



HIGHlight

July 2006

From the President...

Things are going to get a lot worse before they get worse. —Lily Tomlin

Greetings, PSNM Friends —

Just when you thought it was safe to come back to meetings, our need for volunteers is greater than ever. Beginning in July, the second big push toward the National Show will begin. The National Show Committee (which means everyone who has any part, large or small, in the show — which means you!) will be meeting every month from now until November

at Las Manañitas after our regular monthly meeting. Many jobs remain to be done, and we need every member to step up in whatever way you can. It feels great to have a part in the most prestigious activity of our organization.

Members are also contacting the board with wonderful ideas about how to strengthen our organization and expand the ways we serve our members. Putting together a show highlighting the work of the “people in the middle” is one such idea; organizing critique groups is another. But again, we need people to volunteer to make these good ideas reality. Please ask yourself what you can do.

—Betsy Greenlee

Monthly Meeting at the Albuquerque Museum

Saturday, July 8, 10am

Terry Ludwig, fine pastel artist and entrepreneur—the inventor of those delicious Terry Ludwig Pastels will give a demonstration. We’re not sure yet of his program, but he’s hinted that he may paint a portrait... something else you could volunteer for! Terry has donated four sets of pastels to be awarded at the 2006 National Show.

NOTE: Please plan to join Paul Murray and National Show Committee Chairs at Las Manañitas immediately after the regular meeting.

PSNM’s 2nd TVI art student scholarship recipient.

Each year we offer a scholarship to a talented art student at TVI (now CNM) who plans to continue with their art career in a serious manner. At the last meeting, Lyle Brown presented our second scholarship winner, Jeness May Chavez.

Jeness discussed her views on art and her goals. As a single mother, with a 7½ year old daughter, she has proven her strong desires to be an artist. She plans to continue at UNM and eventually move towards sculptural installations after becoming immersed in painting, printmaking and sculpture. To quote Jeness from her artist’s statement: “Art is my life, my impetus, my motivation, my sanity, my new family, my lover and at times my greatest enemy” She opened with the simple statement “I was born to be an artist”. We wish Jeness luck in her endeavors and have invited her to visit us at any time.

PSNM Signature Members’ Show

Previous announcements indicated that any paintings submitted to the PSNM Signature Members’ Show at the Albuquerque Museum must have been painted no earlier than 2005. Doug Fairfield, the curator of the show, has amended that to *no painting earlier than 2004*.

We hope that change will allow more signature members, including those who have not worked in pastels in the last couple of years, to participate.

Send your very best!

Treasurer’s Report

As of June 2006

Checking Account	\$3,091.55
CD	8,183.43
Total	\$11,274.98

Addie Draper: Abstracted Realism

That is how Addie Draper described her work at the May meeting. Living on 40 acres east of Albuquerque gives Addie much opportunity to abstract the landscape in abundant brilliance for her subject matter. Since about 1993, she has worked almost exclusively with pastels. From quiet and balmy blues to roast-hot oranges and reds, Addie's paintings convey an emotional connectedness with her surroundings, depicting her feelings about specific landscapes and architecture. The simplicity and spareness of form belie the work behind her creations.

She views a scene and shuffles it down to a few elements to make a statement. Addie states, "I thoroughly photograph a place that has intrigued me and manipulate the photos (in Photoshop) to find the composition or the elements that best relate the concept that attracted me to the area. I then do a black and white thumbnail sketch to determine the placement of values and then do a small color sketch to determine color values and the poetry of the piece. The color mock-up is like the road map to the final piece."

She works on sanded paper, or on archival mat board that has been prepared with gesso and pumice. She likes Kitty Wallis paper for very smooth areas, but also is interested in building up textured surfaces. First the board is gessoed on the back, allowed to dry, then the front gets an untinted pumice-gesso coat. Strokes are applied in both directions. She mixes the gesso and pumice with water in an old coffee can, not letting it get too watered down. Golden also makes a surface texture product.



Left: Blending pastels
Above: Close to finished.

Addie uses a technique that involves rubbing the pastel pigment into the paper to completely cover the ground. She builds up layers of color, to get the depth and intensity of color that she is looking for; the technique has the same effect as glazing does in the oil medium. She is interested in the impact of color and composition in relating the mood of the work, working with the experience of a place, time of day, season, feelings, thoughts and emotions that one experiences when existing in their world. Her initial ideas come from the lighting effect on the landscape. She loves the pure color and luminosity of pastel, so she won't use spray fixative, which tends to dull and coat the crystalline structure of pastel.

Addie begins her underpainting with NuPastels and other hard pastels, building up layers of color. This process gets as much pigment

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Mike Mahon's DiVine SETUP

Mike may live in Amarillo, Texas, but his roots are in Taos, NM, where his grandfather was a pharmacist. Mike graduated from art school in 1971, when everything was about abstract expressionism — all novelty. After a 30 year career as a commercial artist in order to make a living, he started painting full time in the late 90s. Mike's style whether in oils or pastels is impressionistic realism. His paintings range from landscapes to portraits. He primarily paints scenes of Texas and New Mexico. Mike opened by saying, "the work of an artist is to lift the veil over the rest of the world's eyes. Artists must have a mastery of observation. An artist's job is to show the world what it has never seen before. Art is to re-think God's thoughts and put it on canvas. There is nothing new to say; it is the artist's job to interpret." Mike specialized in portraits, but wanted to put his people in landscape settings. So he learned how to paint landscapes, which at first intimidated him. He does portraits from life, and life studies. He said the difference between a portrait and a study is, "a portrait is paid for in advance; while a study you do it and it might sell."

To Mike, starting a painting is the most intimidating part. There is always a tipping point where it looks terrible and you think it will never look good. You have to work through that and not be discouraged. He has devised a "procedure" for painting, so he'll know if it will be a good painting, and he puts a lot of time in planning a piece. His paintings start from life as much as possible, but he will also use the computer to manipulate and compose a photo. Photos are for compositional or color reference. Normally he doesn't spend more than 3 hours on a painting.



Above: The composite photo
Below: Sketching in values.



Today's demo was a scene of an old, pitched-roof adobe house in Arroyo Hondo near Taos. There was a clothesline beside it, a hill in front and a large tree anchoring the image in the background. Mike was most intrigued in the clothesline, so he made it the painting's center of interest.

He used Kitty Wallis paper, mounted on 14"x 18", 1/2" thick foamcor. Normally he cuts the board to fit the paper size, but for the demo, it was a few inches larger all around. He began by using a general layout carbon pencil to do a basic loose sketch of the scene. He likes to start very loose, as the looser you are, the more you can change things later. Painting is an editing process. Sometimes he fixes his pencil sketch with HAIRSPRAY! It is less toxic and cheaper than spray fixative.

Once he was satisfied with his loose sketch, Mike started roughing in the tree with darks. He worked

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We talked about keywords, and that's a start. Even if you sit on your hands, the search engines will find and index your site. That's what they are designed to do. But you can help them do it sooner by submitting your site. Google, Yahoo! and DMOZ ("The Open Directory Project" at www.dmoz.org) allow you to submit your site for indexing. There are others, but start with these.



Another way to draw visitors is to have other websites link to yours. The more links, the higher up in the search rankings it will go. For example, you may belong to several pastel societies. These societies most likely have websites and membership lists on-line. Your site should appear as a link on each of these lists. But think beyond just pastel societies. Think of other art groups you belong to that have sites, sites of galleries you're in, art directory sites such as www.NMCultureNet.org – well, you get the picture.

If you participate in any on-line discussion groups, make sure you put your website address in your signature line, if possible. I participate in a community called WetCanvas (www.WetCanvas.com) where they have a pastel forum. From the information I get from my hit counter, I know many visitors come from WetCanvas. (Make sure you put your website address in your regular e-mail signature, too!)

You can also get free publicity through eBay. You may think that eBay's just a place to sell and buy, but think of it as a place to advertise. Consider putting up a "teaser" painting for sale. If you put your website address in the item description, you can bet you'll get many more visitors to your site.

I've had my website on-line for six years now. I'm fortunate. Since I design websites professionally for artists and writers, I've been able to experiment and help my website evolve into a "lean, mean, marketing machine." With these tips, you can do the same.

Michael Chesley Johnson, PSA, not only paints and teaches workshops but also designs websites for artists. (He helped design the PSNM site.) For more on his web design, see www.3CrowsKeepingWatch.com. For more on Michael, see www.MichaelChesleyJohnson.com.



with his *plein air* set up of 96 NuPastels and other soft pastels. He started the traditional way – hard pastels first, with soft last. A plastic tackle/tool box held his colors, organized by value: lights across the top; medium values in the middle; darks in the bottom. He will sketch in colors all over the painting like "notes" to remind him what color he wants to put in later. To remember which pastels he is using in a painting, he stands them up on end in place. As others do, he cuts off about 1/2 inch of the pastel to keep the numbers intact for future reference. He knows which colors he uses over and over, but this helps him keep track of some lesser used colors. First, Mike puts in his darks all over the painting. He has planned a path for the eye with the darks. Once he has the darks blocked in, he goes over it with turpenoid. He can tell right away if it is going to be an interesting design. Mike says, "the foundation of a good representational painting is in the abstract design at the beginning." Since he also likes to paint in oils, he says doing the turpenoid step with a brush gets that out of his system. The looser it is, the more fun; the drips and runs add interest. He also tones the outer edge of the pastel paper with turpenoid so he can use that area to test colors. He always paints with one sheet backing the top one, so there is no transfer of texture from the foamcor substrate.

The "Procedure", that he applies to every painting, he calls the "DiVine SETUP" — 7 basic fundamentals of art. In order of priority. **D = Drawing and Design.** Learn to compose on the page. Doing the pencil sketch first, gets the center of interest established in the first 20 minutes. Mike divides the paper into quadrants. The center of interest will be in the center of one of the quadrants. In today's demo it was the quadrant with the clothesline. He states that to be a better painter you have to DRAW. If you can draw you can paint. **V = Values.** Learn how to judge values from dark to light; values are second only to drawing in importance. Various media affect the discernment from dark to light. Television only has 50 steps from black to white; print film 100-150 steps; slide film 200-250 steps. But the human eye can discern 100,000 shades of grey that the camera cannot see. That is why it is impossible to take a photograph of a scene and have it look the same as it does to the human eye. **S = Shapes.** Vary your shapes to make the painting interesting, but only use 5 or 6 basic shapes. More than that are too busy. **E = Edges.** Lost and found, soft and hard. **T = Temperature.** Warm/cool colors and how they work together. **U = Unity.** Unifying elements of the painting and repetitive shapes and values gives a feeling of unity. All of the other steps flow into Unity, i.e. one temperature will give it unity. **P = Perspective.** All the other things make perspective work. Looking at all these steps is also useful for self-critiquing. Break down, step by step, each element of the painting until you can figure out what, if anything, is wrong. Set up your canvas so you are in control.

Mike found Richard Schmidt's book "Everything I Know About Painting" especially useful. Mike has a page in the International Artist's book, "100 Ways to Paint Portraits and Figures". He teaches workshops at the Amarillo Art Institute. Visit Mike's website, www.mmahon.com or phone 806-359-5130 for more information.

Far left: The painting takes shape, once the center of interest is put in. Near left: Mike finished the painting at Weems after our meeting.