

DAVID SHEVLINO

MY CREATIVE JOURNEY

My desire to be an artist began as a teenager, and by 16 I had decided that I wanted to devote my life to painting. I had no idea how that would happen, nor was I overly concerned about it. From the moment I became interested in art, I was enthralled with the Old Masters and traditional painting, so much so that I didn't even look at contemporary painting. I attended art school directly after high school and spent most of my time drawing from casts and live models. As a student I had a very narrowly defined attitude about what I considered good painting.



It wasn't until I was out of art school for about twelve years that I began to question what I was doing. I had a nagging feeling that there was something more that I wanted to paint besides traditional realist paintings. I had no idea what these "other" paintings would look like, but after a while I finally got up the nerve to start the ball rolling.

I bought some large panels and matching brushes and determined to start experimenting with some ideas. The work was mostly surreal, with a personal narrative. At first, it was very uncomfortable doing something different and outside of my comfort zone. I would often look at the work and question the validity of what I was doing, but with time it began to feel more comfortable. Though the paintings weren't always "keepers," they represented a major shift in the way I thought about painting. I began to embrace the idea of experimenting in order to find what I was looking for. This not only meant making major changes in my attitude, but more importantly it required giving myself permission to break my own self-imposed rules.



Past and Present, 1994, Oil on panel, 48 x 48 inches

The surreal paintings I did at that time didn't last long, but they led to other ideas because I was more open-minded about what I could paint.



Farmer, 1996, Oil on canvas, 40 x 45 inches

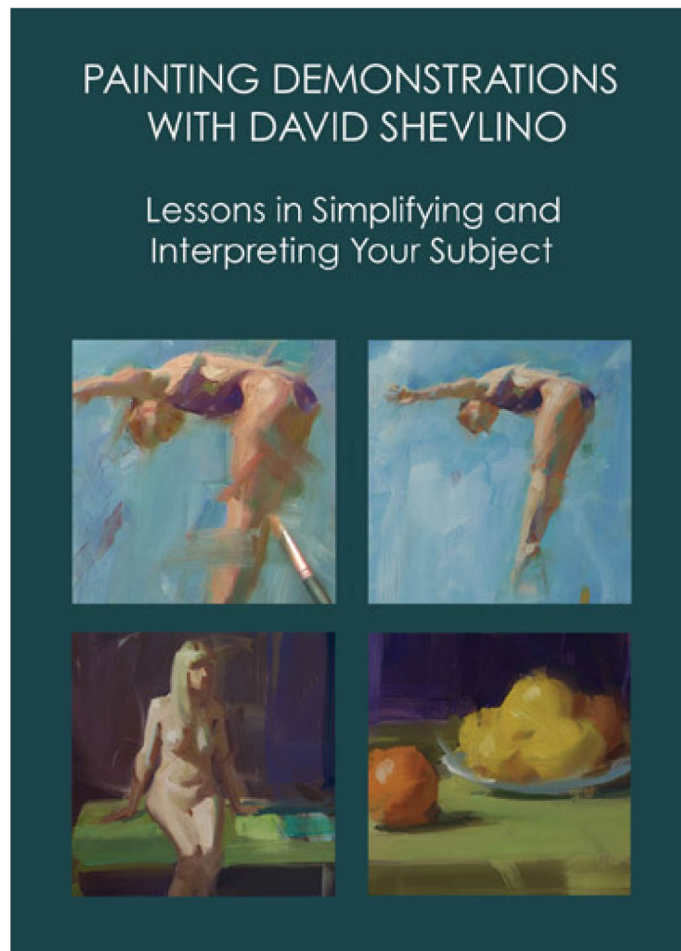
Another big change in my thinking was that it was OK to work from photographs. So many traditional painters have negative feelings about working from photos, and I was one of them. Being a traditionally trained painter and making the leap to working from photos in a constructive way took me a few years. Being able to work from photos means inventing, since photos lack so much information. The upside was that it made me freer to create. When digital photography became available it opened up even more possibilities. It made editing and manipulating images even easier with software like Photoshop. Since I was now open to working from digital photos, I could create compositions that would have been very difficult without the aid of photography.

More changes came to my career after the stock market crash in 2008. Until then I had done little to no teaching. With the poor economy a lot of artists were left to wonder what to do next.



Cars at Dusk, 2007, Oil on canvas, 50 x 45 inches

On a lark, I decided to make a video and post it on YouTube. I had no idea that it would attract an audience. I decided to make an instructional DVD and market it directly using social media, which was becoming more popular. With galleries closing and sales of paintings stagnant, videos, YouTube and social media helped me create another way of marketing myself as a workshop instructor directly to people who were interested in what I was doing.



My instructional DVD, available at: <http://www.davidshevlino.com/dvdpage.html>



Shevlino teaches a painting class in Atlanta, Georgia, in 2011



My instructional vidoes can be found [here](#).

Website: <http://www.davidshevlino.com>

ABOUT DAVID SHEVLINO

My exposure to art began as a teenager growing up in New Jersey, just outside near New York City. I began making trips to art museums in New York when I was 15 and developed a love of traditional figurative painting. As a youth I found myself especially drawn to the old masters. Those early trips to the museum instilled in me a love of craft and a sense of where painting comes from. For most of my artistic career I've tried to take what I've learned about traditional painting and mold it into something I can call my own, which presently means exploring the place between tradi-