

A Life Full Of Faces

by Gene Ploss

Ever since I was very small I have loved to draw people. I remember spending hours camped out on the living room floor with a pad of paper and a box of crayons. I created countless pictures of the things I saw around me, but my favorite subjects were faces. The human face has always held such wonder for me. An entire story can be told in a single expression. Faces of elderly people are especially interesting to me. Each wrinkle traces a different path in their journey, showing evidence of their life experiences and the wisdom they gained along the way.

As a kid I would retreat to my bedroom and draw for hours using books, magazines and even encyclopedias as reference. As a high school student I cultivated those early skills and started producing more finished portrait drawings. People started to notice my work and I eventually started doing commissioned portraits. After receiving my Bachelor of Fine Arts degree, I began to focus on a career in illustration. I have worked as a freelance artist for many years, drawing and painting many different subjects; but my passion for drawing faces has never subsided.

In 2005 I discovered a new art movement on eBay and it became a very appealing idea to me. There was a group of artists making miniature works called "Art Cards, Editions & Originals" or ACEOs. The pieces must be the size of trading cards, 2.5" x 3.5", but can be any subject, style or material. I made a few appropriately sized portrait drawings, put them up for auction....and they sold! I was hooked. I've been listing my portraits nearly every week for the last three years on eBay. During that time I have developed a growing audience of collectors throughout the world. Although most of my pieces stay in the U.S. and Canada, I also have work in France, Spain, Australia and the United Kingdom.



Josie
Colored Pencil*



Farmer
Graphite*



Ellie
Graphite*



Chrome Dome
Colored Pencil*

Not long after I began making ACEOs, I also started a blog where I could post my work for the world to see. I use images from all of my illustration and fine art projects, but people still respond most intensely to my

*all works created on Strathmore® 500 Series Lightweight Vellum Illustration Board

miniature portraits. One of the greatest joys of having a presence on the internet is the opportunity to meet so many wonderful people. I really enjoy communicating directly with my patrons, viewers and other artists. These little works of art have opened up a whole new world for me.

Because they are so small, ACEOs take a very short time to create (between 45 minutes to a little over an hour). It is very gratifying to see one take shape so quickly. When I started doing these little faces I felt compelled to give each one a name. I thought that eventually I might run out of interesting names, so whenever I hear a good one I write it down. I keep two master lists in my studio (both male and female names). I've drawn well over one hundred of these faces now, and the more I create them the more they seem to name themselves! Often, when I'm drawing a face, the perfect names just pops into my head because as each face comes to life, the distinct personality emerges. Each one spends about a week in my studio before it is purchased and shipped to its new owner. Some of them are difficult to give up, but once they are on their way, I turn my attention to the next interesting face. I think of them as an ever-growing community of characters, each one having his or her own unique story. Maybe someday their stories will be told. I hope so.

About the Artist

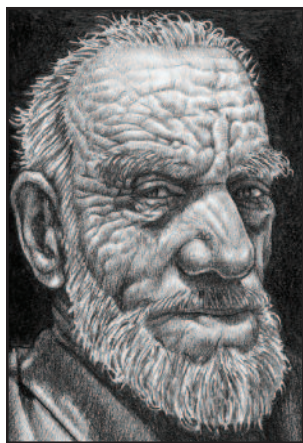
Gene Ploss

Gene G. Ploss Jr. was born in Frankfurt, Germany in 1969. Son of a third generation dairy farmer, he was raised in a rural farming community in upstate New York. In 1993 he graduated from SUNY Fredonia with a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree. He now resides in Buffalo, New York where he works as a sign maker, fine artist and illustrator. Gene works mainly in graphite, colored pencil, ink, watercolor and acrylic with a focus on figures and portraits.

To see a complete collection of his work, watch videos of his art in progress and sign up for his free studio newsletter, **check out Gene's art blog at geneploss.blogspot.com.**

What is the difference between ACEOs and ATCs?

Artist Trading Cards (ATCs) and Art Cards, Editions and Originals (ACEOs) are both miniature works of art. They must be the standard size of 2.5" x 3.5", and can be created with any media. The difference is that ATCs can only be traded with other artists without the exchange of money. ACEOs can be bought and sold, opening up world of art cards to artists and collectors alike.



Curmudgeon
Graphite*



Minnie
Graphite*



Jasper
Graphite*



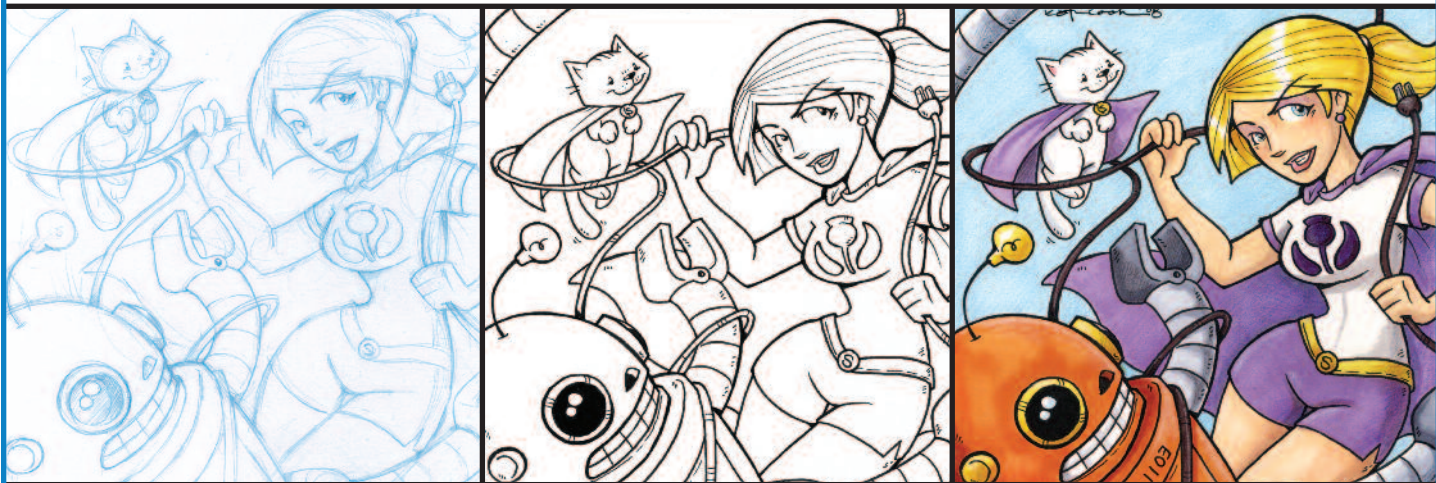
Gia
Colored Pencil*

*all works created on Strathmore® 500 Series Lightweight Vellum Illustration Board

Featured Product

Sequential Art Surfaces

Introducing new surfaces and formats for sequential artists.



Original artwork above created by professional illustrator Katie Cook.

Character Building

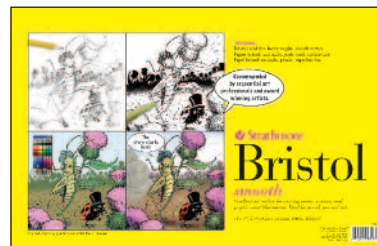
Strathmore® fine art bristols and illustration boards have been the choice among sequential art professionals and award winning illustrators for years.

Strathmore is now offering those best selling bristols in convenient formats to fit the application. We are also introducing a new bristol surface and a new illustration board for wet media.

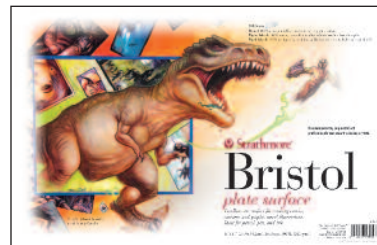
The comic, cartoon and graphic novel industry is growing – choose the industry standard and picture your stories on Strathmore.

Learn more about the Sequential Art surfaces:
www.strathmoreartist.com/sequential

Available at fine art and craft stores.



Cover artwork created by comic artist David Petersen.



Cover artwork by writer, artist Tommy Castillo.

Sequential Art se-quen-tial art [si-kwen-shuhl ahrt]: A form of telling a story through the use of pictures in a narrative sequence. Comics, cartoons and graphic novels all fall into this widely popular category of art.

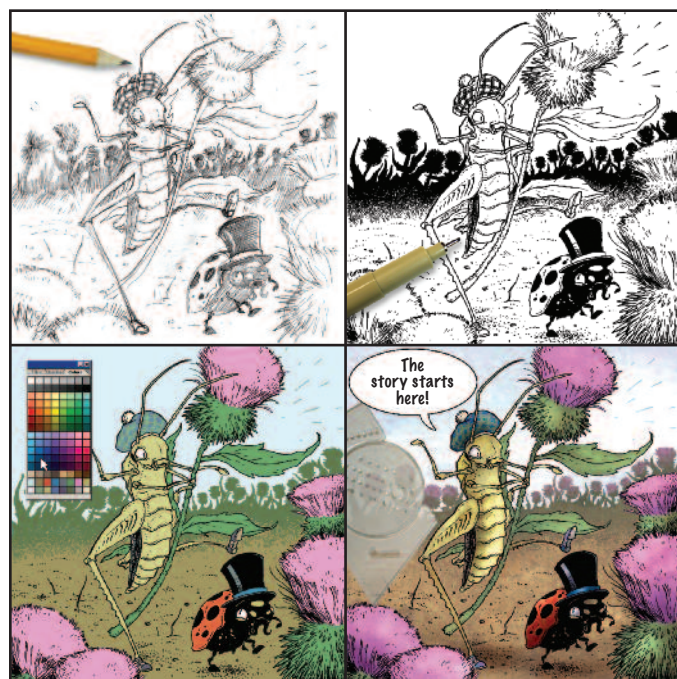
Questions From Our Website

What is sequential art?

Se•quent•ial art [si-kwen-shuhl ahrt]: A form of telling a story through the use of pictures in a narrative sequence. Comics, cartoons and graphic novels all fall into this widely popular category of art.

What types of paper are used to create sequential art?

Original drawings can be sketched on anything from a paper napkin to a bristol or illustration board. Final illustrations are done on bristol. The choice of surface (vellum, smooth, semi-smooth, plate) depends on the artist's choice of media and personal preferences for working properties.



Original artwork created by comic artist David Petersen.

What types of media are used in the creation of sequential art?

Many different media are used for creating sequential art. Traditional pen and ink, specialty pens and markers, colored pencils, sketching sticks, charcoal, graphite pencil, watercolors and acrylics are used for traditional pieces. Many of today's artists use scanned images of their original sketches and color fill with computer programs such as Adobe Photoshop.

What size are comic book pages?

Most people assume that comics are drawn on 8.5" x 11" paper but this is not true. The standard size sheet for comic illustrations in North America is 11" x 17". The paper is larger than the actual comic pages so that the artist can create in a larger format. Final pages are scanned and reduced to printed size.

Why are some bristol sheets for sequential art blue lined?

Non-reproducible blue grids are used as a guide for the artist to keep illustrations within the live or copy area of the sheet (**see illustration on the next page**). The live area is the area that will be reduced and reproduced to make the final comic book, cartoon or graphic novel.

Some artists are accustomed to working with the preprinted grids while others prefer to line their own with Adobe Illustrator, non-reproducible pens and pencils or other printing methods.

Non-reproducible blue grids are used as a guide for the artist to keep illustrations within the live or copy area of the sheet.

