

The Studio School

Winter 2020 Newsletter

It's hard to believe it is the end of another year. This one may be better off gone. At the School, we have been fortunate to be able to flex our creative sides in more ways than one! Many of us have learned how to teach and take classes online, how to communicate, but still be distanced, and most of us have been safe.



Talk Not Text By **Vera Dickerson** was awarded an award of Distinction in Virginia Watercolor Society annual in Richmond. Its at Virginia Museum of History and Culture, next to VMFA. Exhibit runs through Dec 31. This was done from a photo she took on the interior Towers stairs, of 2 students from Paul Mitchell School.

Jane Frank's *Dream Forest*, accepted to the International Society of Experimental Artists Online Juried Exhibition. This acceptance makes me a Signature Member.



Gina Louthian-Stanley will have two encaustic projects included in the upcoming book *The Ultimate Guide to Transfer Artist Paper* (April 2021) by Lesley Riley. Gina will also be part of another one of Lesley's projects for 2022!



CLASS NEWS:



What the Watercolor group has been up to...

In early March of 2020 — before we realized we were headed for one big roller coaster ride, Robin Poteet proposed a group project to her Wednesday watercolor students: “Let’s create a nature inspired Calendar for 2021.”

What seemed a fun endeavor became complicated once we had to stop in-person classes. Thankfully, 12 students persevered by researching and painting nature related themes from home.

In spite of the challenges.... we created a beautiful and meaningful calendar for 2021!!

Almost all of us are aware of today’s challenges to wildlife and our environment, yet many feel our personal voice isn’t enough to make a difference. With this calendar, our hope is to show that we, as artists, can make a difference, simply by doing what we do best... create!

We had no painting restrictions, other than using nature as our theme. Our group did a stellar job of calling attention to everything from tiny frogs to magnificent elephants.

Each image in the calendar also includes text that provides information about that animal’s characteristics and/or status in today’s environment.

Our planet is filled with inspiration -- from plants and animals, to rivers and rainforests and it has been a joy for us learn more about each subject represented. There are 20 watercolor paintings in our calendar.

The calendar is available through the Shutterfly website and we hope you’ll take a look. If you’d like to purchase one, contact Robin at poteetstudio@comcast.net She’ll send you a link with order information.

Shutterfly charges \$19.50 ea. + shipping. We did this as a “labor of love” and there is no markup

or profit. However... if our calendar leads you to donate to an environmental organization on your own, nature will be forever grateful.

Shifting Our Sails

During this time of isolation, I, as I am sure e all have, been able to fill our time doing new things, or just trying to de-stress. I have tried to stay active and try a few new things.

I have found myself able to be a student, even though everyday teaches me something. I began taking a myriad of online classes from other instructors I have wanted to take from, but was not able to travel, or afford to. As an instructor, I have learned a lot about teaching online from the classes I have taken. Gee, there's a lot of technology, all types of programs, and all kinds of gizmos and gimmicks, as well as mishaps when that technology is involved. Still there is noting like learning hands on, in person, and having such inspirational instructors and the comrade that we have at the Studio School. It's great we have been able to adjust, distance, and still come together to create and share inspirations. This is needed more now than ever.

Another good de-stressor is reading art books. Here are a few I have enjoyed:

- *The History of Art Materials* – by A.W.J. Pilgrim (Author, Illustrator)
- *Art & Fear: Observations On the Perils (and Rewards) of Artmaking* by David Bayles and Ted Orland
- *The Secret Lives of Color* by Kassia St Clair

Here are a few other recommended books:

- *Living and Sustaining a Creative Life: Essays by 40 Working Artists Paperback* Edited by Sharon Loudon
- *Catching the Big Fish: Meditation, Consciousness, and Creativity* by David Lynch
- *Do It: The Compendium* Curated by Hans Ulrich Obrist
- *Creative Block* Danielle Krysa
- *Taking the Leap: Building a Career as a Visual Artist (the Insider's Guide to Exhibiting and Selling Your Art)* by Cay Lang
- *Art/Work* by Jonathan Melber, Heather Darcy Bhandari
- *The Artist's Guide: How to Make a Living Doing What You Love* by Jackie Battenfield
- *Art, Inc.: The Essential Guide for Building Your Career as an Artist* by Lisa Congdon

And then there are always new art materials!

One of my new favorites are Gelatos by Faber Castell. Very similar to Woodies, but these are softer and bendable. The colors are bright and they also offer a metallic selection. They can be used on any surface and over any medium and are water-soluble. I really welcome this new find!



While shifting your sails, hopefully, you have been able to find some inspiration, new books, or new materials. Please email me to share these and I can post them in the next newsletter. Gina



OH, about art materials:

Have you ever wondered about the origins of some of the basic materials we use?

One common thing about art, we all know about the importance of art materials as a basic and realistic aspect of art. The choice of materials an artist uses brings something unique to their creative process and work. You have to admit; the choices are vast and sure ignite our curiosity and creativity.

The earliest art supply was the pencil. Do you know that modern pencils owe it to the ancient Roman writing apparatus called a stylus? Writers used this thin metal rod to write on papyrus- an old form of paper, and produced light marks that were readable. Also known as Silver point and today we use scribes of different metals to scribe an illustrative piece of art. Another form of stylus used were made of lead, which the hazardous lead was replaced with non-hazardous graphite, thus, where the word lead pencil comes from. Interchangeably, the graphite pencil makes darker marks than the lead pencils, or ancient styli.

The name graphite came from Greek origins, which means "writing." The pencil we know today was made conceivable just by the discovery of a strangely unadulterated graphite deposit in England in 1564. The pencils of craftsmen can be differentiated by the softness and hardness of the lead, based on the amount of clay that is used to bind the soft graphite or carbon. Although graphite pencils sketches and drawing became famous in the 17th-18th centuries, they were primarily used for outlining diverse media representation. Perhaps you have a favorite pencil on your art toolbox?

Then comes the easel. The easel in Dutch as a whole is called schildersezal the donkey of the painter. The apparent alternative to painting on walls was painting with panels or canvas on an easel. Easels were known to have been used as early as ancient Egypt; Pliny the Elder in the 1st century was the first recorded description of an easel. Easel painting became more popular in the 13th century, than the subsequent wall painting.

The mighty pen that we know today began as the brush that the Chinese used to write in the 1st millennium BC, the reed pens used by the Egyptians (around 300 BC), and the quill pens or pens made of bird feathers in the 7th or earlier century. In the mid-19th century, metal pens and pens with metallic nibs were developed. They had no ink reservoir in them, and it had to be dipped into inkwells. While Fountain pens, which need not be continuously dipped into ink, date from 1884. It wasn't until the 1930s or 40s that ballpoint pens came into fashion, and until the 1960s the soft-tipped pens we use today were not commercially available.

Most pen-and-ink drawings that were done before the twentieth century were made out of reeds or quills brushes. Some acclaimed artists that favored pens were Pablo Picasso, Henri Matisse, Rembrandt, and Vincent van Gogh.

Who can live without a paintbrush? As early as the Paleolithic Period, brushes were utilized. Examples can be seen in Spain and France caves, as well as in early Egyptian tombs. Paintbrushes were made of animal fibers like hog bristles or horsehair, and sable... The supplementary modern brushes are made of nylon fibers, polyethylene, or even wire.

To go along with the paintbrush, there is oil paint! Oil painting was believed to have originated in the 11th century in Europe. In 2008, oil paints that were extracted from natural sources were reported to have been used in the 7th-century cave paintings in Afghanistan. For many artists, particularly in Italy, oil paints had become the medium of choice by the end of the 16th century.

In 1841, John Goffe Rand, a portrait painter invented the paint tube, which replaced pig bladders and glass syringes, creating a boom in the art industry, and a new art movement “Impressionism”, impasto painting making it easy for outdoor painting, known as “plein air”.

Then there is wax: Ancient Egypt and Greece can be traced back thousands of years to the elemental composition of a crayon like medium, wax with pigment. Nevertheless, it may be easier to trace the notion of a crayon to chalk and pastels, recognized as early as the 16th century. Sometime in the late 18th, 19th century the wax-based crayons were probably developed. The famous Crayola were invented in 1902, and Artist quality Caran d’Ache in 1924.

So when was acrylic paint discovered? Well, acrylic paint can be traced back as far as 1934 – created by a German chemist called Otto Rohm. Rohm developed an acrylic resin that was quickly transformed into paint.

The first acrylic paints were designed as house paints and for use on military vehicles; the fact that the resin dried so quickly and adhered to almost anything made it perfect for these purposes. The paint had a low viscosity and was seen as too runny to be of any use to an artist.

Acrylic artist quality paint as we know it appeared in the early 1950’s, and high viscosity artist quality paints in the 1960’s. As previously mentioned, artists were very reluctant to use acrylic paints, mainly due to the attributes being so different to that of oil paints.

Acrylic paint dried so quickly that it could not be smoothly blended with itself, creating artistic boundaries for painters.

The ‘new’ acrylic paint required a different approach. It was not until the pop artist Andy Warhol embraced the medium that it started to gain real recognition. His famous ‘Campbell Soup Cans’ series demonstrated the sharp, bold clarity possible with acrylics. Today acrylics have various consistencies and bodies making the medium very diverse to work with.

Lastly, there is watercolor. You have to go far back in time to find the roots of watercolor painting, to the time when prehistoric humans in the Paleolithic ages painted the walls of their caves with mixtures of ochre, charcoal, and other natural pigments. Watercolors were also painted on papyrus and used in Egyptian art forms. In Asia, time-honored Chinese painting with watercolors developed around 4,000 B.C., primarily as a

decorative medium, and by the 1st century A.D., the art of painting religious murals had taken hold. By the 4th century landscape watercolor painting in Asia had established itself as an independent art form. Into the 21st century, artists have taken advantage of this unique medium to create striking works of art. Above all, watercolor painting is versatile, alternately offering rich, vivid tones or soft, soothing forms. Perhaps watercolor is your individual preference?

No matter what materials you use, they have all evolved from a rich history and have evolved to give us the resourcefulness and creative diversity we love to explore in our work.

An extended and enormous **Thank You** to all who have donated to help us weather the storm due to Corona Virus. We are all eager and excited to get back into the Studio School space and to be together in person! We hope to get back in person as safe as it is safe to do so. In the meantime, we will observe the same safety protocols as we did in the fall sessions. **Thank You** for all the extra Care in helping us all stay safe and creative.

THE STUDIO SCHOOL REOPENING POLICY

The Studio School is reopened in June, 2020 for classes offered in the summer schedule. In order to maintain a safe environment for our faculty and students we do the following:

- Keep tables six feet apart
- Only 8 foot tables are in place
- Maximum of 10 students in front room
- 8 students in back room
- Cleaning of tables, doorknobs, faucets, etc. before classes start
- Table mats will not be used; bring a white trash bag or plastic to cover your space. Take it home to throw away.
- Wear masks and gloves
- There is a clorox solution in spray bottles to use on tables. Instructors will wipe down tables and chairs after each class.
- General classroom cleaning of surfaces will take place on a regular basis.
- Extra bleach and paper towels are in the cabinet in the front room.

We look forward to resuming classes. We will monitor the pandemic continually, in case of needed policy changes.

The Studio School Faculty

See you in January for all new classes and inspiration.

Have a safe and Happy Holiday Season. Vera, Judy, Robin, Jane, Gina, Tracy, and Patti.

