



Teacher Showcase Series
Sarah Castle

AOEU: Watercolor
August-September 2022
Prof. Alyson Poulos

WEEK 7: PREPARING FOR MY TEACHER SHOWCASE SERIES

7/14/22

WATERCOLOR CLASS REFLECTIONS TO PULL FORWARD:

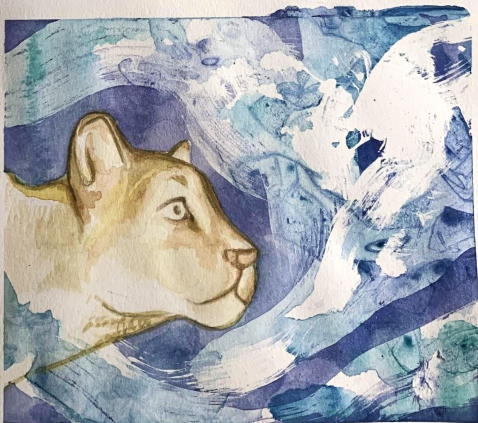
- TECHNIQUES I LOVE: LAYERED RUBBER CEMENT MASKING, TAPE MASKING, WET-IN-WET, WC PENCIL, PLASTIC WRAP
- LEARNED A LOT ABOUT MY OWN CAPABILITIES WITH "HALF-BLOOM" PAINTING - WOULD LIKE TO CONTINUE WORKING WITH LAYERED / DELICATE BRUSHSTROKES + DETAILED REFERENCE IMAGERY
- WOULD LOVE TO SOMEHOW BRIDGE THE SEMI-REALISM (PERHAPS WALKING WITH THE FIGURE?) AND THE ABSTRACTION OF COMBINED EXPERIMENTAL TECHNIQUES IN NEGATIVE SPACES

THEMES OF INTEREST:

- TRANSITION - THE IN-BETWEEN SPACE... LEAVING SOMETHING BEHIND SO YOU CAN GROW SOMEWHERE ELSE.
- PREPARING FOR MOTHERHOOD / THE UNKNOWN... SIMULTANEOUSLY FEELING FEAR, SELF-DOUBT, EXCITEMENT, PURPOSE

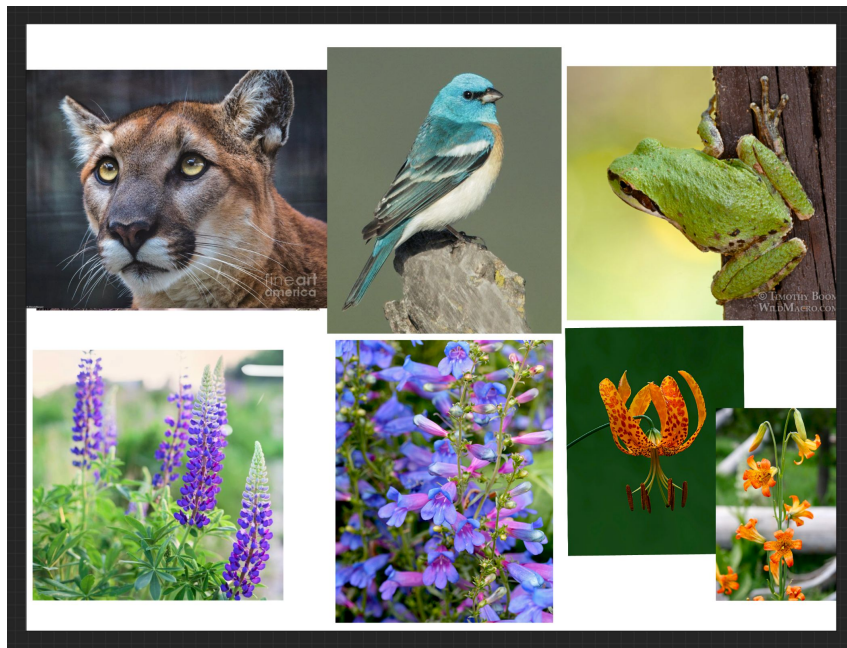
IMAGERY:

- MOUNTAIN LYNXES (LIONA, OUR DAUGHTER WHO WE DO NOT YET KNOW)
- LUPINE (HER MIDDLE NAME)
- COMPARTMENTALIZED FIGURE (JACK AND I)



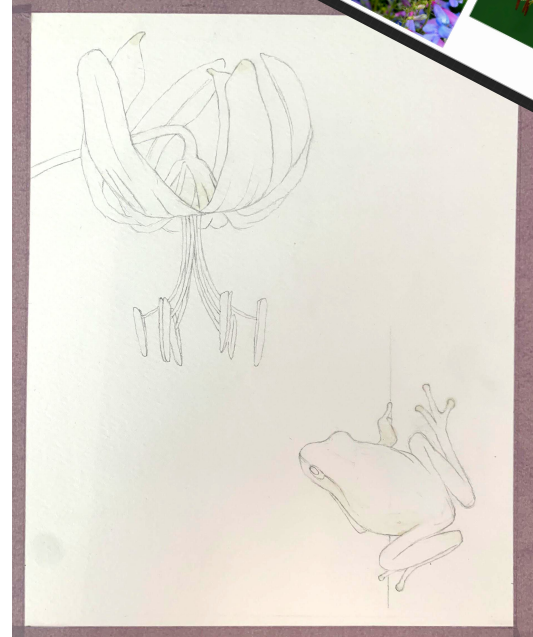
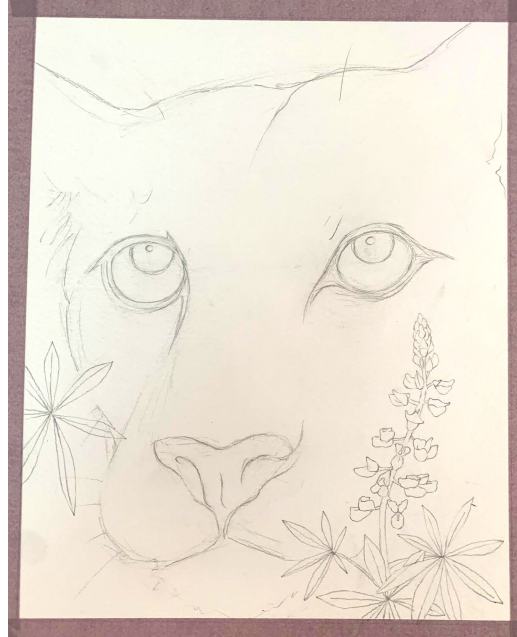
PLANNING THE SERIES

As I set out to create a series of three watercolor paintings, I considered what I had learned and loved throughout the course. I decided to integrate several techniques (layered rubber cement masking, wet-in-wet washes, plastic wrap and more) while drawing inspiration from California native flora and fauna. I wanted to challenge myself artistically while expressing my personal feelings about family dynamics and the anticipated arrival of my first child.



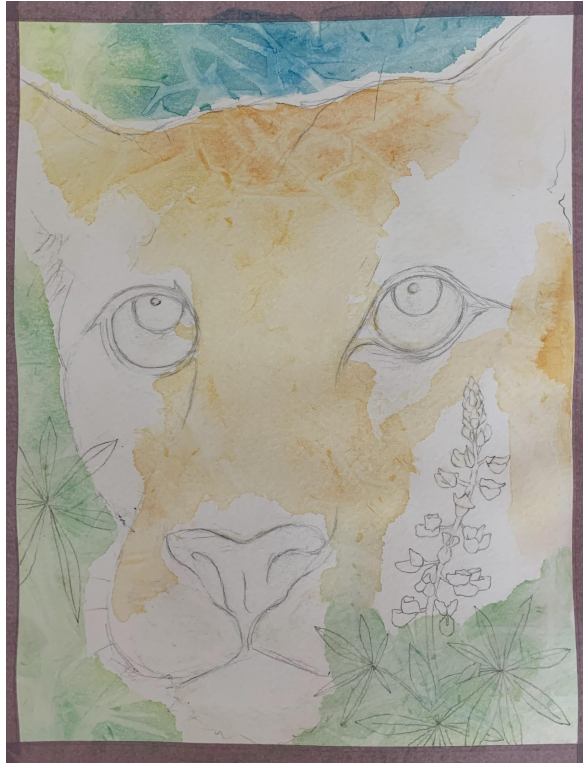
DRAFTING THE IMAGERY

This important step took a significant amount of time. I gathered imagery using Google's search engine and compiled them onto one digital canvas using ProCreate. Then, I used this reference as I worked and reworked all three compositions. My goal was to pair one animal and plant in each painting and experiment with textural techniques in the negative space.



BEGINNING THE BACKGROUNDS

I worked on all three pieces simultaneously. This proved beneficial as I could alternate between dry-times. I began with large areas of wet-in-wet washes using analogous colors. I applied plastic wrap to add subtle shapes and texture to the wash areas.



LION PAINTING PROGRESSION

This set of photos illustrate the process of developing one painting. Before I experimented with washes, rubber cement was applied using a q-tip to areas of the painting that I wanted to remain white.



FLORA AND FAUNA PAINTING + FINISHING TOUCHES

To paint the imagery, I used a small round brush to control tiny wash areas.

To create fine textural details, I used a watercolor pencil as the top layer.



WATERCOLOR TEACHER SHOWCASE SERIES:

“FAMILY DYNAMICS”



WATERCOLOR TEACHER SHOWCASE SERIES:

“FAMILY DYNAMICS” Artist Statement

The “Family Dynamics” series consists of three watercolor paintings combining textural abstraction with representational imagery. Each painting features a plant and an animal that are both native to California. These flora and fauna are placed in the compositions to create visual balance and suggest a pensive relationship between living things. Negative space is filled with layers of transitioning color and translucent shapes created using watercolor wet-in-wet washes and plastic wrap effects. Other tools and techniques evident in the wildlife imagery are watercolor pencil, rubber cement, and the use of small liner brushes to render fine details. All three paintings display earth tones and color harmonies.

This work is inspired by the liminal experience of anticipating my first child. Created in the 37th week of pregnancy, the paintings were motivated by feelings of curiosity and wonder in the approach of the unknown. My husband and I selected the wildlife pairings to create a representation of him (the lazuli bunting bird and penstemon flower,) our soon-to-arrive daughter (the mountain lioness and lupine flower,) and myself (the sierran tree frog and tiger lily flower.) My intention with juxtaposing these plants and animals is to consider the relationship that exists in the space shared between them. This connects to the dynamics that happen in family systems and the incoming transition of our family from two to three human beings. While we can be certain that everything is about to change, there is no way for us to know what our individual and shared experiences will feel like. So, too, are the changing dynamics of the delicate ecosystems in our treasured Sierra backcountry.

This watercolor series gave me the opportunity to combine several aspects of my recent learning in a way that felt authentic to my personal art practice. Throughout the course, I have picked up several techniques that I will continue to work with: textural effects such as plastic wrap, wet-in-wet washes over large areas, watercolor control with paper dams, rubber cement, and tape masking, and the use of small round brushes and layered glazes to render detailed imagery. My intention with this series was to employ as many of these favorites as possible, and I am now seeing how I might be more targeted with my watercolor efforts in the future. Ultimately, this course has taught me to embrace the inevitable balance between control and unpredictability in watercolor. I have a widened appreciation for the capabilities of this magical medium, and I am happy to have created artworks that hold meaning for me personally.

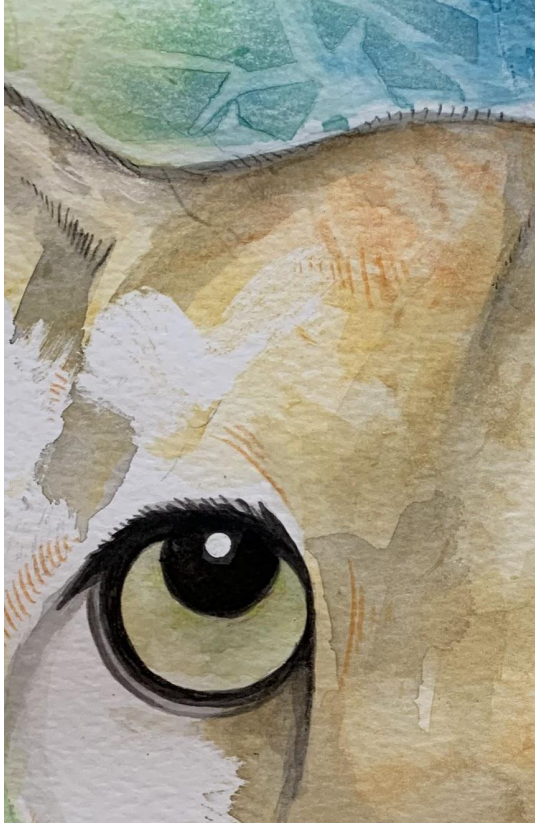
“LAZULI BUNTING and PENSTEMON”

2022- 8” X 10” - WATERCOLOR ON PAPER



“LIONESS and LUPINE”

2022- 8” X 10” - WATERCOLOR ON PAPER



“TREE FROG and TIGER LILY”

2022- 8” X 10” - WATERCOLOR ON PAPER

