

C. Schuld StudioNews

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One of the interesting things about creating my paintings, for myself, is witnessing and experiencing all the steps I go through from the initial idea to the final signed work. People are maybe under the impression that magic spells and incantations are at work in the studio.

I have learned that looking at a potential landscape subject through my camera lens is a great way to figure out what the painting should actually show. I capture images by zooming in and out repeatedly until I have gotten down to what the initial attraction was—then I push the shutter button.

In my studio I study the photos I printed and make many decisions about the potential painting. What was the weather and scene mood like? What were the major colors? What is the most important part (focal point) of the scene that I want to show? When I have answered all these questions and more I start creating.

In this first image you see a simple watercolor painting, (about 5 x 7" only), a small value scale sketch and color splotches I recorded to help me get to know the scene better. Some of the things worked out at this stage are: balance of light, medium and dark areas; my color choices; land line directions and nature patterns I want to include. I am not really that interested in capturing the actual colors that were at the place, or giving a 100% replication of the scene. I am more interested in showing the **THING** that for me was powerful and memorable at that site.



Step 2: Work starts on the canvas. I sketch the image using pastels with the goal of laying down the shapes, lines and some of the deepest colors to keep me on track when I switch over to paint. By putting down a few examples of the darkest value at this point it helps remind me to not use that value until it is really needed. This is a pretty scrubby and rough looking stage in the work.





Step 3: Using my largest brushes I lay down the major shapes and lines I want in the final work. Also established are darkest areas. By putting in the darkest areas early in the process I am better able to keep track of how light I need to preserve my light and medium areas. I do start to work in details in the background but try to stop developing these areas when I feel I am about 75% “done”. Often, I never need to do much more in these areas – which makes them look more impressionistic in style.



Step 4: I’ve now started working on the fountain which is the focal point or main area of interest. Since I’m going to concentrate on the water more than the architectural elements of the fountain you can see I’ve limited myself to large brush strokes again. You can see I’ve tightened the area around the two pigeons but I don’t want to paint them until later when I know better how much detail they should have and what colorings they need to be to fit into the work. The large light blue area on the right is sitting waiting for me to decide how much tree work I want here.



Step 5: I’ve done almost all of the water work now with several different techniques used to create the flowing and splashing water areas. I’ve used different mediums to thin my paint including water, glazing liquid and rubbing alcohol—which all result in slightly different effects. At different times I’ve also pre-wet the canvas, worked it dry, and sometimes sprayed water on the paint tilting the canvas to force the paint into a different direction. Often this is the time when a result happens that makes me decide to not touch that area again because I don’t want to lose what just happened!

FINALLY—the finished work resulted in a decision that I never planned for in the first place—the addition of a third pigeon in the lower right area. The initial vertical trees that I was attracted to were just too heavy and prominent. I felt the painting needed some other interesting detail to balance out the fountain and water areas. I kept this bird in mid and dark tones so it isn’t the first thing that is noticed when looking at the final painting.



“Fountain I” Acrylic on Canvas 36 x 48 inches

I’ve enjoyed showing you my step-by-step process and hope you also found it interesting.