



Community Outreach — Oakland Veterans

Mix and Match for Ginkgo Fall Colors



We painted a color wheel in November to gain a greater understanding of how color works. We reviewed the classic watercolor palette with a cool and a warm of each primary color. For our December gathering our working source was an arbor of ginkgo trees lining a lane. Each vet was given two pieces of watercolor paper and a copy of the source photo. Sheila explained the project. First, we mixed swatches to match those in a source image, playing with lemon yellow mixed with all the warm pigments in our palette.

Pat assisted by helping the vets paint a swatch sheet. She encouraged the vets to not only mix a swatch sheet but also to create a wet yellow wash and drop other pigments into it, letting them mix wet into wet on the page. Next, they moved on to drawing from the source material.

This arbor of fall ginkgo trees is a cheery yellow contrast to our cool, grey days. When they are hit by the sun, they turn quite golden. It makes a great exercise in mixing yellow through orange, green, and grey. Some vets had finished the arbor of trees and were ready to begin our January New Year's gathering by drawing the focal point, which happens to be on or near the horizon line. The people are the focal point where the darkest dark meets the lightest light. There are occasions when we painters need or just prefer to create a new focal point to make the composition more interesting. That's our prerogative. We don't need to be a slave to rendering our source material. The important thing is to guide the viewer's eye into the painting to the focal point.

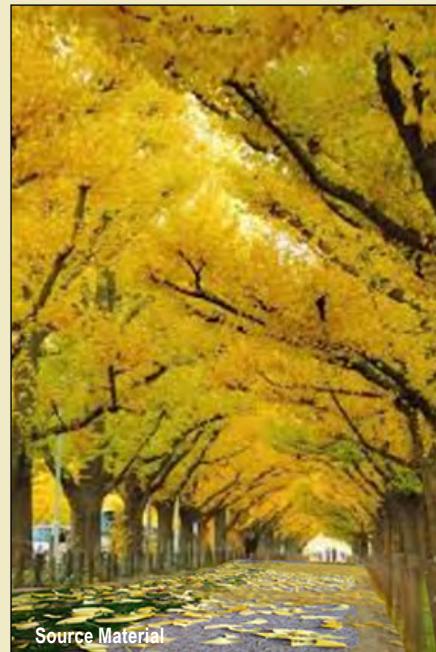
In addition, the lane has a scattering of fallen golden leaves and the concrete lane has a nice contrasting grey-blue color. Pat encouraged the veterans to apply salt on the yellow mass in some areas for texture and enhance the color range the contrast will soften when the pigment dries.

This seemingly simple painting could become a golden opportunity. Nancy had brought a bag of limes from her prolific lime tree which we divided up to take home. Everyone left with a "so far so good" feeling. It's great to have a project to carry over into the New Year in 2026.

Have a Cool Yule and a Frantic First!

Sheila Cain

Co-Director, Community Outreach





Community Outreach — Martinez VA

December 2025

It's been a unique year. — adapting to changes in staffing and work spaces required creativity and flexibility. I was fortunate to have a veteran whose wife was visiting for a bedside art lesson. He has woodworking skills, and she's a longtime crafter. The room was filled with her handmade decorations. They both created seasonal watercolor paintings. It was a fun and chatty experience. We all had a great time and learned new skills.

Happy holidays and best wishes for the New Year.

Maggie Metcalf & Darlyn Phillips

Community Outreach



Volunteers Welcome!
Interested in joining us?
Call Maggie at (925) 899-9185
to get involved!

From Our Members

CASA, Court Appointed Child Advocate by Donna Davies

Years ago as a Court Appointed Child Advocate, I was assigned to represent a two year old boy named Joseph and visited him each week to assess his living situation and then represent his best interests in court. He was a sweet child and we enjoyed our visits together very much. His grandmother took care of him during the day in her apartment and spent her day watching television. She seemed grateful for the break in taking care of Joseph. Just as I did for my sons were young, I took Joseph for adventures to expand his world. We made gingerbread men, planted seeds in a garden, went on the jungle gym and swings in the park, and visited children's museums. During one of those museum visits, I discovered Joseph loved dinosaurs.

So one sunny day when we were outside his apartment sitting in the picnic area, I lifted him upon my lap and put a blank sheet of paper on a clipboard in front of him. I announced with excitement, "There's a brontosaurus hiding on this sheet of paper!" That certainly got his attention. Beginning to draw, I said "Here is his really long tail. And

here is his long, long neck and small head." As I drew, Joseph never took his eyes off the sheet of paper. He was speechless. As more and more of the brontosaurus appeared before him, he paid such close attention that I even had time to add a tree behind the monstrous mammal to munch on leaves! Joseph was in awe. His curiosity and wonder sizzled like drops of water dancing in a hot frying pan. After the dinosaur was finished, he wanted me to draw everything and everyone he saw! He fell in love with drawing that day.

A couple of years later after my assignment as his advocate ended, I had the chance to visit Joseph at his morning preschool. I sat down next to him on a tiny chair at a tiny table in a room teeming with four year old tots. When I had an opportunity, I asked him if he enjoyed going to his preschool. You can imagine my surprise when he answered "Yes, but only because they let me draw."

We want to hear from you, to share your story, [click here](#).