favorite art medium of choice.

Color, shape, and movement

- The first thing we're gonna do is we're gonna dissect our photo, we're gonna find our colors, our pattern, our lines, everything we need to get started with our project. I'm gonna pick my first main photo, and I'm gonna look over it and start noticing any colors that really stand out at me, and start building a color palette that I want to use in my artwork. Immediately I see this bright yellow from this shirt, and I love how it is such a contrast, so I know I'm gonna want to use this yellow color. And then I love all of the color that's reflected here from the sunset in the buildings. So I will use the yellows, the oranges, this rich red from the browns. And when I feel like I've found enough color here, I'm gonna switch to my other photos and continue pulling color from there, because the whole purpose of this activity is to take a moment that you really loved and turn it into artwork so that you can remember it and relive it in new ways. Now I'm going to look at my secondary photos to continue pulling more of the color from the different scenes that happened. I wanna focus a lot on the sunset colors here, and now there's a lot of blue and beautiful purples here in these photos too, but for now, I want my color scheme to be really tight, and I really wanna focus on the sunset, the buildings, and the shirt colors, that's where I'm gonna pull my palette from. I'm gonna pick my flat brush up, and I'm gonna start playing with my watercolors, and finding the correct color palette. I've also grabbed some paint chips in my color scheme also to give me a few more ideas and help me

color match. I immediately know that this color is too light, so I'm gonna darken it a bit. Maybe add some orange into it, try and match that nice mustard color in the shirt. There we go. That's perfect. I'm gonna move on to trying to find this rusty orange color. I think I got that pretty well. We'll add in some of our browns from the buildings, they're a little tan, a little orange, so we'll kind of mix these together, see what we get. That's the beauty of using watercolors to create color palettes, because they mix and blend so easily. I'm gonna try and find this rich cherry red brown color now. There we go. That's showing up really nicely. Maybe a little darker, just a hint of black in there. Let's see. That's looking nice and rich. I'm happy with that color. Now I'm gonna try and find these subtle hints of pink because I really want to bring out the colors from the sunset. If you feel like your paints are getting too dark, just add some more water and it'll lighten them up. I'm liking this color, and I think I want to hit on some of those darker pinks that are hiding up there too. I added some orange in to warm my pinks up, 'cause they were getting a little too cool for this color palette. And now I'm gonna add this bright, shiny yellow that's reflected in that window. I'm gonna add some water to it, create more of that reflected look. Before I get too far, I wanna make some notes about how I mixed my color palette, so I'm able to keep it consistent throughout my project. You can pull as many or as few colors as you need to fit your palette. The next thing we're gonna do is we're gonna look at our photos to find the shapes and patterns that we're gonna pull out and use in our artwork. Obviously there are so many rectangles here with all of the windows. So we can go ahead and add those into our page, and we wanna kinda stick with our color palette to keep practicing mixing those colors that we created. And when I look really closely, I notice that these are not traditional windows that have the cross in them. Some of them have lower cross bars, some of them have higher ones that have these nice T shapes in them, some of them are higher. I'm just gonna play around and see how many different shapes I can find with these. There's also these nice rounded doors that I want to include. I'm also gonna just notice the shapes that they're in, we've got some nice oblong rectangles, and then start looking at how the shapes are filled. So some of the rectangles are more open and empty, and some are more filled in. This is gonna add a lot more variety and options for us when we're creating our artwork. Next, I'm gonna continue looking for different shapes, so this house has a nice triangle up top that I want to use. I love this shape here. Next, I'm gonna look at the lines and the patterns that are created. If you look at this rooftop, the repetition of this architectural detail is a fantastic pattern that we can translate. So I'm gonna follow the line, and just create these nice little lines that come off of that. And if we continue to look, this building has different ones, they're really hard to see, but essentially they run straight across, and then every so often, there's just two of them. We're really mining this photo to find all the details that we can that are so minute, that most people would miss, but we're gonna use to recreate into our own unique piece of art. You'll also notice more of the details on the buildings here are these nice, just little spots. These will come in really handy for mark making and adding in more detail. If you blur your eyes and look in really closely at the details, you can start to pull out a lot more little subtle shapes and ideas. So inside these windowpanes, there are crosses, there are also Ts that we can use in our artwork. Of course the squares from the windows, and then if we zoom back out and we look at the building as a whole, there's a lot of repetition of shape and great movement and lines that are happening here. So that is what I'm trying to focus on as I'm choosing my shapes. And then, of course, we're not gonna forget our shirt, which is such a big feature, and we're gonna make sure we have a nice, big pop of that deep mustard yellow color, in this big, bold shape. I also love the deep V that my necklace creates here, so we're gonna add that into our shapes that we can use, and I want to close in that top windowpane, so we have this additional triangle at our disposal. Regardless of what kind

of project you're doing, this is a great exercise to get you started. It gets your mind thinking about shape, and movement, and color, and form, and gives you a lot of inspiration and ideas to draw from as you begin your work.

Translating inspiration into an abstract painting

- The goal of this whole exercise is to be able to learn, to translate the inspiration that you've found from special moments in time into different types of artwork. So our first project today is gonna be creating a painting. This is a really easy way to get started, and I like to start with a painting because it helps us quickly develop a whole new idea and piece of artwork from your moment, and really sets us off on the right path of translating our inspiration to new creations. Now I have my color references here to remind me what colors I need to use. And I have my shapes that are gonna inspire my painting. I'm gonna work on an abstract piece that uses all of these elements together to create a new, fun piece of artwork. I'm gonna start with these big yellow pops of color because they'll anchor our piece in really well. And again, I'm still just mixing on the page as I go, but if you're using another type of medium, you could mix in a pan, create your own color set. However you like to do this. If you're following along and creating your own painting from your photo that you've chosen, and you're doing the same style, just be mindful of how much paint you're putting on the paper. For this first layer, you wanna make sure you have good balance and the color is spread evenly throughout your page. What I like to do is I just like to begin with each shape and layer it in as I go, I start with the bigger shapes so that they act as anchors. And it's okay, as you begin creating, if your shapes and your colors start taking a little bit of a different form, because it means you're making it unique to you and to your situation. As I create, I will change the directions to make shapes more unique and more of my own, as I'm pulling them from the inspiration pieces. So I'm turning this V on its side, and then I'm gonna move to these more open Vs. Now I wanna add in more of my window shapes 'cause those are another big anchor piece that I can use to pull everything together. Now I'm gonna add in some of these triangles and I'm gonna assess what colors I haven't used yet. I haven't used this red pink color. Now I want to add in some of my hashes that mimicked the openings of the windows on the buildings. And for the first one, I'm gonna go very literal and then I'm gonna start abstracting them more and changing them to become more of my own. We have a lot of freedom with these paintings and what the type of project that we're creating. We want them to be our view on them and how we remember them. So feel free to start manipulating what you see into things that work for you. Now, I'm gonna move into these fun lines. I'm gonna do a couple of them very traditionally, the way that I saw them in the photo. And then I'm going to start abstracting them. Gonna mimic them here, 'cause these are also straight lines. And I'm just doing what feels right. Now I'm gonna switch to my smaller brush, and I'm gonna pick up some more of these smaller detail mark-making type things and add those in as fillers to add more into the space. Try rotating your motifs for more variation in your project. And remember to make things bleed off the edge of your page. Now I'm gonna look over the painting and see what I feel is missing and add in those parts and fill in any gaps and holes that I see. So I'm gonna go through and I'm gonna see what colors that I'm missing in the page and what shapes 'cause I haven't used this shape and this shape yet and so I wanna make sure I add those in. Even though we're getting further and further away from our original photo in our original idea, this project is doing exactly what it's supposed to do. And it's getting you inspired and helping you create new iterations of work that is unique to you.

Art journal pages

- A lot of my creative energy goes into art journal pages, and so for this next project, I'm gonna show you how to translate your inspiration into a new page. I have collected my paint chips in my color palette, some tissue paper in the sunset palette, my favorite drawing pens, which are Posca pens and Microns, and of course, a glue stick. I'm gonna start by creating a sunset using the tissue paper. (paper crinkles) (paper crinkles) (paper crinkles) I'm working in a Strathmore Mixed Media Journal, the pages are nice and thick, and take lots of wet medium really well. (paper tears) (paper tears) (paper tears) I'm layering my papers in because I want it to resemble a sunset but still be abstracted. (paper tears) (paper tears) Okay, and last but not least is our yellow. (paper tears) (paper tears) (paper crinkles) Oh, look, this red is really bright, so I want to tone it down by layering it underneath everything else, and then I'm gonna add a bit of gold because everything is better with gold, and it adds a nice touch to the feeling you get when you watch a beautiful sunset. All right, I'm just going to glue everything down with my glue stick. (paper crinkles) I don't want the journal to have a hard time closing and to rip the paper, so I'm gonna go ahead and rip it myself, but it still looks like it's one solid piece. Just gonna continue to layer it in. (paper tears) Just make sure everything's glued down nicely. Tissue paper is really easy to work with because it will stick with very little pressure. (paper crinkles) I like that it's a little crinkled on the page, it adds really nice texture here. (paper tears) (paper crinkles) I'm gonna take a second, make sure everything's glued down well. (paper crinkles) And the next thing I'm gonna do is turn my paint chips into my cityscape. I'm gonna start by layering them in. Hmm, maybe we don't need this one, toss that one out, okay. I'm gonna cut these to mimic some of my shapes that we created and found in our original photo. I'll start with the traditional rooftop from this V right here. And then I liked this top here, so I'm gonna add that in. But I'm gonna save some of my scraps, 'cause they will come in handy. Just gonna cut this one into this tall, long shape here. Maybe we'll do another nice tall V. Maybe we'll use this rounded top here, create a little variety. There we go. Let me lay my houses out again. Maybe we'll make a few a little thinner. Okay. Now I'll glue these down. When you create all of this natural texture and things that come up from these places, it's really beautiful and adds a lot of character and new life into your spreads. Now I wanna go back through my scraps that I cut off and I want to mimic some of these other shapes that we created in here through these. I'm gonna add this nice, fun triangle roof. We can cut some windows out, outta these nice shapes. Add these in. Ah, and I love how wonky and overlapped they are. They're becoming so unique. And we've got some more square shapes in here that I wanna pull out and use. And we don't have to do it for every house, but some variety will be nice. This is very fun and lovely here. Let's see if I can find another one. Yes. And maybe one lasts one, here. Now I'm gonna take my paint marker, and I'm gonna add a little bit more of these window details and these different lines and shapes into my cityscape. (paint marker scratches) Just by using the shapes that I've pulled out instead of the original photo, I've created a whole new cityscape here. Now I'm going to cut up one of my reference photos and add us into the page. I don't need all that hair. And I think we're gonna live right here. There we go. Now I'll add a tiny bit of journaling to my spread and then we'll be done. I like to draw lines to keep me on track so my words stay nice and straight. (pen scratches) Just by switching up your media, you can get a ton of different looks and feels for your projects.

Create a stitched piece

- For our last project together, we're gonna do embroidery. And I was so excited for it, I even needed to change into a new outfit. This is a really fun project that you can do even if you do not

know anything about stitching or embroidery, it is absolutely great for beginners because I'm just gonna make everything up as I go because we want it to match our inspiration anyway. I have my quilting cotton, my thread, and my embroidery hoop here. To set up your hoop, you're just gonna pop out the inside and you can twist this to loosen or tighten it. You start by placing the smaller hoop on the bottom, your fabric on top, and then you simply press the top part that has the hardware over it and make sure it's nice and tight and make sure it's centered however you want. And then you simply twist to tighten your piece down. And you can keep tugging at it to make sure you've got some nice tension here. I've chosen my colors that are in my color scheme and I've threaded my needles. I like to double over my needle so whenever I'm stitching, it's a little thicker. You can even do multiple strands of thread at one time in a needle. It depends on the look you're going for. So to start, I'm going to look over my shapes. I'm gonna choose a few that I want to add in. I know that I wanna do this nice deep V triangle, some of the pluses, these little dashes, maybe some of these cool lines. And then I'm just gonna start adding them into my piece. I start in the back. I'm using a tapestry needle. And you just pull it through. I'm gonna just go ahead and cross over to another section here. Gonna add a couple of these nice Vs, not too many, in some different sizes and directions. Add some nice variation to the piece. And that is the end of my thread. And I'm happy with that. I'm gonna snip these, pull off my needle, and tie a simple knot. Gonna double knot it just in case. And cut off the ends. I know that you can see some of my stitches here, but once it's hung up on the wall, it'll look really nice and you won't be able to see through it because I'm using a darker fabric. But if you used a lighter fabric, you'd maybe want to knot off between every stitch and every mark you made so that the back looked a little cleaner and didn't have these shadows. That's up to you and the colors you choose to use. So now, I'm gonna move on to these lines here. And I'm gonna make sure I come under and around the main long stitch so it gets tucked down nicely. And as I'm working on this, I'm just thinking about the balance of the piece and having all of my stitches spread out nicely. But we're just going for a nice abstract feel. And if you mess up, all you have to do is tug on your needle, on your thread from the back, and you can pull it right back through or you can thread it back through. Either way is fine. And then if you just rub the fabric, it closes back up. I'm gonna add just a simple stitch here and then I'm done with this color. The whole point of this exercise and this course is to gather your ideas and your inspiration from the world and translate them into new ways. So every time you have a new idea as you're working through one of your projects from your inspiration piece, follow that idea and see where it leads because it's gonna take you one step closer in creating more and more unique artwork. Alright. We've got three colors left. Some yellows and browns. Let's see. Now, I think I would like to add in maybe some of these Ts. I'm gonna do a couple of those in some small little groups. I really like how subtle some of the colors are against the background. And you kind of have to look closely to see all the detail. And I'm just kind of experimenting with how each piece looks, whether it's stitched over, or under, or through. And just playing around with it. There's no right or wrong way to do these kind of projects. Gonna make a little bit bigger ones here. Add some more focus down at the bottom. And I think the middle of our piece needs a little bit of attention. Alright, and I'll do one last one in the corner. Make sure you're stitching all the way to the edges and all the different areas so your piece feels nice and full. I'm gonna continue adding more motifs to my piece until I feel like it's finished. Once you're finished and happy with your project, these are very simple to finish off. You simply cut about an inch around your circle, and then you'll just glue it back on the back here to the inside. And then, it will be nice and finished. And you can just hang it up here and you have a perfect wall piece. Now I wanna show you a few more ways that I've translated this inspiration into some more fun projects. I

painted this planter with acrylic paint with the different motifs we pulled out of our inspiration photo. I love to weave so I designed a weaving based on our inspiration again. I followed the lines that were in the windows, the boxes from my shirt, the rooftops, and of course in the beautiful sunset color scheme. And then the last thing I did was I sketched out a quilt idea. This would be an amazing quilt to have to have this big yellow color block and then these nice window patterns. The rooftops are traced here and here. If you make this quilt, please let me know. I would love to have it. From a single photo, you're able to pull out colors and motifs that you can use in any craft project. Take some time to look around your world, look through your photos, and things that inspire you, and create something new today.