

The Secret to My Watercolor Style

By Dorrie Rifkin

I spent the first half of my life searching for the perfect paper to achieve my painting style, "Controlled Chaos." One day I was in an art supply store in Kingston, NY. This is where my love affair started with Strathmore® Illustration Board.

Last year I discovered the 500 Series Illustration Board for Wet Media. This paper keeps the color intense and it lets me rework parts even after it dries. It can take a beating, which I give it.



River Road, Edgewater

Watercolors on Strathmore Illustration Board, Heavy Vellum Surface



Ground Zero

500 Series Illustration Board for Wet Media

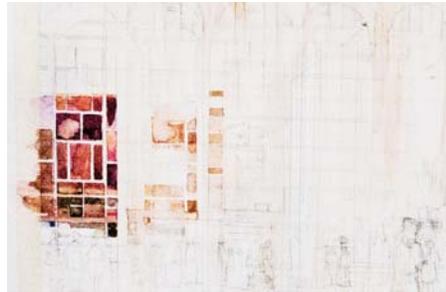


Coney Island, Train Station

500 Series Illustration Board for Wet Media



Step 1



Step 2



Step 3

I'd like to share my 4 steps to watercolor success.

Step 1: Have a Full, Great Life

I am lucky enough to live close to NYC. I always bring my camera and take lots of photos. The more you experience in life, the more opportunities for a painting. Before I start painting, I open up the images in Photoshop, where I crop and alter the colors.

Step 2: Structure and Planning

I then make a very tight, detailed sketch. I review, and determine which parts are going to be most challenging. Without a strong foundation, there is no way to create a good work of art.

Step 3: Painting and Trust

My greatest concern is making sure I don't stick my paintbrush in my Diet Coke instead of my water. Add blacks and bring back the whites (by dabbing water with a paper napkin or paintbrush). Remove the tape and then after a few days I declare a painting complete.

Step 4: Go Back to Step 1



Nathan's at Coney Island

500 Series Illustration Board for Wet Media



About the Artist

Dorrie Rifkin's work is often influenced by her career as a talented and award-winning art director. Many of her paintings feature unique local signage that adds a personal touch to each piece.

Rifkin was profiled in *Watercolor Artist* magazine's December 2010 "Ones to Watch" feature. Her paintings have won prizes in many international and national juried shows. She is a signature member of both the Transparent Watercolor Society of America and the Northeast Watercolor Society.

To see more of Dorrie Rifkin's work, you may visit:

Website: www.dorrierifkin.com

Facebook: www.facebook.com/dorrierifkin

Etsy: www.dfrdesign.etsy.com



Cyclone at Coney Island

500 Series Illustration Board for Wet Media

Featured Product

new!

Ready Cut Watercolor

Introducing standard size sheets for readymade frames and mats.

Ready Cut Watercolor offers you convenience.

Our 500 Series premium watercolor paper is precision cut into standard size sheets for readymade frames and mats. Perfect for selling your work online or at art fairs.

Save time and hassle.

No need to measure, calculate and cut down paper from larger sheets. You have more time to spend creating and selling your art.

Make framing easier and less expensive.

You or your art buyer can purchase readymade frames, mats and glass which are readily available and less expensive than custom options.

Ready Cut Watercolor sheets are available in hot or cold press: 5" x 7", 8" x 10" and 11" x 14".



Experience the benefits!

Made from 100% cotton fiber, Ready Cut Watercolor paper is archival, lignin free and acid free.

To learn more please visit: strathmoreartist.com

Guide to Standard Sizes

Ready Cut Paper Size	Frame Size	Mat Size	Mat Opening
5" x 7"	8" x 10"	8" x 10"	4.5" x 6.5"
8" x 10"	11" x 14"	11" x 14"	7.5" x 9.5"
11" x 14"	16" x 20"	16" x 20"	10.5" x 13.5"

Strathmore®
Visual Journal
ONLINE WORKSHOP SERIES

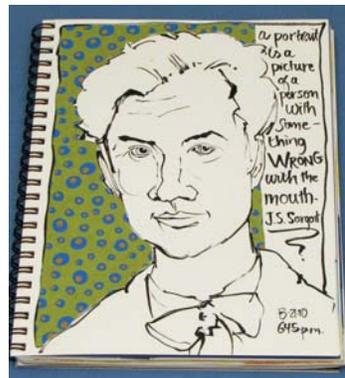
**Visual Journal Online
Workshop #3 Starts in May!**



The journaling workshop entitled “Building Your Visual Journal from the Page Up” features instructor Roz Stendahl. This free workshop starts May 1st. If you haven’t registered already, you can register now and get immediate access to the classroom and supply lists.

Through video lessons and instruction sheets, Roz will help students find their unique visual style while creating mixed media journal pages from the background up. Topics include how to execute colorful and textured backgrounds with paints and inks; work with collage papers and ephemera to explore composition; and master paper handling techniques that expand your page and enhance your journal’s flow.

Lastly, Roz shows you how to take your journal into the real world to hone your on-site sketching and observation skills. The techniques and strategies presented in this workshop will enable you to discover your own authentic journal voice and unleash your creative energy.



Roz Stendahl is a graphic designer, artist, and life-time journal keeper. She teaches bookbinding and journaling at the Minnesota Center for Book Arts. Her bookarts classes provide students with a solid understanding of materials and mechanics giving students a strong foundation for the discovery of their own artistic voices. As an instructor, Roz’s goal is to develop the observational skills of her students while introducing them to a variety of mixed media techniques and supplies.

You can view selections from Roz’s visual journals on her website: www.rozworks.com

Read about her on-going art adventures on her blog: www.rozwoundup.typepad.com

For more information or to join our Workshops today, visit: strathmoreartist.com



Above: Journal page examples from Roz Stendahl’s workshop lessons.

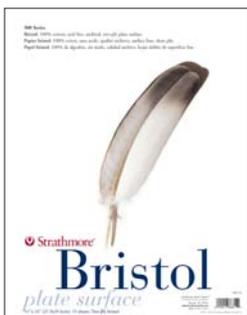
Questions From Our Artists

What is “sizing”?

Sizing is an ingredient that is added or applied to paper in the papermaking process to provide specific performance characteristics. Drawing paper is sized for surface strength, helping protect the paper for erasing. Watercolor and mixed media papers are sized to deliver performance for common watercolor techniques - washes, lifts, scrubbing and layering.

Internal sizing is mixed into the pulp. External sizing is applied to the surface of the paper and affects surface absorbency and surface strength. Most fine art papers have both internal and external sizing. The type and amount of sizing varies depending on the paper type.

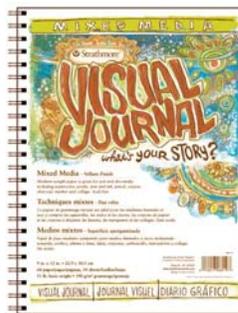
What is your best paper for very fine technical drawings? I would like to get an absolutely clean line on the hardest paper possible.



Strathmore® Bristol board in either a smooth or plate finish is the best for your specific application. Bristol Smooth is excellent for mechanical drawings, pencil, dry media, pen and ink, marker and airbrush. The smooth, hard surface allows you to create fine line and detail.

Our 500 Series Bristol Plate finish is ultra-smooth, for the most detail and the most responsive surface. 500 Series Bristol is 100% cotton and constructed of multi-ply of paper that form a board that is stiff, heavy weight and resists warping. It is available in 2, 3 and 4-ply sheets.

Why is Strathmore Visual Journal Mixed Media 90 lb. much heavier than another mixed media pad that is 98 lb.?



U.S. paper weight standards can be confusing. The measurement is based on “basis weight” of paper which is calculated by weighing a bunch of sheets of particular paper. The confusing part is that the sheet size that is weighed to determine the basis weight varies by paper type. For example, watercolor paper weight is based on a 22" x 30" size sheet. Drawing paper is based on a 24" x 36" size sheet.

The paper weight for our Mixed Media Visual Journal is based on watercolor paper standards. It is likely that other pad you mention is based on a different basis weight standard. Fortunately, there is a way to compare apples to apples. If you look at the metric measurements of g/m^2 (grams per square meter), you can directly compare paper weights regardless of the paper type.

For example:

Visual Journal Mixed Media: **90 lb. paper = 190 g/m^2**

Other Paper: **98 lb. paper = 160 g/m^2**

In this case, the 90 lb. paper is actually heavier than the 98 lb. paper.