Design Explorations: Photo as Inspiration

Photos are a great source of inspiration for art quilts, collage and artcloth. Here is a case study of how I used a photo that intrigued me as the basis for a fiber collage composition.
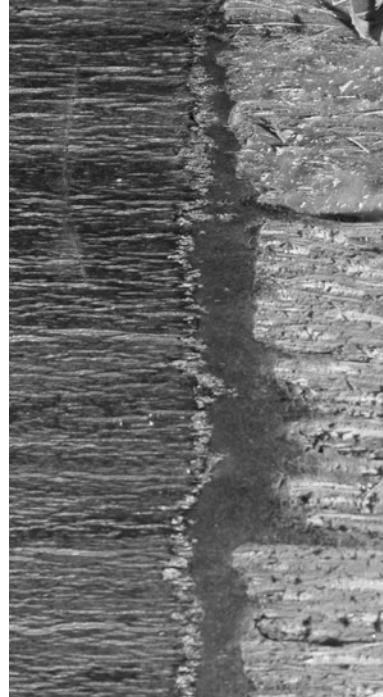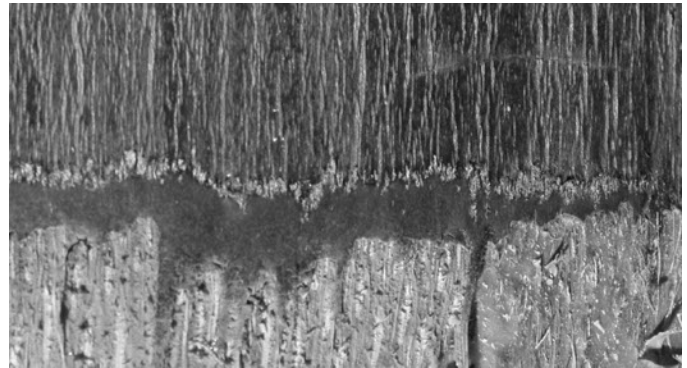

This is the original photo. I found it on the internet on one of the web sites that has copyright free photos available for download. (See the last page for a list of resources.) I was first drawn to the contrast in texture and value. As I looked closer, I noticed how the center section transitions differently above than below. I also noticed how the pattern and texture on the top half differ from that on the bottom half.
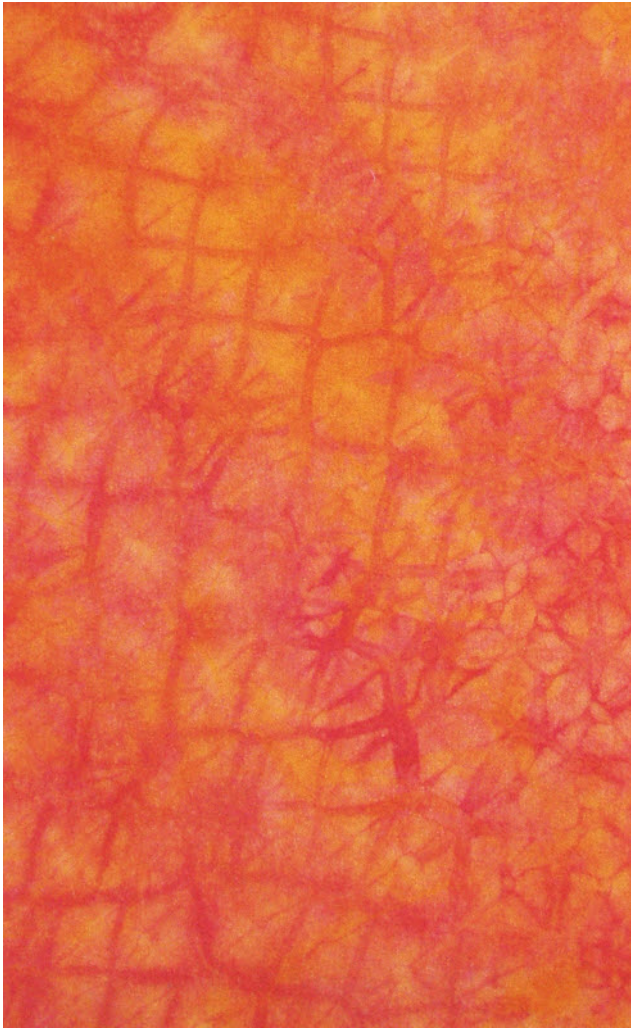
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The first step was to convert the photo to grayscale. It is easier to focus on the composition, value and texture without the distraction of color.

Next I rotated it to see which orientation I preferred. Although the original is interesting, I am drawn to vertical rather than horizontal compositions, so I focused on those.
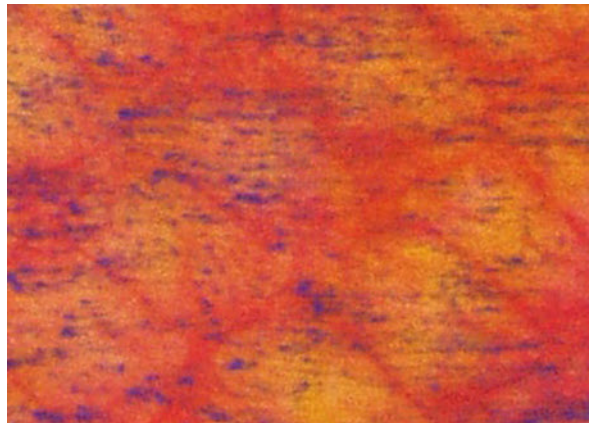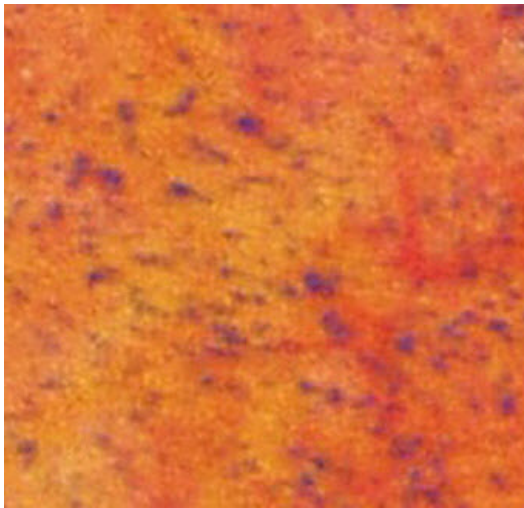

The photo on the left seemed better balanced, so that is the composition I chose for my collage.

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I used fabric from my stash rather than creating new fabric. I wanted to pick up on the orange in the original photo, so I chose this piece of silk noil, with hues ranging from yellow-orange to red-orange.

Although the color of the fabric was perfect, it didn't provide the texture that makes the photo so interesting. I used a whisk brush to apply a small amount of blue violet paint. The left side was stippled to recreate the rough texture. The paint was brushed onto the right side to replicate the horizontal patterning.
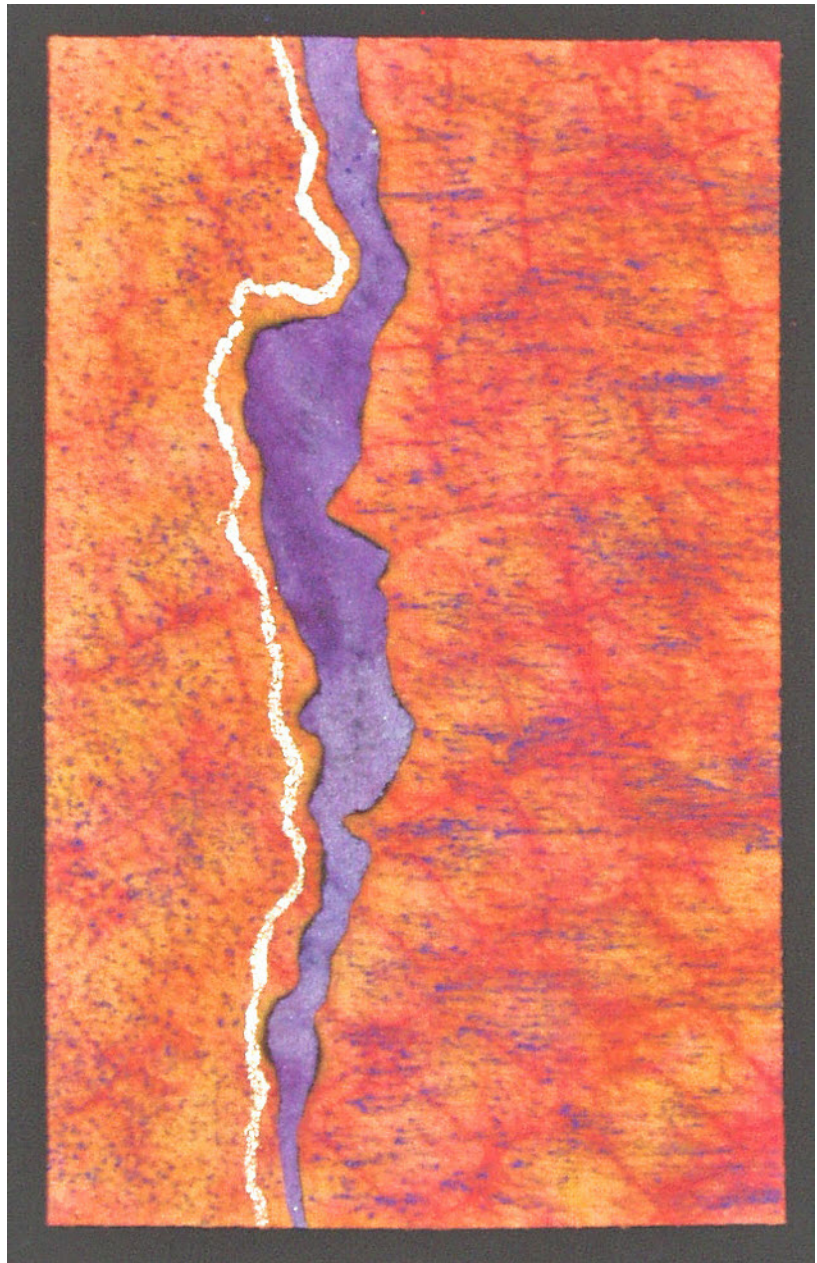
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The blue violet really pops against the orange, so I found the perfect shade of habotai for the focal point. I burned the edges of the noil to create a bit more texture. Then a bit of metal leaf for the final touch.

This is just one example of the many possibilities for using photos as a design inspiration. I hope you are inspired to try this for yourself!

Please respect the copyrights of others. Use photos that you have taken yourself, or photos that are in the public domain. The next page contains a list of resources for public domain and copyright-free photos.

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Resources for Copyright-Free Photos

http://www.publicdomainpictures.net

http://www.morguefile.com/

http://eduscapes.com/tap/topic98.htm

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Public_domain_image_resources

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