Pine Tree Paintings with CBTV Live

Chapter 1 - Chapter 1
Pine Tree Paintings
(upbeat music) - Hello everybody. Welcome to Creativebug Live. I'm here with Courtney. - Hi everybody. - And I'm Liana, and we are back from some mountain adventures. - Yeah, we had a long weekend. What did you do, backpacking, camping? - We did a little backpacking trip, me and my family. And what did you do? - I went to Lake Tahoe, our annual family trip in the summer to Lake Tahoe. So, it's like something I've been doing since I was in utero actually. - Yeah, it feels like this was, okay, it was the weekend after Labor Day and it's like, one of the last sunny, warm weekends of the year, and it's kind of like, that last ditch get to the mountains. - Like, last hurrah. - I know! - Very late summer vacation I've been holding off. - Ah, so great. - But it was really fun, and I don't know for you, like, backpacking's a little different than my vacation. We were in a house. - Yeah, I'm much tougher and cooler, pretty much. - Yeah, I'm not about it. Did you have to cut your paintbrushes in half? - No, I didn't cut my paintbrushes in half. - I think it says something like, it's based on what we like to do in our downtime though, that we both were painting as much as we could, although I feel like I did not get enough painting time in. - Yeah, well, and that is the truth. I actually, every time I go backpacking, I take with me this tiny little Winsor & Newton Travel paint kit. It's about the size of these ones we have out here, actually and like, one little notepad of postcards - Postcards. - [Liana] And like one water brush, so it was super limited, but I just love having it there when you have a little downtime and you're out in the woods. It's so satisfying. - Yeah, and Liana actually texted me when I was on vacation. And she was like, "Ah, do you maybe want to paint pine trees "on the Live shoot?" 'Cause you were painting pine trees and I was painting pine trees. I was like, "Sure." - I know, we were snooping each other's Instagram feeds and we just happened to both be painting pine trees. - Yeah, and we have very different approaches. - Very different, that we thought you guys might be interested in seeing and learning how to do, and we really hope that as you watch us work today, you take some of these techniques and go play with them and make some art yourself and then share it with us. - That'd be awesome. - You could go to Instagram and post pictures, hashtag Creativebug, or you can go onto creativebug.com, onto our website. - Yeah, and upload them to your user gallery. We'd love to see those. - Yeah, I don't know if you guys know this too, but we always post these Live shoots on Creativebug after the Live shoot so you can always go there too and add your own images. - Yeah, and just to give you some setup of what we're working in, I'm just working in a watercolor sketchbook. This one's my handbook. I love this one. This is a bigger size. It just happened to be what I had on hand, and then you showed the Fluid four-by-six postcards, and then is this the Vision, the other guy? - [Courtney] This is, I believe it is a Strathmore. - [Liana] Oh, you have a Strathmore sketchbook? - Yeah, I think it's-- - That's from the shop. Right? - I think it's from your shop, actually, so I've just been working in this bad boy for a while. - Look great. - [Liana] And this is my form of a pine tree, so one thing that I just love about pine trees is we all, in our heads, have a pine tree is a cone and it's got a center and it's got some stuff that comes off of it, so this is what we learn a pine tree is from a very young age. - It's like a Christmas tree, basically. - It's a Christmas tree, and then you get out in the woods and it's like, it changes every minute. You're looking out at a vast horizon of trees and they all blend together and-- - And the way the light's hitting them. - Exactly, and then-- - And then are different kinds of trees like, different sizes of needles, the way that the branches are. - Mm-hmm, and one of, I think, our shared, favorite things

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about pine trees is how they look as the sun is setting, and when they turn really dark. - It's really cool. - And get all of these cool shadows in them and you see them more in profile than like, forest green. - Absolutely. - They're usually not all forest green. - Yeah, I mean, obviously there's not just one kind of green. You can see we've got some paint out. So, these are these little sets by Prima. I am totally in love with these. I started using them about a year ago and was like, hmm. They come in these pre-curated palettes and I started with the Tropicals and the Classics. You can get them on joann.com and oh, And the Decadent Pies, so those three, and then I'm just now using this Essence and I've had this one for a few months and I really love them. - Ooh, this one looks fun. - They're super affordable. It comes in this cute little tin. They are high-quality pigments and I cannot recommend them enough, actually. - [Liana] Honestly, one of my favorite things about these is that they come with these color cards that show you what it's gonna look like because sometimes it's just really hard to imagine when you're just, if you're just looking at these colors here it's like, oh, that's so muted. Like, you wouldn't even know that that that is a vibrant emerald green, so-- - [Courtney] So yeah, it comes, it shows you what the colors are gonna be on the side and there's a little photo on the back, and then you actually fill this out yourself. - Oh! - Yeah. - I didn't even know that. - Yeah, because I did it for ya. - (gasping) She did it for me. - Yeah. - She took all the fun. - Sorry. - Courtney! So! - Show me how you approach painting a pine tree 'cause you're-- - Okay. - You start quickly? - Oh, I'm very speedy. - So Liana's like, the fast and loose. - (laughing) That's what they call me around here. - Just with a paintbrush. - So yeah, and you can see this is one that I did this is one of my original experiments, and then just earlier today I was warming up and did some much thinner ones, and my favorite thing to do really, is to work with really non-traditional colors, so-- - [Courtney] And tell me the brush you're using. - [Liana] I am using a size two, and this is, what are these called? - A liner. - A liner, so these are like, really long, skinny brushes. They feel a little bit crazy. - [Courtney] Yeah, a liner brush, - To work with. - Or sometimes it's called a script brush, just depends on the brand. - But the thing is, you want it to feel a little bit crazy, in my world, when you're doing this. If you are trying to find control while you're doing this, then you're doing it wrong, is my lesson. Aren't I wild? - So wild! - Okay, I'm just gonna scooch these around 'cause I really love this palette. - [Courtney] That's the Decadent Pies palette. - Decadent Pies! - I think Faith, if she hasn't already, will be posting a link to it on the joann.com website. They have a really cool Instagram, too. I think it's Prima Watercolor. I, of course, did not tell Faith to link to this, but maybe she can find it, and if you want more tips on watercolor, you can also check out Yao Cheng's classes on our site. So, what I like to do first is just wet the colors that I think I might be dipping into, so I'm like, hitting a lot of these up. Love that Pistachio Cream here. Okay, all right, I'm gonna start with Blueberry and I do like to start with that center line and then just kind of even make it a little bit jagged, and what's fun when you work quickly is that you're gonna get some really cool bleeding action. - [Courtney] So not doing a lot of pressure. You're like, very light touch. - Very light touch! - Kinda like a scribble. - Yep. - Ooh, it's so pretty. - [Liana] And look at how fun that is. It kinda like, explodes when you hit is with the new color. Boom! Oh my God. - [Courtney] So pretty. - [Liana] I sound like Emeril right now. - [Courtney] You do! It's very edible looking, so that fits. - [Liana] Oh yeah, so this is definitely my favorite way to approach these trees, and then I love to come in with the dark colors. So like, this Blackberry color and it just adds a crazy amount of depth. So maybe we're gonna end on that one, and just like that, you could honestly leave it right there or you can just keep chipping away at it, adding more of those dark colors. - [Courtney] So when you add colors, you don't wanna rub it in 'cause you don't want it to get muddy, you want to let it spread on its own. - [Liana] Mm-hmm, exactly, and following some of those scribbly lines that you did. So, and

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I could really, I can just fill an entire page this way. This is like meditation for me. - [Courtney] So pretty. It's very calligraphic. - [Liana] And the best part is, you can't do it wrong. I think you will find, you will forgive yourself quite a lot 'cause it's just so fun to see what happens. Courtney's probably cringing as I muddy up all of the colors in the palette. - No, you're fine. You're good. - You're okay with that? - Yeah. - [Liana] Okay. I don't wanna hurt your toy. Okay, so another fun thing to do if you want a little bit more structure going into it, which is what I did when I worked on these postcards this weekend, and these are, they're a similar style of tree like, these ones are tiny, but they have a lot of the same squiggly lines, but with both of them, I used a Micron, and so for this one, I actually started with the sketch, so I'm just gonna turn this around, and so, let's say-- - [Courtney] There's some photos printed out here. - [Liana] I gonna work from this one and just really-- - Can I move it so we can see it? - [Liana] Loosely doing some shapes here, and it can just form a little guide for you if you're not super comfortable just going in and being a crazy person like I am. Not everybody loves that. - [Courtney] And the Microns are permanent, so you can paint over them after. - [Liana] Mm-hmm. We're actually doing a daily challenge as a team in-house right now, and it has been so fascinating to see the different styles on our team. - [Courtney] We're doing the Lisa Congdon 31 Things to Draw. - Yeah, and people's comfortability with-- - Drawing trees! - Being a little like, loose or feeling that they need to do it exactly right exactly as Lisa is doing it, and it's really, it's just so interesting to see everybody work, but I love it. So here, I'm just gonna go in and add some of these really fun needle colors. Again, I'm working with that same palette and that liner brush that just gives you the crazy marks. - [Courtney] Well I love, 'cause you're holding it kinda loosely, but also because of the point, the brush tip is so long, you relinquish control. - [Liana] Mm-hmm, totally. - [Courtney] So if you were an uptight painter, then maybe work with a script liner. - [Liana] Yeah, oh, I hated it at first. I was like, why? I think my husband got me this brush and I was like, "Why would you wanna punish me like that?" I didn't understand it (laughing). - But now you love it! - Yeah. Maybe-- - Helps you embrace looseness. - [Liana] Exactly. So, and then you can go in with, you might want a wider brush for going down the middle or that's fun, too. - Oh yeah. That's a cool texture. - [Liana] Mm-hmm. So, right there, in just minutes, look at that! It's like, cool, crazy tree. So, this is my fun. Why don't you show us-- - I love it. - A little bit of your fun, Courtney? - Sure. So, I usually will work from a photo. It doesn't always have to be the case, but if you don't have that perfect painting set up, then taking a photo and then, when you're at home on your kitchen table, then you can paint and that gives me some peace of mind to know that okay, I'm not be able to paint this right now, especially because the light changes so rapidly, especially at this time of year like, in the afternoon, but you can start, sit down and paint, and then the light is totally different, everything looks different, so I like to take a photo. I printed out some and I guess I'll just start on one. Oh, the other thing I was gonna say before I start is that if you're having a hard time discerning what you're supposed to paint because if you look at a forest, it's like, you can't see the forest for the trees, like, that's a true saying. - Exactly. - Again, it applies to the painting, too. So, if you boost up the contrast on your photo or take it like Liana and I were talking about earlier as the sun is setting and the trees are in silhouette, that can help you because you can just focus on the shape and you don't have to think about all the different colors that are making this tree. - I think a lot of people honestly get very tripped up by being like, I must paint every needle-- - Yeah, absolutely. - Exactly as it appears! - Yeah, I do that, too. - Yeah, mm-hmm. - You can even squint your eyes. There are these tricks that'll help you kinda loosen. Liana's tip is the script brush and mine would be like, squint our eyes and use a silhouette. And actually, I think Missy Dunaway talks about this in her acrylic painting class, her acrylic ink-paining class where I think one of the first images she

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starts with is at night, and when we were talking about her class in the developing stages, I was like, "At night? "That's the easiest?" And she's like, "Yeah, things are in silhouette, "so it takes out the details." Like, oh yeah, that makes sense. - Ah! - So I had started this painting based on this image. You can see I'm not painting every tree. I'm also using multiple colors and I happen to be working with the Essence palette. It has a lot of browns and greens and ocher tones, which I love. I always use the ochers first on my palette, but I'm just gonna add more. I'm using a 5 Round Raphael brush, but honestly, it could be anything, and if you wanna add in some more of these trunks, you can. I can just see that it's very dense there. I don't have to count every single trunk. - [Liana] Right, you're just seeing that there's like, condensed areas - A bunch! - [Liana] Of darkness where there must be trees. - [Courtney] Yeah, and I never use black unless I'm doing something that's just black and white or something like that. I tend to use Payne's gray and indigo and then I'll mix it. In this palette, the color names are non-traditional. They're specific to this company, so I'm using Creation, which is like, a dark, royal blue, Nirvana, which is like, a forest-y green, and just Adore to kinda warm it up a little and it's giving me a nice kind of color. - [Liana] Is that what we're seeing in here and in here? - [Courtney] Yeah, that Adore color is coming through. - Oh! - [Courtney] It's pretty, right? So then I'm just gonna like, excuse me, I have a cold. I sound froggy. Blobbing in things and going right off the page if you want, and remember, this is something I have to tell people when I'm teaching in person, when I'm working with other artists who are teaching, no one's gonna see this photo. They're gonna see this painting and they're gonna be like, wow, that's so cool. That's so beautiful. We're not trying to, I'm not trying to accurately paint this image. I just wanna get the feeling and I want it to be my inspiration point, so blobby, I like blobby, and then I like to go back in with a thinner brush or with a pen or with my nib pen and add some small detail if that's what I'm going for. So you can see in some ways, it's also fast but I'm pushing down more on my brush and creating more blobs than Liana was. Liana had a lot of thin, stringy lines, which I love, but you can get a little bit of that here too, right? - [Liana] Mm-hmm. - [Courtney] And then another thing is like, there's this beautiful golden light coming. That's something that I could've started with. I could've done a wash of orangey tone in the back, but I can also go back in and paint that once everything is dry if I want to. - I know. Well, it's interesting. Trees are kind of like reflective, I think. - Oh yeah. Like, the needles. - They absolutely carry light, and then at least in California, I don't know about the rest of the country, but there was a lot of bark beetle-- - Oh yeah. - From a drought last summer, so a lot of the trees were orange, actually. They were like, dead. - Totally. - Orange needles on the trees, which was like, horrifying and sad, but also really interesting to paint (laughing). - Yeah, yeah, look for all those things in nature. All right, I'm gonna dry this so I can show you the next step, so I'm using my heat gun. If you haven't used one of these before, I highly recommend it. This is for embossing, but I use it to heat up my paintings in between layers 'cause everything just goes more quickly. You wanna make sure you keep moving the heat gun around and not in one spot 'cause you can burn your paper, you can bubble your paint, especially if you're working with acrylic ink or something. You can also pick up some of this liquid using a brush or a bit of paper towel. - [Liana] So now why do you want the paint to dry before you do the next bit? - So, I'm gonna show you some, just detailing with the nib pen, and it's very scratchy, and if the paper is damp, then it becomes really chewed up and gets caught in the nib. - Ew! - So it needs to be like, really dry, but if you're doing a Micron or something, you can forge ahead without it being perfectly dry. You can use any, you don't even have to use a waterproof pen. You can see what happens when you start to let colors bleed. I love using the Koi Coloring Brush Pens, so you can play with that, which is fun. All right, so I'm gonna use my nib pen. I honestly couldn't even tell you what size nib this is. It might be a vintage

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one 'cause-- - [Liana] Would any calligraphy pen work for this? - Yeah, so you can pick up, like, if you guys just watched my monoprints class, the Andy Warhol one that I know some of you have been loving, I talk a little bit more about using nib pens in that, but Speedball makes a beginner nib pen set. Your local art supply store, some of the Joanns carry them too, you can get them online, and you just wanna play with what feels good for you. Some nibs will be made out of different metals, and so some will be softer and give you a really fat line, some will be harder or stiffer, give you much thinner lines. It depends on how hard you push and what feels good, just like when you're picking out anything else, right? Like, when you write, what kind of pens do you use? So, I think this is like, the biggest tip for the pen is that I, instead of dipping into some kind of ink, I'm just gonna make my own color and just lay it into my pen with the brush, - Ooh! - So you're gonna have of refill it pretty often, and this is where I can go in and add details if I want. I love the scratchiness. - [Liana] And by the way everybody, write in with questions if you have any as we go. Courtney's a wealth of knowledge. - [Woman] We do have a question about the paints. - Yeah? - Mm, yes. - [Woman] Mandy asks, "I have two watercolor "and you have a pan. "Is that better? "How are they different?" - Oh, Mandy's asking a really good question about pan watercolor versus tube watercolor. So, for most companies, the paint in a pan or in a tube is exactly the same. Tubes tend to not dry out so you can use them over and over, and then when the pans are dried like this, you just apply water to activate them. Like, Liana added a little bit of water to start or you can us a spray mister to kind of get them wet and ready to go. We both also work out of our own custom palettes where we've squeezed in tubes. I don't have mine up here, but that's also common. So, you can go back and forth. It's really about the brand that you like and the colors. I'm not even particular to a single brand. I use lots of different brands, paint. I love to check the Opera Rose color and indigo. I love this pinky tone that's in the Prima Paints. It's very much like an Opera Rose. It's very saturated neon pink. - I usually find that the tube paints are more saturated like, more pigment than the, what are these called again, the blots? - Pan. - The pans? - Yeah. - But not in this case. These paints are actually wildly saturated. - Yeah, and I think also, - It's quite impressive. - Because the pan is already, or sorry, because the tube is already wet and creamy, you get the full impact of the pigment right away, whereas in the pan, you kinda have to activate the pan, and depending on whether you're using, you might have to stimulate the pan more with your brush kind of a thing, so it just depends. I would say in most cases, and you could use whatever you like, feel free to use whatever you like. So, I'm just going in here and scribbling and I like the addition that the scribbles make. - [Liana] See, this is a common theme with us! - We like to scribble. - We both like to scribble our trees. - [Courtney] I like to scribble a lot of stuff. - [Liana] I feel so close to you right now, Courtney. - [Courtney] Oh, it's all the scribbling. And you can go in and add little marks, so I was gonna show you the one that I worked on earlier. This is a tree in silhouette, again, started with my blobbiness and then went in with my nib pin for some of the finer lines. This is just like, a little study from here, my boyfriend's parents' property was burned in the California fires or just at the edge of it, and so this pine tree is no longer alive. It's really super pale and it was against this black, scorched earth, and I was just playing with the colors, like you said, catching the light, and this was right at sunset, and then this is, there are two things here. This is just from a photo I took while I was driving the car yesterday, so I would consider this a first pass, although I posted on Instagram. Everyone's like, it looks done to me. I'm like great, that means I can be lazy. I don't have to do more layers, but this is super blobby. - But now that you say that, I want you to go in with your nib pen and keep going. - [Courtney] Right, and I would wanna look at my photo to see like, are there lines here? What is it that I wanna go in and do details with? But you can see where I do a lot of blobby. I like some of the bleeding in here. It

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already looks like foliage, so that's really fun, and this is one I started that I need to do a lot of nib pen work. I just barely started. - Ooh! - And then my mom wanted to watch a movie when we were on vacation, so it is done. (Liana laughing) My mom's really obsessed with Ozarks right now. - Oh, okay. - I was like, "I'm not watching that." (Liana laughing) Yeah, so I'm just gonna keep going in with my nib pen and fleshing this out to whatever feels comfortable until I feel like it's done. - But it's so fun when you discover a technique, kind of a formula for painting something, and then you can approach it in all these different ways. So like, the day that I painted this one, for instance, and I was like, oh! - I love that. It's so beautiful. - That's really fun, and then I went and I actually, I did this painting, which actually isn't all pine trees. It's a whole bunch of different kinds of trees. - Yeah. You have like, rounder shapes. These ones look like they're falling. These ones are very needle-y. - Mm, but they all really, it borrowed from the same palette, they all have that same kind of quick, messy vibe. - [Courtney] Yeah, and I think the thing that really works for this too is you have a lot of white space, so you're not just putting a big blob in this foreground tree. You're allowing some of the white to show through, which articulates those as leaves, which is really pretty. - [Liana] Yeah, thank you! - [Courtney] It's very nice, Liana. - But yeah, it's a whole new rabbit hole was born that day, which I have had so much fun with. - I know, I love it. - So, I hope you continue down your rabbit hole. - I know, the pine trees. I'm definitely inspired at least for the next weekend to continue drawing and painting my pine trees. - And if you all are looking for more painting inspiration, especially like, that Missy Dunaway class - It's amazing. - That Courtney was talking about, it was so good, and a lot of those are techniques that can be used across mediums. It doesn't have to just be acrylic ink, but it can really help you in the way that you're thinking about watercolor and other mediums. - And yeah, color mixing, color on the page, light. We have a great class with Yao Cheng where she's doing plein-air painting outside, and the first chapter she does, trees, painting trees, so that'd be very helpful to see. I think Lindsay Stripling's class would be amazing for just like, brush handling, color mixing, and she does some more atmospheric kinds of washes and so forth. - She'd probably be like, what is Liana doing with that liner brush? That's crazy. (laughing) So if you are new to Creativebug, you never tried us before, come on over to the site. We have a great deal for you. You can try a month of Creativebug for free, so that's over a thousand classes in all sorts of categories, and Faith is gonna post a promo code for you. - Yeah, it's Joann30, and that also gets you 30% off your supplies? - Yes, at joann.com. - Yeah, so you can use it on your Primo watercolor kits. They also make some awesome watercolor ink that I am really excited to play with coming up soon. They just came out. They do really great little tiny books like, watercolor postcard books, but in all different kinds of sizes that are really fun to play with, too. - Ooh! - Yeah. - Cool. - Thank you guys for watching. Thanks for your great questions about watercolors and all of the questions that you bring to our Live shoots, and we'll see you next week. - Bye! (upbeat music)

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