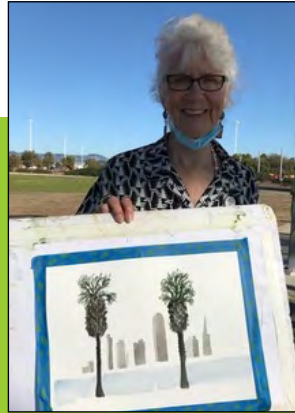




Community Outreach

Oakland Vets Reunited with Plein Air Event



November 4 turned out to be a terrific day for Community Outreach to meet with our Oakland veteran group in a socially-distanced plein air event. We had not met since February due to COVID. The meeting spot was the Oakland Middle Harbor Shoreline Park, opposite the port of Oakland. Our group was just at the limit allowed, 12 people. The spot afforded great views to paint.

The plan was to meet, greet, and eat between 11:30 am and noon. Then paint from noon to 2:00 pm. Once everyone arrived, we socialized and snacked. Then the vets found their spots to paint and set up. Conversations ceased when the painting began.

This was our first ever plein air event. Michael Friedland slipped each of us this wise message that he read somewhere. "Words have a surprising power to preserve a state of mind, so I find it's helpful before I start a painting to **describe in one sentence** (mentally or out loud) the essential aspect of the motif I want to capture. Repeating this brief definition

as I work keeps me from getting derailed from the original concept. A common hazard, however, is to try to do too much. You can't ever get everything you see onto the paper, no matter how many days you work at it. The essential discipline is to **paint the concept and no more.**"

Some vets just knocked out their painting without batting an eye. Others took their time painting a detailed Bay Bridge or a beautiful row of palm trees. Some would complete their works and others would have homework. As things progressed numerous people found that they had beautifully finished foregrounds, but empty backgrounds. The lesson learned was first, layout the painting then start with the background. Nevertheless, just being together and painting was joyous. Our day ended with the plan to meet again at a date yet to be determined at Point Pinole.

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