

April 1, 2001 Issue

Some Tools Of My Trade: From digital camera to Printer



I can't believe how quickly the time has flown by. I have received a lot of good comments on my web-ezine, and some quite useful suggestions. Many of you have forwarded it on to family and friends. Thank you.

As Spring days start earlier, and stretch out longer, I find more time to play. (Shouldn't we all take that kind of time?) With so much to see and do, a great pleasure is to take my digital camera wherever I go. You just never know when a photo opportunity will present itself and no sketch book or paint box is handy! So, as April days warm the earth and warm our hearts, get set for some marvelous opportunities to have FUN!

Next issue: Teachers and teaching

For many years I have used a camera to capture a fleeting moment in time. "That will make a great painting!", is the thought that goes through my mind, as I reach for my tool; the 35mm Pentax camera loaded with color slide film. The slides, when viewed on a screen (or hand held viewer) appear three-dimensional and bring back that special instant. No matter if the photo is not perfect, I as the artist, can fill in details or leave them out in the finished painting.

Photographs or slides also give me an accurate record of architectural details I could not possibly remember in toto.

Two years ago I updated my research tool by purchasing a digital camera. Mine happens to be a Sony Mavica FD91, which uses a 3.5 inch floppy disk to store the images. (For more information about Mavica cameras go to www.sony.com). I purchased mine at www.cameraworld.com. It is a good source to purchase the one you choose to meet your needs.

I purchased a photo management software from www.cquick.com called SHOWCASE that organizes by keywords all the pictures I have taken, (as of today, over 21,000). I use these photos for research. Of, course, I take personal family shots of children and grandchildren, art shows and more.

I use Adobe Photoshop for color correcting and manipulating the size and quality of the image. Once I have the composition selected, and the color and quality I want, I will print out a copy to use for a final painting.

My computer is a pc built especially for my requirements. It is a Pentium III , 933 mhz, with 768

megabytes of memory.

In order to get the best quality of reproduction of a painting, I paint nearly always 12" X 17" (or smaller) watercolors, gouache or pastels. This permits me to scan the image directly; thus giving me control of the quality and color, which may degrade if there are too many steps in-between. The scanner I use most frequently is a Microtek Scanmaker 9600 XL, a flat-bed scanner that scans up to a 12" X 17" image at 600 DPI optical. My other scanner is a Microtek Scanmaker 5, a flat-bed scanner that can handle up to 1000 DPI optical on an 8" X 14" painting. It also has the capacity to scan 4" X 5" transparencies or 35mm slides at 1000 dpi optical. Go to www.microtek.com for more information.

Once the image has been scanned and saved into the computer, I use Photoshop to color correct the image to exactly match the original art. The image is printed on a Hewlett-Packard 1120C on high quality bright white 80# cover stock with a neutral PH factor. Hewlett Packard's website is www.hp.com.

The final step is signing and numbering, packaging and presenting the artwork: but that's another story.....

In today's high-tech world, I don't know how I'd get along without the tools of my trade.



Featured Artwork

Dew Drops (watercolor)



"The sun has risen on a perfect spring day. The 'dew drops' have formed on the delicate petals of a lavender colored iris in the yard. What a nice way to start your day."

Sunset Hawaiian (oil)



"As the sun sets on a perfect day of flying, you take a few final sweeps across the sky, challenging the brilliant sunset to compete with the stunning colors of your 'Hawaiian Team'."

Old Pals (Gouache)



"Nearly lost in a tangle of black-berry briars, an aging piece of farm equipment rests beneath a faded windmill. These 'old pals' once worked together to produce bountiful harvests on a now long neglected farm."