



## Second Place Noah Layne

Victoria, British Columbia • [www.noahlayne.com](http://www.noahlayne.com)

*Lemons* is one of several paintings in which Noah Layne depicts the yellow fruits resting snugly within a wooden box that creates dramatic light-and-dark contrasts. "I love to paint light as it falls and wraps around forms," he says, "and the roundness and texture of lemons show this nicely." He has also found that lemons look fresh for two weeks, about the length of time he needs to paint one lemon-filled box. The fruit's longevity is a significant advantage for Layne, who still follows the advice he received at age 15: work from life as much as possible.

The wooden box here is an adjustable structure he constructed. With the lemons in place, a single spotlight with a daylight

fluorescent bulb emphasized the lights and darks. On his linen surface, Layne first did a line drawing of all the boxes plus the lemons in the left box only. Then, working on one lemon-filled box at a time, he created an underpainting in earth colors, followed by a color block-in. With the third layer and subsequent finishing, he addressed the modeling of form and the "subtle flow of light."

Building up layers in this way allows Layne to "live with a painting" for weeks at a time. "One of the things," he says, "that make a photo different from a painting is that a photo records a split second of time. What I want my work to convey is a sense of timelessness—of time standing still."

LEFT: *Lemons* (oil, 14x30)

## Third Place Jennifer O'Connell

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OPPOSITE: *After Dinner* (oil, 24x36)

"We unconsciously create our own still life arrangements within the home," says Jennifer O'Connell. "The flowers we gather, doors we open, and way we arrange our homes reveal our humanity. It makes sense to explore this world."

*After Dinner* depicts a typical end-of-meal scene in O'Connell's home. When beginning a painting, she works from life, which sometimes necessitates leaving in situ an area of living space that has become the subject of a painting. As the painting progresses, however, she finds the sheer number of real-life details overwhelming, so she moves to the studio to "orchestrate the symphony of colors, shapes, edges, and marks," pushing the painting beyond representation. "Reality," says O'Connell, "is really the springboard into the bigger issues in painting."

Indeed, in *After Dinner*, realism and abstraction coexist companionably. This close-up view with its diagonally placed table pushing into the viewer's space offers strong, abstracted shapes and tonal contrasts, but also invites the eye to circle the table and explore clues as to what has taken place. The repetitive shapes of the face-up hand of cards on the table with its counterpart of darker, face-down cards on the chair lend not only narrative, but also rhythm. Placemats become part of a checkerboard that's picked up as patchwork color on the chair backs and far wall. "A painting," says O'Connell, "is made up of shapes that create an overall movement. What interests me is organizing those shapes and making something out of that chaos."



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