

VWS JUNE 2002 - AL'S ART SPEAK

Whether it is running out of one of the items in that special recipe or raiding the larder for a late night snack, we are all familiar with having to make unusual choices and extending beyond our comfort zone to "rustle up some grub". The concoctions can be surprising (e.g. pasta with a can of navy beans) but are often quite delicious in the hands of an experienced, confident and innovative cook.

With limited choices of ingredients, time, fuel, cooking utensils, and the like, the preparation process becomes one of the creative manipulation of these elements to develop the most appetizing and nutritious meal possible. Conversely with ample time and supplies, one finds oneself facing an entirely different set of challenges when contemplating what to prepare to create a particularly tasty repast that will impress one's guests. With so many possible choices, the process now includes pre-planning and careful selection of the ingredients. I mention these simple examples to make the self-evident point that whether we are putting together a meal, solving a problem or developing a work of art, we are actually engaging in a *creative process*, which entails using the elements at our disposal.

When there is a limited choice of materials, the process becomes one of the creative uses of the elements at hand. This would certainly be the case for artists in Cuba where art materials are almost non-existent. In some sense however this experience can be somewhat freeing in that one can focus all of one's attention on the few elements available. The well known adage that "necessity is the mother of invention" applies. The suggestion by many art teachers to their students that they limit their palettes to a handful of essential colors is in effect a means of intentionally creating limited choices.

However, artists in the US and in particular in Southern California, find themselves more in a "feast" than "famine" setting. We have ample and highly varied art supplies, exciting terrain, beautiful weather, oodles of intelligent and talented art teachers and so on. Our problem is more where to start, what to choose, what to eliminate. While being in the land of plenty is a good problem to have, it is nevertheless worthwhile to give some real thought to the careful selection of the elements to use.

Perhaps if we were to list all the possible choices that are available it might facilitate the selection process. Add limiting factors, such as time, skill level, interest, personal preferences and the list of possibilities is decreased to a manageable level. Since I used a food analogy, my list follows in the form of a menu from which I will make my selections. As with food, one can be as daring or as conservative as the moods dictates.

CHEZ AL-BEAR

Appetizers

- ❖ Thumb-nail sketch, #2 pencil
- ❖ Thumb nail sketch, felt pen

- ❖ Three-value sketch, felt pens (3)
- ❖ Three-value sketch, ink
- ❖ Three-value sketch, watercolor
- ❖ Three-value sketch, compressed charcoal

- ❖ Watercolor sketch

Pescados, Pollo, Viandes

All dishes served in double elephant, full sheet, half sheet, quarter sheet formats and choice of two of the following: watercolor, acrylic, acrylic ink, pastel, sumi.

- ❖ Landscape
- ❖ Seascape
- ❖ Cityscape

- ❖ Figure a la desnuda
- ❖ Figure en costume
- ❖ Figure dans landscape sauce

- ❖ Still Life
- ❖ Floral close-up
- ❖ Floral dans le jardin

- ❖ Abstract – expressionist
- ❖ Abstract – geometric

Dessert

- ❖ Calligraphic lines avec bamboo stick
- ❖ Calligraphic lines con el brush
- ❖ Pastel scumbling
- ❖ Chinese White
- ❖ Gouache