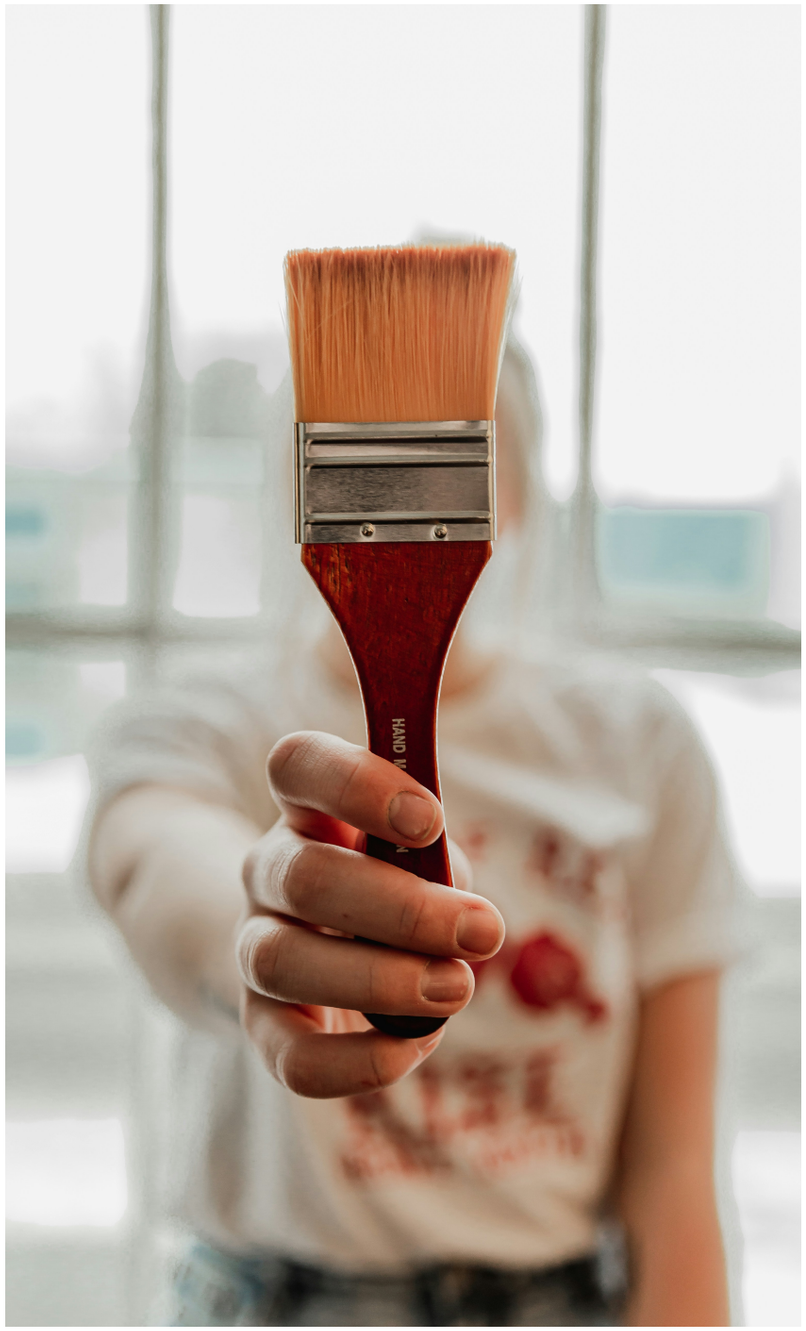


ART ASSIGNMENT #13C

Landscapes & Scenes: Choosing Photos + Making Artistic Choices For Great Results

1. VISION AND CONCEPT

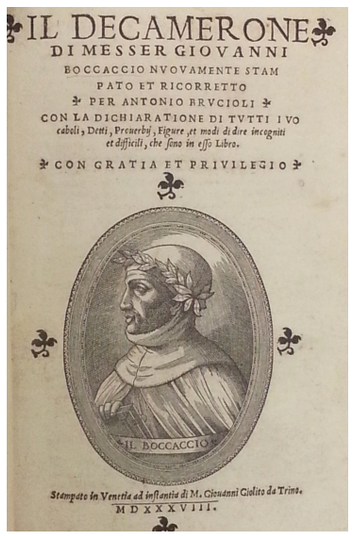


- Every strong painting **begins with a clear concept or reason behind it**.
- Think about why you're drawn to the subject before choosing or creating reference photos.
- Your **emotional or personal connection** to the subject will strengthen your composition and final outcome.

Identify your connection to the subject

- You might be drawn to:
  - A place you have a personal link to.
  - The color palette or light in the photo.
  - Interesting shapes or visual rhythms.
- Understanding that connection **helps guide compositional decisions later on**.









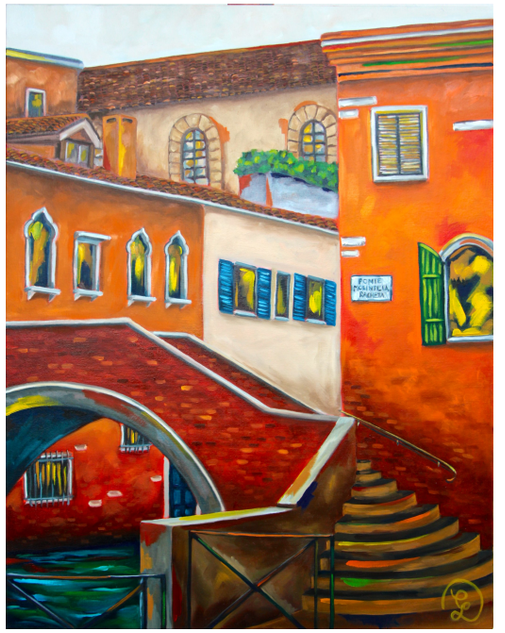
My concept for this series

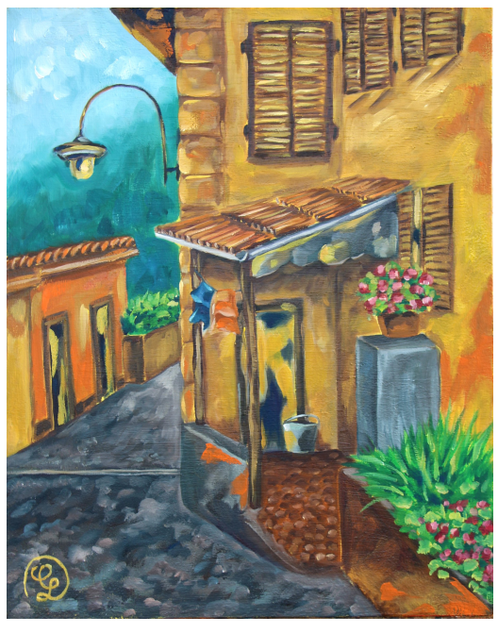
- I've always **loved painting architectural facades and scenes**.
- For this gallery show, I wanted a cohesive collection that showcased:
  - My **strengths in perspective**.
  - My **modern impressionistic** painting style.
- I chose Italy because of **my personal and cultural connection to it** through my father's Italian-American heritage.
- I've always been **fascinated by Italy's culture, history, and artistic legacy**.
- Exploring Italy through painting felt deeply meaningful and creatively stimulating.











Building a cohesive series

- The collection includes **five paintings** of different Italian cities/locations.
- Each was chosen for its **unique atmosphere and visual character**.
- I aimed to bring each place to life through my own artistic lens, **using color as a primary element of art**.
- Used a **limited color palette** and repeated colors throughout all five paintings.
- Kept a consistent **level of detail** and **brushwork style** across the collection.
- These decisions helped the series feel unified and intentional.

2. HOW TO CHOOSE PHOTOS FOR BETTER RESULTS



There are 6 things I always pay attention to when choosing photos for full landscapes or scenes.

A. Layers and Variety

- Look for photos with **multiple *layers*** (foreground, middleground, background).
- A mix of colors, shapes, and textures adds depth and visual interest.

B. Large Shapes and Structural Unity

- **Identify medium-to-large elements** that form solid visual structures.
- Check for **overlapping** and **integration** between these shapes.
- Avoid scenes where everything feels scattered or disconnected.



C. Visual Path / Movement of the Eye

- Ask: *Where do my eyes go first?*
- Does the viewer's gaze **flow naturally through the image,** or does it stop abruptly?
- Aim to keep the viewer's eyes moving through the piece.

D. Focal Point and Visual Hierarchy

- Does the image lend itself to a **clear focal point or hierarchy**?
- **Not everything should carry the same visual weight**- use contrast, detail, and texture intentionally.
- When applicable, use the **Rule of Thirds** to position the focal point effectively within the picture plane.
- Decide what's *most important* and what will support it.

E. Contrast and Lighting

- Look for a good **range of values**- lights, midtones, and darks.
- Interesting **shadow shapes** can make a composition more dynamic.
- Lighting defines atmosphere and mood.



F. Asymmetrical Balance

- **Seek balance between left and right sides** without mirroring them.
- Play with **visual weights and positive/negative space**.
- Create balance by adjusting:
  - Size/Scale
  - Detail/Texture
  - Color saturation
  - Value contrast

Key takeaway:

A strong photo isn't just "pretty." It presents what you need to easily develop **depth, flow, hierarchy, contrast, and balance,** which work together to guide the viewer's eye and create visual harmony.

3. WHY I CHOSE THESE PHOTOS + COMPOSITION CHANGES I MADE

I evaluated each image based on:

- **Visual appeal- color harmony, light, and atmosphere.**
- **Structural or compositional potential- lines, perspective, shapes.**
- **Story or emotional connection to the place.**

As I selected each photo, I was already planning compositional changes:

- **Simplifying complex areas.**
- **Adjusting balance and focal points.**
- **Enhancing rhythm and flow between elements.**

This stage sets the foundation for a painting that feels intentional, personal, and cohesive.



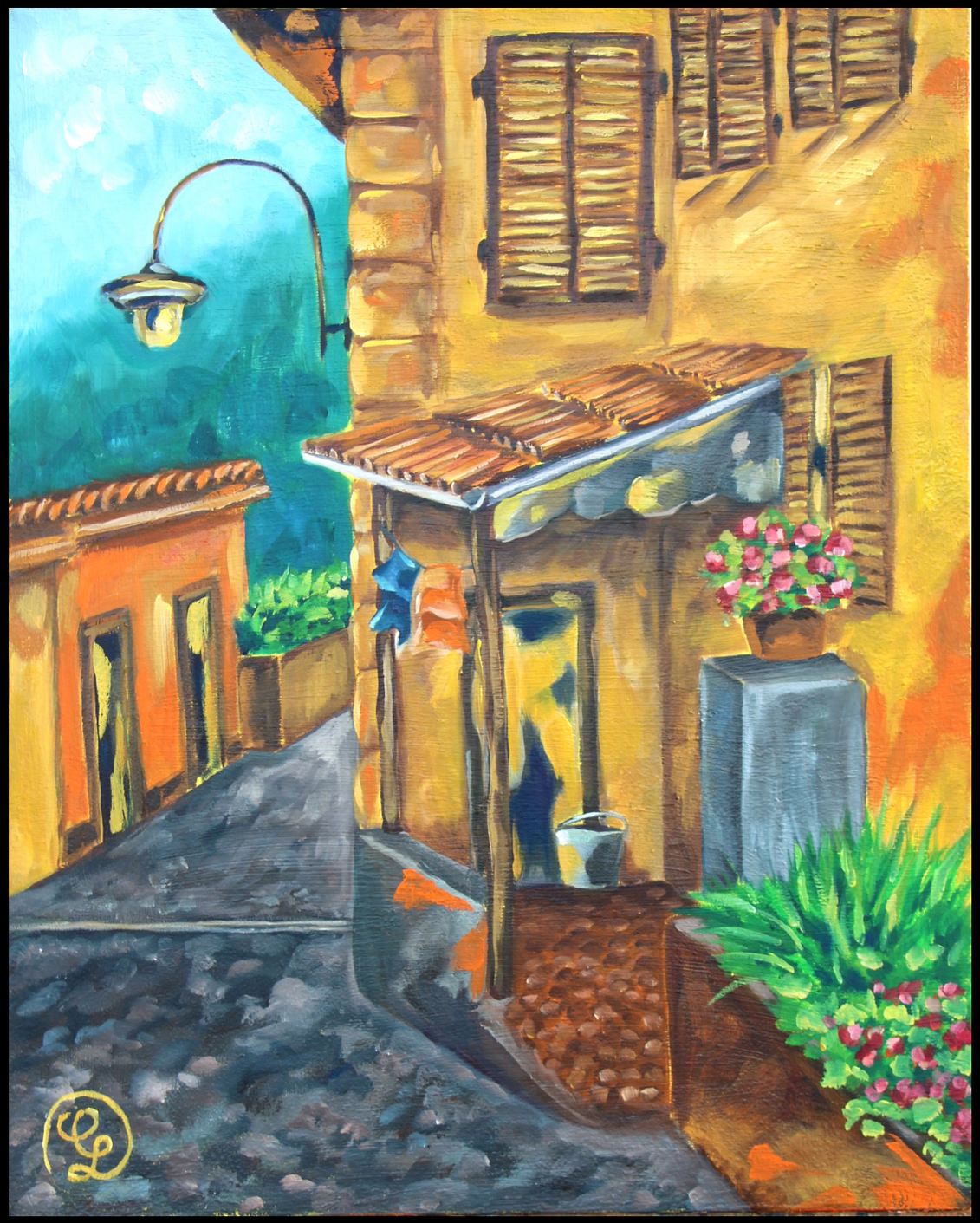


Verona





Burano





Tuscany





Venice





Sardinia

4. PREPARING REFERENCE PHOTOS FOR THE PAINTING PROCESS

- The proportions of your reference photo **must match** your painting surface (canvas or paper).
- Mismatched ratios (height-to-width) can distort composition and balance.
- Certain images naturally fit better in vertical vs. horizontal formats.
- My process in photo-editing software (Affinity):
  - Create a new document matching my canvas/paper size.
  - Insert the reference photo and resize it accurately.
  - Crop intentionally if the image doesn’t fit perfectly.
- Use this step to refine composition:
  - Apply the **rule of thirds** grid to position key elements and focal points.
  - Optionally adjust **contrast** to clarify light/dark relationships.



- I also use the **four-quadrant method** for accuracy in proportions when creating my preliminary sketch, which I do freehand on the canvas.
- *For this series:*
  - I painted an acrylic underlayer for subtle color unity.
  - I sketched essential shapes directly on the canvas with white pastel (over the acrylic color).
  - Built each painting in four sittings/ layers, letting oil layers dry between sessions.

- While this preparation might seem tedious at first, **it dramatically improves consistency and artistic growth over time**.
- You'll also find what specific steps work for you as you continue building up original works.

ART ASSIGNMENT #13C:



- Use the photo provided to create your own drawing or painting (it is attached to the end of this post).
- Simplify, remove, move, or add elements as you see fit- make it yours!
- Think about visual hierarchy, balance, and harmony as you design your composition.
- If you're using color, use it intentionally to set the mood and atmosphere you want to convey.