Mixtape: Trees with CBTV

Chapter 1 - Mixtape: Trees

Conifer color study with Lorene

- I'm from the Pacific Northwest, which is also, Washington is known as the Evergreen State. We have a lot of conifers around in our forest, in our cities. It's sort of the signature of our place. So today I'm going to do a color study of a tiny sprig of a conifer. So here's this enormous tree. We're gonna try and capture its essence down on a little tiny piece of paper. To do that, we're going to use our round brush, like yesterday, and we're gonna keep it loose. We're gonna make our marks more closely resemble what I'm seeing on the sprig. So we're capturing color and movement. This is a Hollywood Juniper. One of my favorite things about a Hollywood Juniper, also has these little tiny teal berries on it. We'll see if we can't fit all of that into today's study. We know by now that mixing a credible green, a green that looks to be natural in the garden, is a bit of a chase, back and forth. Blue, yellow, red. All right, that's getting something. I think I need a little bit of red in there. So, and this is the sort of mark we're going to make today, because we're dealing with the conifer, the needles. And this sprig, which has the berries on it, is a little more of a blue-green. Whereas this sprig, which is just on another part of the same tree, has a little bit more of a limey color to it. So let's start with our berried branches. Some are thicker than others, the needles, and sometimes I wanna fill in a little bit more substantive of a swatch just to express what the color is. That'll kind of translate to these other lines. And again, painting with water, you can kind of catch some of the highlights on the plant. The part where our eyes perceive a lightness, which throws the contrast of the shadows even more into relief. Let's put in some of those turquoise-y berries, which is actually my favorite part. You can see 'em up here. We might as well make them look like berries. The essence of berry. This is definitely an instance where I wanna get the water to move some paint around. I get the impression this is a younger sprig of the tree. It's not nearly, a little more limey-green. And the berries show up as more of a, also that limey-green. So we're working, it's the same plant, it's even part of the same sprig, but we're getting a lot of different greens in our study. We're looking for and finding a range of greens. Tone my green down with some red. It gets very dark, kind of as you get on the inside of the branch, the needles that are shadowed on the inside. Now let's capture the bark of the juniper. It's this wonderful, kind of a rusty, warm brown. The red, adding in the bark, which is a form of red, to this color study, adds a lot of energy to it because it is, we're sort of playing with complementary colors, how they behave. I like to think of it as one complement makes the other even more of itself. So those berries turned out a lot more turquoise as they started to dry out. It's funny how some of the pigments, the way they act, I think, I don't want to mess with it too much more. This is when I go in and just start mopping up color on my palette to shift things one little tiny way or another. Give it some depth. All right. I feel like I just did a self-portrait of my place. So I'm going to call this "Home."

Painted fringe tree with Lisa

- Hello. Today we're going to make a stylized tree that looks like something you might see in a children's book. I like to call this style of tree a fringe tree. So I'm gonna make this tree red with some fuchsia elements. Again, going outside of your normal nature color palette is really fun. We're gonna start by drawing the top of the tree, or inking the top of the tree with medium-size brush. So this tree is gonna have some layers to it, and you'll see why it is called, or I call it, a fringe tree as we

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begin to build it. Just keep adding layer after layer to your tree, sort of evoking a pine tree. This one's fun because you can be really loose. Next we're going to add some of our magenta ink, and I'm using this at pretty full capacity. And this is where it begins to look like fringe. And that is fringe tree. I also made a blue version, that's slightly different shape but same idea. One of the reasons I love drawing trees is there are so many ways to render them, from hyper-realistic to super-stylized and wonky like the ones we've made during this challenge, and everything in-between. You can decide how stylized versus how realistic you want to render things, and nature is a great place to play with that.

Upcycled T is for Tree with Suzy
- It's a T and it's also gonna be a tree. First up, we're gonna give our tree some leaves. It's pretty bare right now. We can put in a line here for this leaf up here, and then we're gonna add the leaves to the top of the tree. This is gonna be the tree trunk. Now our tree has some leaves. We are gonna start with the green leaves. I'm using my medium brush, because these have some detailed areas. And you can paint your leaves all one color if you want to. I think it's fun to make them different colors. I imagine this is a tree in the spring where everything's in bloom. You could use fall colors and paint a fall tree. And just for balance, we're gonna do one more green leaf. I'm gonna add the bright pink for a nice springtime look. Just a couple of those. And then I'm gonna add one more color. We'll add the blue just for a little fun. I know there aren't blue leaves, but if you think about maybe if you're looking at a spring tree at sunset, the colors start to shift and change. Now to color our tree. I'm gonna get my kind of aqua green color, and I'm going to stick with my medium brush. It's a pretty detailed area in here that we need to paint. It'd be fun to start with a trunk, that's the easy part, but I'm gonna start with this area first. If you're feeling nervous about all this painting, it might be helpful to let it dry first. You could paint the entire tree with the light color and paint the leaves on top, but it would change the color of the leaves. They wouldn't look quite the same. Doing it this way allows these colors to stay really bright. All right, now we get to do the trunk. I'm gonna switch to my big brush. And we have ourselves a beautiful bright tree.

Foggy watercolor trees with Maria
- I'm really liking working with the flat edge brush, so I think we're gonna continue along and make some Christmas trees with that same tool. Let's get started by working on the color palette. I'm gonna do some evergreen type of trees, so I need to get a color that feels kind of gray/green for the evergreen. that feels kind of gray/green for the evergreen. Okay, let's start there. And I'll just start by putting some really just horizontal lines to mimic the tree shape. just horizontal lines to mimic the tree shape. And this is where the different flat edge brushes come in handy. As I get to the top of the tree, I might want to use my smaller brush. Some might be triangular, some might not even be triangular. Let me try that there. I'm gonna use some pencil as well. I'm gonna actually switch things up a little bit and get it a little wetter because I want to experiment with salt as well on this. So, we're gonna do a bunch of different kinds of tree shapes here. I love the way it feels when I drag the pencil into that. All right, let's try to get some salt in here. Just gonna-- I have a little container of salt. I'm just gonna drop a little bit in and you'll see how it's really cool, the texture that it makes. And you can see how it just picks up. It makes this beautiful texture on there. Don't want to overdo the salt but I do want to put enough, so that I can see the beautiful effect of it. It feels a little bit like it's mimicking snow to me, so I'm gonna play with that. I'm gonna keep pushing that. Now I'm gonna actually try this little bristle here and see because it's a different kind of bristle and

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it's wider, I'm going to just try to pick up some of the texture of that. That's kind of cool. Drag it across. So, I'm getting some different kinds of Christmas trees in there. I might just also drag it very, very lightly across. I'm thinking when I'm doing this about like a pattern with the Christmas trees and I really like this horizontal motion with this. I think I'm gonna grab a little bit of blue. I think I'm gonna try to get a little bit of blue on here. It's fairly wet, so I will try a little bit more salt on there in those areas. Okay, now I'll pull out a little bit more of the trees. What's really nice about the salt is that you can use lots of different types. There's coarser salts that will be a little bolder. Feel free to try different salts and work on this idea of texture. I can put some little snowflakes in there. I'm gonna use the dry brush to make it feel windy or foggy, so I can drag a little bit on this horizontal ground plane. So, I'll put a couple little bits of blue and green, maybe even a little bit of black but not super black just to get the eye to move into the tree a little more. But when you're using salt, you can just wait for it to dry really. And then once it's completely dry, you can brush off with a really light brush, a dry brush, just to get the bits of salt that are excess. But you don't wanna really touch it too much. You want to just leave it 'cause the watercolor and the ink kind of dry together on the page. And the more you touch it, the more it'll kind of mess it up. So, you really just want to make sure that you are pretty delicate with it. Mine is all dry now, so I'm just gonna use the brush to take off the excess salt. I'm just gonna gently brush the excess salt off. Not too much, just very lightly. And you can see the little bits of white in there and how it created this really interesting texture over here.

Graphic inky trees with Jon
- Drawing a tree is all about trying to notice movement and capturing that movement using line weight and quick, long lines. We're going to study this tree from a photo because, if you can believe it, we couldn't bring an 80-foot oak tree into the studio. This photo is available to you on the class PDF, but I encourage you to try and find a tree either in your neighborhood or in a park nearby so that you can work from life rather than off of a photo. This photo here is an oak tree that we saw when my wife and I were in Paso Robles, and what we're gonna do for this drawing is we're going to isolate it out of the entire scene. So we're gonna discount the vineyard, the other trees, this tiny photo of my wife in the foreground, and we're just gonna try and focus on the tree and the shadow. Starting with our Pigma fine point brush pen, we're gonna begin at the base of the trunk, and what we are looking for are longer lines that can really help us see the rhythm of the branches flow. We're trying to really understand the way that this tree forms and looks. It's all about trying to look at this rhythm 'cause otherwise it's not gonna look as natural as it does in real life. And, if you end up overlapping lines at some point, that's okay. The important thing is that it sort of feels like a fluid mark. In some case, these beginning lines are almost like writing in cursive. So, if you imagine writing a cursive F or a cursive S, you don't really lift up your pen in mid-letter. You try to find the longer line and have it be an uninterrupted mark, which really makes it feel more fluid. So we've got the branches and now I'm just gonna kind of litter in some marks that show the overall shape of the top of the tree, the leaves. You don't have to try to get every single leaf in there. And, as we're going, I'm also gonna try to add some shapes to show where there's a gap in the leaves, and we can see some of the branches again. But it doesn't have to be totally perfect. Again, if you have some random marks here and there, it'll end up looking more organic anyways, but you want to try your best to follow the path of the branches you already started with. So, with a few more marks in the middle here, that's a pretty good start. And the last thing I want to do with this pen is just show an outline of the shadow, and I'm doing that so that we get a sense of the light. Now, if you're drawing

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from life, which I hope you are, I hope you watch this video and then go outside and draw from a tree that you actually see before your very eyes, you might not have the most powerful lighting. It might be a foggy day or the tree might be backlit. So it really depends on what you're looking at, but I like to try to find powerful contrast 'cause it helps us to see the shapes of the shadow a little bit easier. So, I have a good beginning sketch here, and I'm going to take my medium brush pen now and try to define the difference between the area of light and the area that's in shadow. So, if I'm going along this branch here, that means this whole side is gonna be in shadow, this branch here as well, this branch here, and what I like to do for some of these shadows is just kinda stroke in the value like that so that you can see that there are individual leaves making specific crisp shadows on the trunk. We can do that down here, as well. Darken this whole branch, and now let's work on the leaves and try to find a way to add in value that shows that the light is coming from above and casting a shadow that goes off to the left side. And, if you do want to get specific with leaves, try to look at how they shape out some of the negative space around the edges. If you try and do every leaf on the inside part of the tree, it's gonna take you a lot longer. So this is all about thinking about lighting and value as opposed to specific details, especially at this point. So, we can see that the lighting is starting to look a little more credible, so that's good. I'm gonna keep pushing this around, and one of the reasons I like using this tool for this tree drawing is because you can make broader strokes and fill in a large area like this pretty quickly, but you can also pull back and add some strokes like that to focus on some of the more specific leaves. There's gonna be a little bit more of a sense of lighter area on this side because that's where the light is coming from, so we don't need as much black on this side here. Now I'm gonna work on the shadow that's on the ground. (pen scraping on paper) You can see that, once you get that shadow on the ground, it really makes the light source a lot more evident, a lot more credible looking. And sometimes, when you're looking at any object, doesn't have to be a tree, whatever it is you're studying, the contrast might not be that strong. You might see just a subtle difference between light and dark. But I think, if you end up pushing that value even more so the contrast is really strong, it can help strengthen your drawing and make it look a lot more iconic, a lot more solid. So the last thing I want to do is get some marks here to show the layers in the trunk, so there's some lines in here. So that helps to strengthen that, and then a couple more leaves in here just to help keep that flow looking good. So now we're done drawing my tree, so I hope what you do now, take a little break, go outside, give yourself 20 minutes or 15 minutes, and draw your own tree.

In-person tree study with Yao
- To start off, let's choose one or two trees to paint. We're gonna single them out, study them, before we move on to a more complex landscape. So where I'm sitting, I'm thinking something tall like this tall eucalyptus tree right here. And then a bushier, shorter one for variety, and I can get a sense of scale and different types of textures that I'll be using. Starting with the trunk of the tree. Now notice how I don't sketch with pencil beforehand. If you're more comfortable with that, definitely go for it. The reason why I don't is because I like to improvise as I go, and be surprised by what I'm painting. It often informs me of what I wanna paint next, or what I'm painting at the time. This is a size 16. I like this one because it has a really pointy tip. It allows me to create really detailed work, or do branches like I'm doing right now. But I can also press down quite a bit and get fatty, or wider leaves. Using a permanent sap green here. I'm intentionally not focusing on details too much. I'm more concerned about the overall shape of the tree. So because we're out in the elements, if you will, the drying time is a lot faster. So one, if you want all the blends to happen, you'll need to move

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at a faster rate. Or you can use it to your advantage and start layering with it. The other thing that I'm doing is I'm constantly looking back at my subject. I'm picking out certain, maybe it's an area of the foliage that I wanna focus on. I'm not taking it, I'm not trying to get the photorealistic aspect of it, because again, everything is moving. There's breeze going through, so I can't focus completely on just one area. But I am constantly looking back for reference. I'm dabbing lightly in some areas, particularly towards the outer part of the tree because that's where it fades more in the background, so I get a little more perspective. This tree in particular have a lot of clusters in certain areas, so I'm trying to get that characteristic. I actually love painting outside also, because it's a very abstract way of depicting nature. Because it forces you to not be able to focus on details so much. You can be super gestural. Some leaves are behind and some leaves are in front. I'm keeping that in mind. Can also make it up. Use your artistic license. I'm painting this one as a study, so gonna move pretty quickly here. It's just to get an idea of the types of strokes I'll be using, how heavy I wanna press with my brush, the overall shape of the tree, the lighting that I'm working with. So don't feel like you have to dwell too much on any one piece. Adding just a little bit of detail in the trunk. Perhaps a little bit of foliage. The brown that I picked up was a burnt umber. Adding some foliage at the bottom just for reference. Oh. Can work with that. Not a problem. You can use your brush strokes to depict the different types of foliage. Seems like what I'm looking at in the back, there's some that are longer and thinner, not as bushy. Alright, let's move on to the next one.

Tiny traced trees with Lisa
- I love bottlebrush trees. I have a huge collection of them. In fact, sometimes I bleach them, so they come green, and then I take all the color out. And they sit on my windowsill. I really like them. And, lo and behold, they make cool shadows. They're also full of texture. They're really bristly and hard, so we're gonna try and capture some of that with my graphite pencil. Let's line these guys up at the bottom of the page so they're like a little forest. Okay, and I think I'm gonna include the base, because I think it's really funny. I'm really trying to think about how the bristles move in space and how rough they are. So I'm trying to draw kinda willy nilly. There's a middle wire that goes up the tree, and then they go in all different directions. There's some stragglers down at the bottom that I want to try and get to. The really fun thing about this is, as I keep going, I feel like I'm getting looser and looser, 'cause I've drawn it a couple times. So it's like everything, my wrist gets looser, I'm concentrating less, it's getting more freeform, which is part of why I like this technique. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight trees, yay! I'm gonna add some color. Let's do real color, let's do green, green trees. 'Cause, why not? Maybe I'll alternate. I'll do a light green for this one and this one. I'm painting over the shadow drawing just to add some spot color and some interest. And you'll notice the graphite's moving around a little bit, that's fine. Kinda dotting, dabbing. And let's do a crazy color, how about pink? I like pink and green together. Let's do the bases all the same color. How about... Let's make a different color green. I don't really like this color green right out of the box, so I'm gonna mix it, maybe with a little ochre, just to tone it down a little bit. Much better. I like pukey greens. I'll do all the bases the same. And then because I've lost some of the density of the graphite, I'm just gonna go over a little bit of it. Not all of it, just in a few spots. Just to kind of punch it back up. And I don't even care if I'm going over wet watercolor, I'm just gonna work right through it. The watercolor dulled it down a little bit. I'm just gonna go ahead and go over it. I don't mind if the pencil catches. It's really about being free. This technique is so good for keeping yourself loose. I mean, you can't go wrong with drawing the shadow and then you just play. It's really just about putting color where you want it to, redrawing

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when you feel like you've made a mistake. It's not about doing things really precise or really nitpicky, and that's kinda the fun of it.

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