

Tonal contrast — glowing sunlight against deep shadow — enhances the vintage feel of this scene from my backyard.

Linea Line, oil, 18 x 14" (46 x 36cm)

my inspiration

This old apple tree in my backyard has never grown to its proper size. Just after I resolved to chop it down, it produced abundant fruit for the first time — saving itself from the axe. The tree and the shirts glowing in the September sun looked like a vintage scene, a snapshot from another time.

my design strategy

The sunlit tree and bright T-shirts stood out from the darkness of the background hedge, which cast a strong shadow across the grass. This provided the all-important element of tonal contrast.

my work process

- I started by covering my canvas board with a bright orange wash. I mixed Cadmium Yellow and Cadmium Red with turpentine to allow the wash to dry quickly.
- The subject matter has many different shades of green. I chose to underpaint with orange as a contrast to help me decide how dark to make the shadows and how light to make the areas in full sunlight.
- When the background was dry, I sketched out the scene with willow charcoal.
- I mixed various different greens and applied the paint very quickly, building up layers of color to create a rich texture. I allowed some small areas of the underpainting to show through, which had the effect of pulling the scene together.

the materials I used

support

canvas board

brushes

nos. 8, 10, 12 flats
no. 4 round

oil colors

Cadmium Yellow	Prussian Blue
Chrome Yellow	Vindian
Yellow Ochre	Sap Green
Cadmium Red	Alizarin Crimson
Cerulean Blue	Burnt Sienna

