



The Role of Art

by Cathy Welner

Art has always played an important role in my life. As a child I would attend Saturday classes at the Art Museum in Syracuse, New York. My mother loved to sketch and if there was a blank piece of paper and a pencil, I would follow her lead. While art was not my major in college at The State University of New York, at Cortland I took as many elective art classes as I could fit into my schedule.

There was an extended hiatus from any art activity as I entered a family-raising phase of my life, getting three children to a level of independence before I once again felt drawn to the art milieu. I approached my art interests as a pastime or hobby, and for some years would take lessons from experienced artists in Northeast Ohio where we had come to reside. I benefited greatly from the diverse techniques of these teachers. As time evolved, I ultimately found my own pathway which persists to this day.

My first classes were plein-air. We would venture out rain or shine and although the elements were sometimes overwhelming, they were at the least enthralling. I loved the beauty of life all about me in the many dimensions observable in the landscape. Bombarded with all the stimuli, I would strive to capture such emotional energy and transfer it to a flat surface. I was gratified to be able to bring back to life what had filtered through my sensory system.



Old Homestead

22" x 15"

Strathmore 300 lb. Cold Press



Winter Barn

15" x 7"

Strathmore Imperial 140 lb. Cold Press

Gradually I gained confidence that I could convey to a viewer this emotional transfer. I love to be diverse in my subject matter while keeping it fresh, and each project becomes its own energizer. I do not attempt to make social statements, nor show the darker side of life. I simply love the beauty that is around us.

At some point my competitive interests emerged and I began to enter art shows. My work received recognition as I won numerous awards, and my art began to sell. Spurred on by this acceptance from the consumer public I became more productive, and took on a variety of subject matter ranging from still-life to landscapes to figures. I entered the outdoor show circuit which was a whole new world of non-art activities. These included transporting, framing and hauling my paintings, as well as setting up booths and tents and lots of manual labor. The upside of all this were the accolades and positive feedback multiplied many times by the exposure to lots of consumer traffic. The sale of ones painting is the ultimate recognition that you have attained some measure of success.



Nature's Gifts
40" x 32"
Strathmore 300 lb. Cold Press

Concurrently, the show circuit exposed me to those who wanted to learn watercolor painting. This pathway led me to teach classes in the show off-season. Teaching became a very big component of my work and has evolved to a following of repeat students over many years, as well as invitations to teach workshops nationally and internationally, including a recent workshop in Lake Como, Italy. This led to a formal relationship with the Cleveland Institute of Art for an extended period.

I love the atmosphere of teaching and sharing the skills and techniques I have acquired over many years. I encourage my students to use good materials, of which Strathmore Artist Papers represent a very high quality. The results with Strathmore Artist Papers are always predictable, and the color I put down is the color I get. I paint on either side of the paper for varying granulation. The paper accepts dry brush and wet-on-wet beautifully and lifts easily when needed. My favorites are 140 lb. Gemini and Imperial Cold Press. Similarly, I use 300 lb. Cold Press and Strathmore Bristol for larger work.



Picket Fence
15" x 7"
Strathmore Gemini 140 lb. Cold Press



ABOUT THE ARTIST

Cathy Welner

Cathy works in a sensitive painterly fashion, allowing the flow of pigment and brush to evoke a mood and transcend photographic realism. She captures the essence of the subject and creates a certain warmth between the viewer and the painted image. She is a member and former officer of The Ohio Watercolor Society, The Hudson Society of Artists, and a lifetime member of Whiskey Painters of America. Cathy can be reached by phone at 330.659.0810 or by email at hwelner@adelphia.net.



The Gatherer
22" x 30"
Strathmore 300 lb. Cold Press



Sunflowers
15" x 22"
Strathmore 300 lb. Cold Press



Venice Canal
22" x 15"
Strathmore Imperial 140 lb. Cold Press

Strathmore Museum Mounting Board Designed for the Test of Time

Creating a work of art is an intensely personal process, full of immediacy and focus. Even before they apply the first stroke, however, serious artists should give some thought to their finished work, and how it will be preserved through the years. In other words, art preservation begins before the creation process begins.

Most professional and fine artists know they should select acid-free papers made either from alpha cellulose or cotton rag fibers. Either material helps to inhibit degradation of the sheet, although 100% cotton fiber also produces paper with a stronger surface. Virtually every category of fine art paper offered by Strathmore Artist Papers includes either alpha cellulose (400 Series products) or all-cotton paper (500 Series products).

Serious conservation of your best artwork takes care and knowledge with regard to the selection and application of the best mat and mounting board.

Many frame shops that claim to offer museum quality mounting may not fully understand what that standard requires – or may not realize that there are specific museum quality standards. Simply mounting your work on rag board does not signify it has been preserved to museum standards.

In 1977, the Library of Congress established the National Preservation Program Office that specifies, among other things, what makes for museum-quality mat and mount



boards. These specifications are applied to the Library's own collection, and offer a useful reference tool for commercial framers and artists interested in mounting their own work.

It's worth noting that Strathmore Artist Papers selection of Museum Mounting Board meets or exceeds the specifications laid out by the Library of Congress. You can evaluate Strathmore's quality for yourself:

The pulp

Any and every ply or layer of the mounting board must be free of the lignins that naturally occur in tree sap. These lignins can change into acids over time, and eventually break down the board's cellulose, causing damage to the work mounted on it. The Library recommends board stock made from high alpha-cellulose content virgin pulp made either from wood or cotton.

Strathmore's Quality: All Strathmore Museum Mounting Board is made from 100% cotton fiber, the highest quality cellulose fiber found in nature and entirely free from potentially corrosive lignins.

pH Value

Museum quality mounting or mat board must have a pH value between 8.0 and 9.5. The alkaline reserve should be between 2 and 5 percent, and alkaline reserve should be distributed evenly in all plies. pH provides a quantitative measure of acid or alkalinity within a material. pH Neutral (~7) is generally considered archival quality, but a neutral or slightly elevated pH is desirable for preserving works of art on paper.

Strathmore's Quality: Our family of Museum Mounting Board products all have an alkaline pH of 8.3 – give or take 0.5. In addition, our boards contain a minimum buffer of 2 percent residual calcium carbonate, which helps neutralize acidic materials that come in contact with the board (e.g. glues, artist media, etc.). It can also help neutralize acids resulting from exposure to the environment, or formed during natural aging.

Sizing

Only neutral or alkaline sizing should be used to make archival quality boards. No alum-rosin or rosin is allowed.

Strathmore's Quality: Strathmore uses an alkaline sizing system, not only to ensure its Museum Mounting Board delivers archival quality but also to allow for French matting without surface feathering.

Color fastness

The color of museum mounting stock must show no bleeding when soaked for 48 hours in distilled water while in weighted contact with white bond paper. In addition, color must not change more than 5 points of brightness when exposed 24 hours under test lamps.

Strathmore's Quality: Only the purest, color stable pigments are used in production of Strathmore Museum Mounting Board. The colors are solid throughout the board, and rated at 80 hours tested fade.

Adhesive

Adhesive must neither cause museum board to become transparent, nor alter its color. Neither should adhesive yellow, discolor or cause delamination over time.

Strathmore's Quality: The base sheets of our Museum Mounting Board are laminated into a composite structure using a synthetic adhesive. An additional buffer of calcium carbonate is added to the adhesive to provide maximum protection

Contaminants

Iron should not exceed 30 ppm in archival quality mounting board. Copper should not exceed 1 ppm. Colored papers must meet this specification prior to the addition of colorants.

Strathmore's Quality: Strathmore Museum Mounting Board is free of metal particles, plasticizers, bleach and other substances that aren't necessary to archival quality performance.

In addition to meeting or exceeding these specifications, Strathmore Museum Mounting Board is further qualified by

accelerated aging tests under both dry and humid conditions. This ensures that our products will exhibit retention of strength and visual properties in accordance with ASTM standards on the permanence of artist productions.

Our board offers surfaces designed to provide a smoother, cleaner cut. Plus, artists and archivists can select from a variety of neutral shades, and several plies, including

- 1 ply ($\pm 0.0150'' + 0.0005''$)
- 2 ply ($\pm 0.0305'' + 0.0015''$)
- 4 ply ($\pm 0.0610'' + 0.003''$)

Strathmore Museum Mounting Board is designed to protect your valued works of art from the challenges presented by time and the environment.

Strathmore Artist Papers™ Acquired by Pacon Corporation

On October 20, 2006 Strathmore Artist Papers became a member of the Pacon Family. Pacon Corporation of Appleton, Wisconsin is a leading supplier of paper products to the school market. Steve Spangenberg, Vice President of Sales and Marketing at Pacon had this to say about the acquisition: "We are extremely happy to have Strathmore Artist Papers operating as a business unit of Pacon Corporation. It has been part of Pacon's acquisition strategy to look for companies that are brand leaders in their market segment and Strathmore Artist Papers certainly fits that criteria.

"Another key to the success of Strathmore Artist Papers is the people involved. The entire sales force and marketing staff is intact and is committed in building on the quality organization it has become over its 114 year history. We look forward to the initiatives that are on the drawing board to keep Strathmore Artist Papers a leader in the manufacture and distribution of art materials."