



June 2006

Welcome to the Oil Pastel Society!

New Professional Members:

*Marke K Simmons
Rita Naras Kreitz*

New Associate Members:

*Lindsay Olson
Patricia Green Brinson
Kevin O'Brien
Kent Whitaker*

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MEMBER NEWS

Luba Sterlikova's works will be among those presented at the RAP art auction in Washington, DC , May 13,2006.

The works can be seen in the on-line catalogue (scroll the list of artists).

To view the complete collection offered for sale go to <http://www.russianap.org/> , this site requires registration.

Carol Zack has joined the newsletter staff. Carol will be writing the Artist of the Month articles starting in this issue. Thank you Carol for volunteering to help out.

Featured Artist of the Month

Jack Brumbaugh

With summer in the northern hemisphere fast approaching, the inspiration we see and feel from the changing seasons is certainly in the air all around us.

Deciding to choose Jack Brumbaugh as our June artist-of-the-month seems appropriate, since much of his inspiration comes from nature, and in particular, water. Jack translates his ideas and thoughts about life and water into beautiful oil pastel paintings, he feels his paintings are most successful 'when they draw the viewer into the intimate and abstract level of stroke, color, and texture'.

Jack's house and studio overlook the Chesapeake Bay in Fairhaven Maryland, USA. 'The local landscape is evident in his oil pastel drawings and paintings.' Based on the information on his website, he is a busy productive artist, 'exhibiting in numerous art fairs and galleries nationwide.'

Please take some time to check out this very talented artist. We took some time to ask him some questions that he graciously answered in hopes of providing a glimpse into Jack's approach to painting with oil pastels. His website has additional information to explore, as well as seeing more of Jack's work. www.jbdrawing.com



**Mesmeric
22" x 34
Oil Pastel**

Jack, what first attracted you to the oil pastel medium? What made you first pick them up?

I've always enjoyed drawing over other media and began with graphite and colored pencil. I began to work on a larger scale, however, and soon realized that pencils were inadequate for filling up a large space, with any amount of color and density. I began experimenting with other media and combinations of media. I discovered oil pastels, and initially was most attracted by their ease of use. Since then, I've come to appreciate their plasticity and flexibility, as well as the styles and palettes now available with the different manufactures.

Is there a particular brand or type of oil pastels that you prefer using?

I've used most oil pastel brands on the market at some point, but my favorites are the Caran d'Ache neopastels and Holbein. I like the shape and consistency of the Caran d'Ache, and the large palette of the Holbeins. I find the Sennelier too buttery for my purposes. I start my pieces by filling the space with a flat or graduated color. I cover the surface evenly with a thin layer of oil pastel and use a rag with solvent to make an even, rich colored surface. Typically I will then sketch out my image with oil paint washes or more oil pastels and solvent. As the image progresses, I begin to play more with the color, texture, and line that using oil pastels allows. I find that I work best using an "organic" approach. That is, I allow the image to develop slowly, while at the same time I try to allow the media to work to its best advantage, and enjoy the process of drawing. I try to balance the process of drawing with the end goal of a well-balanced, recognizable image.



Refractory
34" x34"
Oil Pastel

You seem to prefer gessoed rag board and stretched canvas to other surfaces. What is the advantage of this surface, and how do you prepare the gesso on the surface? (sanding, multi-coats, smooth, rough etc.)

My use of oil pastels continues to evolve, just as my work in general does. I can describe my present techniques, though, as well as some of the techniques I'm experimenting with. I start with either 8-ply rag board (heavy mat board), or stretched canvas. For the canvas I choose a pre-gessoed ultra smooth canvas, although I've experimented with a "pastel-velvet" canvas made specifically for pastels. If I'm working on board, I gesso it using Windsor-Newton or Liquitex clear gesso base. This gesso dries with a matte finish and provides a nice "tooth" for drawing.



Marcia's Thoughts
32" x 18"
Oil Pastel

Jack, in my studies with oil pastel, I have been asked about other ways to present an oil pastel painting. Since it doesn't ever technically dry, the standard presentation technique is to use matting, glass and a frame.

On your website, you state that you use varnish to protect your work. Can you explain when it's the right time to apply the varnish over the finished oil pastel, how you apply it, and the kind of varnish you use that does not destroy, yellow, crack or smear the oil pastel?

For the past eight years or more, I've been varnishing the surface of my finished drawings. I wanted to be able to show the work without glass or plexiglas; particularly the large work. I researched and experimented with several varnishes and fixatives, but I've been using an acrylic spray varnish exclusively for years. I typically use three or four coats of "Kamar" spray varnish manufactured by Krylon. It dries to a flexible matte or semi-gloss finish and there is no crackling or discoloration. It seems to be archival, at least in terms of decades. The finished surface is still somewhat delicate, (i.e. I could scratch it with a fingernail) but I show the work at indoor and outdoor venues, and often ship it, and rarely have any damage.

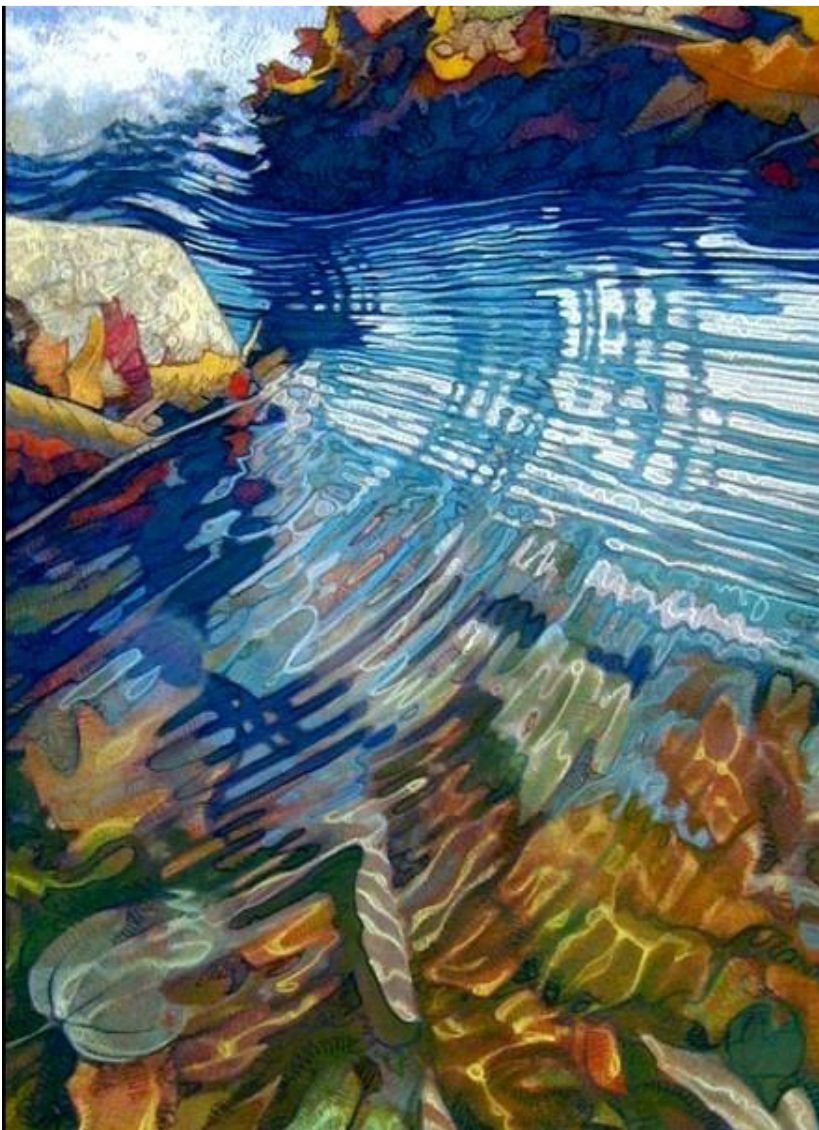
You 'prefer to work as close as possible to the surface, since...it is a tactile process'. How does working in a larger format affect your sense of design and composition? Could your images work on a much smaller scale?

Also, What artists inspire you?

I've always been interested in pattern and texture in art, as well as the dichotomy of micro and macro. My work is successful if it functions both at a distance as a recognizable image, and close-up where a viewer can explore the colors and texture of the drawing at a macro level. I'm most comfortable, therefore, working large, to hopefully encompass those two levels of viewing. It seems appropriate, I guess, that in the past I was attracted to pointillism, and more recently artists such as Chuck Close. For composition and the treatment of nature, I look at oriental art, and as an art student, I was very interested in the old drawing masters such as Brueghel and Durer.

Many artists find painting water extraordinarily difficult. Is there any technical advice you can share with the other members of OPS that might be helpful?

For the past several years I've been interested in water imagery. I enjoy the subject in its own right, but I also like it as a vehicle for exploring drawing. The texture and arabesques of the water surface, as well as the endless color variations of reflected light are wonderful sources for using color, line, and the calligraphy of drawing; things, I think, for which oil pastels are well suited.



**Foreplay
30" x 40"
Oil Pastel**

Your website shows wonderful photos of your family. What influence, if any, has your family had on your imagery?

I honestly can't say what impact my personal history and family has had on my work. I think that my experiences are so deeply internalized that I have no perspective on what the effects on the work might be. I can say that my family and friends have always been supportive of me and my vocation as an artist, and I'm sure that without that support, I would not have been able to indulge my life's most creative pursuit.

Local Chapter News

Oil Pastel Society - Chicago Chapter

On Saturday, May 20th, seven oil pastel artists met to paint plein air together. We met at the Riverwalk Park in downtown Naperville, a western suburb of Chicago, IL. We had great weather and lots of fun. It was interesting to see the different set-ups each person used. We spread out over 2 blocks to paint for about 2 hours. Here are some photos of everyone painting.





Here we all are doing an impromptu show-and-tell while we wait for our lunch table.



We had so much fun that we are going to try scheduling another paint-out next month.

If you live in the Chicago area or plan to be visiting, please join us! We will post the time and location of our next paint-out on our blog:

<http://ops-chgo.blogspot.com/>

Now that warm weather is here, are you interested in doing some oil pastel plein air?



Do you have a pochade box or French easel for your oil paints but don't know how to convert it?

With a little balsa wood, glue and time, you can have that box converted and ready to go. I have a small pochade box, Guerrilla Painter's 6x8" ThumBox. I found that it was deep enough to hold 2 layers of oil pastels.



When closed, the top slide-tray can hold my color-pushers, palette knife and such. While under that are 2 pastel trays I made out of Balsa wood (no power tools required).



There is a half piece of foam at the bottom of the box to even out the floor. (The flap covering the thumb hole is great to push the pastel trays out when I'm setting up.) Each pastel tray is covered by a piece of foam. And it all fits just snug enough to hold all the oil pastels in place.

I measured the inside of the box and subtracted 1/4" to ensure the tray would fit. I cut a rectangle out of 3/16" balsa wood to these measurements. I then glued strips of balsa wood on top of this around the edge. (Foam-core and duct-tape would probably work just as nicely.) I cut out covers for each tray from sheets of thin foam. And my conversion was complete.



This set up can hold a full set of well-used Sennelier oil pastels.

I can only imagine how many oil pastels you could get to fit into the drawer of a French Easel!

The Oil Pastel Society Presents the Second Annual Members Only Show "VERSATILITY"

The deadline has passed and all entries for the show have been received. The entries are now being put onto CD to be given to our judge for this show, Pacific Northwest oil pastel artist, **Susan Bennerstrom**.

If you are an award winner, you will be notified by email or postal mail before the show opens. Good luck to all who entered. An email announcement will be sent out when the show opens online.

For more information on the show, see last month's newsletter.

Future Articles



Many of our best articles, demos and tips have come from members. If you have something of interest that you would like to share, please send us an email. Even if you don't think what you have to share could be a whole article, sometimes it can be a starting point for an email conversation which then can turn into an article. There are only a few of us working on this newsletter and it is very easy to run out of ideas.

So..... If you have something interesting that you would like to share, please send us an email at: newsletter@oilpastelsociety.com

If you have a new email address, please notify membership@oilpastelsociety.com so that our records can be updated and you don't miss out on any of the news!



And don't forget, Cafe Press has items for sale featuring our beautiful OPS logo and can be seen at:

<http://www.cafepress.com/oilpastels>

Your OPS Staff

One way that all of you can help to make the Oil Pastel Society more visible is by placing a link from your personal website to the Society's home page or you can link to your artist gallery from your homepage. Feel free to use the new society logo as a graphic on your links page! Below is the reference and the logo which has been downsized. Copy and paste the reference into one of your web pages and download the graphic and upload to your site.



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<a href="http://www.oilpastelsociety.com">  
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