

THE Oil Spiel

Newsletter for the **Oil Pastel Society**, an international online organization to promote the knowledge and understanding of oil pastel as a fine art medium and to expand the awareness of oil pastel to other artists, galleries, the media, and the general public.

www.oilpastelsociety.com

May 2006

Welcome to the Oil Pastel Society!

New Professional Members:

Jack Brumbaugh
Sarah Theophilus

New Associate Members:

Thomas J Allen
Bonnie Clement
Charlotte Moore
Dana Rowe
Sandra Lee Starck

Reminder: Deadline for the Members' only show is May 15, 2006. Don't forget to enter. ops2006show@oilpastelsociety.com

For more information, see the article in this newsletter.

In this issue:

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- Delayed at the Airport? ... Paint
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- Information on **Second Annual Members Only Show**

MEMBER NEWS

Luba Sterlikova has work displayed at Agora gallery, NY April 21 - May 13, 2006 and at 'Flowers and Gardens' art show at the Gallery West-Eleven in London May 4th to May 14th.

Linda Shantz wrote an article on oil pastels which was published by *Horses in Art* magazine. The article appears in both the printed version and online.

A New Generation of Oil Pastel - by Linda Shantz



"For many artists, the mention of oil pastel conjures up memories of grade school and those hard, waxy sticks of color that were a step up from crayons. Not only were these pastels difficult to manipulate, they raised questions about the medium's longevity which perhaps inspired concerns in the artists' community about oil pastels as a legitimate fine art medium.

As a teenager, I was fortunate enough to stumble upon a decent artists' quality product that I was able to work with. I've always shied away from the dusty art products – charcoal and soft pastels, specifically – so for me, oil pastels were a natural graduation from pencil drawings to the world of color. Now, oil pastels are emerging as a viable fine art medium with some very reputable manufacturers promoting high-quality products."

To read the complete article, go to:

<http://www.equineartguild.com/~equinevision/spring2006-4.shtml>

If you have paintings in a show or exhibit or have an article published, don't forget to share the information with us.

Delayed at the Airport? ...Paint!

By Ann Tucker



On a trip to Atlanta, I had a carry-on bag filled with my painting supplies. I got to the airport the requested 2 hours early and got to the gate to find out that we were delayed another 2 hours.

I looked at my bag and thought "Why not?"

Finding a seat near a pillar so no one would walk too close, I set up my tripod and pochade box.

I spoke a bit with the people seated next to me. And one of the gate agents came over to see what I was painting. But other than that, I was in an extremely crowded airport and no one paid any attention to me. At least none that I'm aware of.

I began painting the gateway door and window with the plane beyond. In front of the window was a woman sitting very still reading a book. Perfect! A model who didn't move!



“Waiting at O’Hare”

When I was almost done, the woman in the painting got up to leave. The lady sitting next to me caught her attention and said to look at what I’d done.

The woman was thrilled that I’d painted her and ended up taking a photo of both of us with the painting. It turned out she was an artist herself, a nature photographer. Beautiful work on her business card.

Instead of sitting there feeling miserable because of the delay, I was enjoying myself. The hardest part of the whole episode was getting the courage to pull the paintbox out of my bag and set it up.

So next time you get delayed at the Airport? ...Paint!

Featured Artist of the Month – Our new Signature Members



Jennifer Cavan



Patricia Isaac



Carly Clements



Stephanie Neely

Last month we were not able to get in contact with new Signature Member Stephanie Neely. So this month we continue our conversation.

Stephanie Neely



How did you decide that it was time to apply for signature membership?

I was encouraged by Carly Clemens to give it a shot. I have tremendous respect for her work and opinion, so I submitted my slides.

How do you decide which images to submit?

I have concentrated on creating images of flowers over the last year and have met with some success in the juried shows that I have entered, so I choose two of the images that have won awards and then settled on three more that were my favorites.

Have you signed your first painting with OPS?

Yes, I was working on a piece for a show in Winston Salem, NC at the time that I received the news, so I did include OPS with my initials and was really gratified to be able to do so. It means a great deal to me to be a signature member of the Oil Pastel Society.



If you use other mediums, how does oil pastel compare? Is it a harder medium to control or learn?

I have literally tried almost everything - oils, watercolor, colored pencils, collage, dry pastels (which I absolutely could not tolerate for health reasons) and acrylic. I was initially resistant to oil pastel because it looked like it would be too hard to control. I work very tight and just could not conceive of a technique that would allow me to get the level of detail I knew that I would need to satisfy myself. I tried oil pastel as a substitute for a crayon in an application of a technique called crayon batik. It didn't work too well, but I really liked the effect I got with the it - a crayon if memory serves me. I was then intrigued with the possibilities of oil pastel and began to experiment with different brands. I tried the crayon specialist and holbeins, but when I discovered Sennelier, I knew I had found my medium.

Oil pastel is very difficult to master. I am nowhere near where I want to be, but I love the challenge of it more than anything else I have ever used because the end product is so much richer. Oil pastel allows me to create an end product that matches my original vision better than anything else I have ever used. The difficulties lie in the limitation of the palette and the bluntness of the instrument. I have spent a lot of time figuring out how to get certain colors through either blending or proper juxtaposition, and I have learned patience through the development of a technique that allows me to achieve the level of detail that my highly representational mind requires. (I really enjoy abstract art, but have a hard time creating anything that is pleasing to me).

There are a few helpful resource books, but ultimately, I believe that when I finally discovered the medium that felt right and allowed me to capture a bit of what was going on inside my head, it was just a matter of stamina and instinct. That has been my approach to learning how to use oil pastels. I fell in love with them first, then I followed my heart.



As a final thought, I would like to see this medium given greater respect by the "pastel" community at large, or at least a determination of whether we are to be categorized as pastels. I have entered juried shows which are open to all media to find that my painting has been classified for judging as "pastel" and yet there are so many pastel competitions that specifically exclude oil pastels. Perhaps we will ultimately be required to stand on our own outside the broad category of pastel as the dry pastel community seems so anxious to distinguish their work and exclude ours. It would be helpful as an artist to know where we fit in all of this.

Oil Pastel Primer

Ann Tucker is compiling an extensive list of information for us about the oil pastel medium, for beginners especially. With each article new ideas, helpful hints, etc., will be added.

For a complete list of all Oil Pastel Primer articles, go to the OP Primer Index page on the website.

This month's addition to the OP Primer is:

Tools for working with Oil Pastels

-Contributions by CJ Crichton-Kelly, Becky McConnell, Sue Choppers-Wife and Alexander Semenko
-Edited by Ann Tucker

It is always fun to look over another artist's shoulder to see how he or she does it. So think of this article as looking over the shoulder of several artists as they share photos of their tools and explain how and why they use them.

This article can be found at the end of this newsletter.

Local Chapter News

As members begin forming local chapters, we will put links to the chapter information here. If you would like to start a new chapter in your area, contact us. We will see if any other members are in your area.

Oil Pastel Society - Chicago Chapter

We will meet once every 3-4 months.

For our next meeting we will do a Plein Air painting event on Saturday, May 20th with a rain date of Saturday, June 3rd.

On May 20th, we will be meeting at 10:00am to paint downtown Naperville and the Naperville Riverwalk. We will meet at the Barnes & Noble bookstore at Chicago Ave & Washington St. in downtown Naperville. There is street parking and a parking structure near by.

Directions:

<http://www.napervilleparks.org/parksfacilities/riverwalk/>

If you have any questions, contact ann.tucker@oilpastelstudio.com

We're looking forward to painting together outside. If you plan to be in the Chicago area, please plan to join us! Also, to keep in touch and share information, we have a blog that all members of this chapter can post to.

If you would like to be a member of this chapter, please visit our blog

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

The deadline is fast approaching for:

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

Eligibility: All Members whose dues are paid for 2006

Entry Fee: None

Deadline for Submissions: May 15, 2006, Midnight EST
Submissions postmarked after that date will not be accepted.
Late arriving email entries will not be accepted.

How to Enter:

- * Submit up to two (2) jpg images at 72 ppi. The longest length not to exceed 600 pixels.
 - * Images which exceed the size requirements will be returned for correction if received before the deadline.
 - * Images should be closely matched to the original artwork and not enhanced with digital manipulation.
- Images should be clear and of the best quality for viewing. Images should not include any background or mats or framing.

Art Details:

- * Artwork cannot be more than 2 years old and must not have won any previous prize or award in any other art competition.
- Current artist gallery images on the OPS site are not eligible.
- * If there is underpainting, the painting must be at least 80% oil pastel.
 - * Artwork must be original - conceived and created by the entrant. No artwork created in a workshop, class, or from published materials (such as art instruction books, magazines, or other copyrighted sources) should be submitted.

Judging:

All entries received which meet the entry guidelines will be exhibited in the online show. An independent judge will make selections for awards.

Notification:

If you are an award winner, you will be notified by email or postal mail before the show opens on June 15th, 2005.

Send Entries to:

You may send a CD with your images to

OPS,

PO Box 390114,

Snellville, GA 30039.

A delivery confirmation is recommended for all mailed entries.

OR

You may send your images by e-mail to: ops2006show@oilpastelsociety.com

Please include your name/address and image title/size/support with your submissions in the "body"

of your email or on a separate piece of paper for mailed entries. If images cannot be matched with

the artist, they will not be accepted. If a third party sends your images, please be sure the email includes

your name/address and other artwork information.

Publication:

By entering, you give the Oil Pastel Society permission to publish your artwork on the Oil Pastel Society

website and in any other publication which features paintings from "Versatility". Any work published will be

given proper credit at all times.

Terms:

Submission of entry automatically constitutes the entrant's acceptance of all competition rules.

The judge's

decision will be final and no correspondence will be entered into. Awards will be posted with the winning

entries when the show opens.


Questions:

Contact: coordinator@oilpastelsociety.com

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

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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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

Oil Pastel Primer on next page

Tools for working with Oil Pastels

-Contributions by CJ Crichton-Kelly, Becky McConnell, Sue Choppers-Wife and Alexander Semenko
-Edited by Ann Tucker

It is always fun to look over another artist's shoulder to see how he or she does it. So think of this article as looking over the shoulder of several artists as they share photos of their tools and explain how and why they use them.

This is a snapshot of just a selection of implements that CJ Crichton-Kelly uses to whip these oily little sticks into submission.



#1. Old paintbrush - for applying odourless solvent/turps to create washes or to dissolve mistakes!

#2. Candle - for heating up #3 - #6

You don't need to heat OP's. It is just something I have chosen to do after reading discussions on it. I wanted to really stretch the capabilities of OP, I wanted it to do more than what I could achieve using the soft pastels. I really really wanted to explore the sculptural possibilities of OP's (must come from my need to push things around). I wanted to get texture that I could touch. And heating does that.

#3. Home made heating tool, made from a child's building block and a screw-in hook (the type used for hanging up your pot-plants) When heated over the candle, the black soot immediately wiped off with a thick rag, I can scrawl thick or thin swathes through heavily applied OP, to create interesting, almost calligraphic, textures.

- #4. Teaspoon - heated over the candle, creates broader, flatter swathes, giving the melted OP a sheen, and 'setting' it so that as soon as it has cooled and hardened, another layer can be added.
- #5. Palette knife - heated, wiped, and applied by pressing into the thick OP layers to create an oil paint effect. Also used for scraping back (either intentionally or ridding errors), or scratching lines into the OP to reveal under layers of colour.
- #6. Potters tool - I picked this up because I saw the possibilities of heating the ball tipped ends (hard to pick up in the photo - sorry), and it melts fine lines into the OP - great for neatening hairy, untidy edges or just for texture.
- #7. Potters tool - another I picked up fairly cheaply, with very hard rubber ends which pushes the OP around really well. Great for blending large areas of colour, and pushing the OP into stubborn canvas holes.
- #8. Colour Shaper - grey synthetic rubber tip, which is harder than the ivory tips used in soft pastels, but not as hard as #7. The point allows for blending into tight corners, and smoothing out fine lines.
- #9. Home made blender - made with an old paintbrush handle, a rubber band and a chunk of #10.
- #10. Very hard eraser (in this case a Faber Castell) which is probably the cheapest option and does the job of all the other blenders. The top eraser has been carved up with a knife, the chunks used to blend. The bottom eraser is the original, intact eraser.
- #11. Domestic iron - no picture of this one as it should be familiar to everyone, and if it isn't then power to you!! I use a sheet of baking paper to cover the painting, iron it (not too hot). This sets the OP and gives it a texture, and sheen, that can be immediately worked over. Good for initial colour 'washes' or setting your underpainting. You can also manipulate the OP while it's still hot, scratching, scraping etc. I have also ironed leaves etc into the OP (under the baking paper of course) to get added texture.



These are the tools used by Sue Choppers-Wife. Starting at the top middle and going counter-clockwise.

A jar of gesso which I use in a mixture of water and marble dust to prime the canvas you see...excellent base for OPs.

Oderless mineral spirits...I don't have great ventilation so I rarely use it but it can be used as a medium to thin the OPs for brush work and it can also nicely wipe out an area. I also use oil glazing mediums sometimes..forgot to add those.

Foam brushes for gessoing the canvas

Two acrylic brushes, one is for applying my varnish mediums and one is brushed directly on the OP and used to run a fine glaze of color over another color.

Two palette knives...don't use the plastic one much, but use the Bob Ross knife to alternately spread and scrape areas.

The next is my most used and favorite tool, a rubber tipped cuticle pusher...I can fill holes with this, I can push the OP to line edges or soften an edge or use it in circular movements to get a blended and yet broken color effect.

Next a hand rolled inkjet paper tortillon...good for fine lines and soft gradation blends

Emory board for cleaning torty

Ah, the most important tool...hate to give you the finger, but hey...couldn't do OPs without...I can spread the OPs around but mostly I use the finger for the fine blends...I can run it very lightly to

keep the sheen moving in the direction I want, I can run colors lightly into each other for perfect transitions.

razor knife for keeping clean edges or sgraffito (scratching designs into the OP)

Prismacolor pencil for original sketch, sometimes for accenting a line.

Q-tip cotton swab for dabbing soft blends

craft knife for scraping

the blob at the top is a kneadable eraser...on my homemade surface or art spectrum I can use it to clean up lines and sometimes to reduce the intensity of an area.

The two jars are acrylic mediums...which she no longer recommends after a failed painting.

Alexander Semenko does not use many tools, but here's what he uses constantly.



One in the bottom I sneaked from my mum. Must have something to do with cuticles, I figure. Right side is used for settling down loose particles with its convex polished surface. Left side I have sharpened and it's very good for scraping, sgraffito thing, etc.

One of tortillions that I made is in the center.

You see half of pastel stick - I'm illustrating my recent idea to use masking tape when pastel is stripped of wrapper. MUCH less messy this way.

I use the brushes with turpentine, forgot to put them in, not a big deal I figure.

Bought kneadable eraser this week, never seen them before. Very funny thing. I don't know if it's of any use for OPs.

Below are the tools that Becky McConnell uses.

#1 - Sennelier OPs, Grands, I think I have most of the others except flourescents.

#2 - Synthetic brush for underlaying on Wallis or other support which can handle turps.

#3 - Turpenoid - I use this for underpainting, after I lay down a base, usually with the Sennelier Grands.

#4 - John Elliott's book, Kenneth Leslie's is in the mail and of course WetCancas.com!

#5 - Paper Towels for blending.

#6 - razor, palette knives and paint scraper for blending, scraping and smooching special effects.

- #7 - Sakura electric eraser and kneadable eraser - to be honest I mostly use the kneadable eraser to play with while I'm staring at my painting wondering what to do next! Electric erasers can be used for blending while the OPs are pretty wet and it will take the OPs off almost completely after a couple of days - don't use on Colorfix paper, though - unless you're careful. I'm not...
- #8 - Stumps and tortillions - great for sharpening lines and blending
- #9 - ColourShaper tools - I use these for blending, sharpening lines, etc - the big one comes in handy for smoothing big areas of color.
- #10 - Walnut Hollow pencils - I use these for detail and initial drawing - I also got these from Dick Blick, but I understand you can buy them from hobby/craft stores, too.

