

A bird's eye view makes a clear pattern and a bold image.

Oranges & Pears, acrylic, 24 1/2 x 14 1/2" (62 x 36cm)



the main challenge in painting this picture

I wanted to paint something in a short time frame so I looked for a subject with simple shapes in varying colors. At a market stall, I found some amazing oranges and pears. My concept was then to balance the colors and shapes of the oranges and the various green pears within the composition.

my design strategy

I wanted to fill the canvas board as much as possible, to crop into the visual space and split the area into quarters. I tried various combinations until I was satisfied with the "bird's eye" view. It caused the objects to flatten out to some extent, creating a clearer pattern. Cutting into the composition of the picture also stops the viewer's eye from wandering out.

The group of oranges are linked together by overlapping. The pears are on their own in another group but linked by the angle of the green cloth running across the table top, pulling the ham stand and bowl together. Placing the two still lifes from corner to corner visually makes the eye pass from one group to the other.

my working process

- I wanted to complete this still life within a limited time frame so I set up all of my equipment at the ready: paint on the palette, brushes, jars of clean water, roll of kitchen towels.
- The techniques used were wet-on-wet, wet-on-dry, variegated washes and a little blending. My goal was to put down the color, tones and shades with bold strokes as quickly as possible, allowing the energy of the colors to show through.

- I left much of the bold, loose brush work visible, which led to a strong, colorful image.

try this yourself

Set yourself the challenge of painting within a time scale shorter than you would usually work in, rather like a five-minute life drawing exercise. You may be surprised at the spontaneity in your resulting work.

what the artist used

Support

Canvas board

Brushes

Flats in #6, 8, 10; round #4

acrylic colors

