

Of Pencil Drawing and Fine Art by George Max

Although my artwork has not been continuous since I first entered the art world in 1988, I can recapitulate and trace back to some of my earliest beginnings. Drawing and coloring always attracted me, from elementary to high school. Nevertheless, it wasn't until 1987 (when I entered the University) that I began to explore my artistic skills and trust my talent to do formal head portrait drawings for sale. It's been two decades since then and I am still on my quest of pursuing a formal art career and becoming an internationally renowned artist.



Pottery (1988)
Pencil drawing drawn
from life



Censer (1988)
Pencil drawing drawn
from life

After studying English in the United States for one year (1989-1990) and after finishing my technical training in Earth Science in 1991, I spent one year creating art which included pencil drawings, watercolors and oil paintings. "Women Washing Clothes in River" is an example of this artwork. Up to mid-2004 all of my artwork had been scattered or null due to work but my desire to become a full-time artist someday continued. Also my lack of literature, resources and time prevented me from developing and exploiting my artistic talent during these years.



Women Washing Clothes in River (1992)
Watercolor on drawing paper, 11" x 14"

Fine Art

Early in 2005, the desire to start a formal art career called to me again. I continued to be committed and motivated to become an artist and create good art. To date, I have invested more than three continuous years making oil paintings that include people, landscapes, still life, orchid and canine art. This has further contributed to my expertise and knowledge in using and making art with oil paint colors over canvas. The whole collection is currently on exhibit in my studio and online on my personal website. I have included two pieces here that are currently for sale.

Ever since I started drawing and painting (except for pencil or oil paint portraits on commission) all of my themes have been about the indigenous Mayan people of Guatemala. They may depict the folklore, traditions, customs and social life of these distinct ethnic groups.

The vivid and bright colors of the typical fabrics of the people's clothes are of interest to any Guatemalan artist. People's facial expressions showing depth and character are also a valuable source for inspiration.



Todos Santos Mayor (Early June 2006)
Oil painting on stretched canvas, 18" x 13.2"



2477 I Road, Grand Junction, CO, USA (Late May 2007)
Oil painting on stretched canvas, 20.8" x 12"

Fine Drawing

I was introduced into fine drawing by Ernesto Boesche back in mid-1988 when he was the director of the School of Art in the capital city of Guatemala. My art training, which at that time consisted of a drawing course and a few magazines (Walter T. Foster publications), was fostered by my creative skills and talent. In early 2007, I continued to teach myself, from the drawing of the head and figure to studying the human body at the anatomic level. I was motivated by my desire to refine my drawings and fine art making (mostly oil paintings) to be highly competitive in the current art world.

I define fine drawing as the creation of accurate, fine textured and realistic portraits or any other subject. For this, various media can be used such as pencil, charcoal, graphite, colored pencils, oil pastels, soft pastels, etc. Although there are materials specific for each medium, it is best to try different materials first in order to match the combination that works best for you and your subject.



Pre-drawing Sketches (March and April 2008)
Graphite on bond paper

A specific medium surface should not be used if it does not yield the desired results for the material intended. Personally, I use bond paper or recycled paper to make my pre-drawing sketches. This provides me with more confidence and skill when starting a formal job on drawing paper. I also determine what scale I should make the drawing and how to use the paper more optimally. Moreover, I try not to make pre-drawing sketches from the same subject as my formal drawing.

Realistic Approaches

In fine art as in fine drawing every pictorial element counts in rendering the best of the subject. Although not all fine art is realistic, my approach for creating fine drawings has always been towards realism. By a realistic approach I mean to the point that the human eye can perceive and subtract from the subject and represent it as properly and accurately as possible.



Flowers (2008)

Soft pastel drawing on Strathmore® 300 Series Drawing Paper, 14" x17"

A realistic approach should give the viewer the sense that the subject is real without losing its pictorial attractiveness and artistic value. In portrait as in realistic drawing, accurate and precise observation of the subject should render likeness and constrain proportions. Observation, however, can be handicapped if the artist lacks concentration and interest in the subject. Practice, on the other hand, is not effective if you do not correct your mistakes which in turn reduces your practice process.

Except for commissioned portraits, choosing the right subjects for fine art drawing will result in a pleasant and compelling process that is comfortable for the artist. Also to guarantee the successful rendering of a fine drawing, it is always important to study the subject as much as possible to be certain of the features.



Indigenous Girls from the 1980s (2008)

Fine pencil drawing on Strathmore 300 Series Drawing Paper, 14" x17"

Tips to Guarantee a Successful Drawing

- Start fresh with each different drawing project, not one after another.
- Concentrate and keep interest in the subject when creating a formal drawing.
- Work in stages during different days to keep a uniform flow and touch in the drawing. Remember that fine drawing requires time, patience and dedication through completion.
- Try different drawing tools over different surfaces to meet your drawing needs.
- Formal drawing should not be intended as a pastime or a means to get rid of stress from the mind and body.
- Preferably, work standing in front of your drawing board at a comfortable position that allows freedom of movement and control over the drawing.
- Try not to make pre-drawing sketches from the same subject as your formal drawing.

About the Artist

Artist George Max lives in Cobán, a small town in central Guatemala where he was born in 1968. He attended elementary and middle school in this city. He also studied House Design in 1985-1986. In 1987, he entered the local University Center to study a three-year technical career in Earth Science. As part of his geological training he traveled the country in field trips searching for rocks and minerals, studying rock formations and exploring volcanoes, rivers and lakes. In the summer of 1989, the artist had the opportunity to travel to the United States (Grand Junction, Colorado State) to learn English under a one-year scholarship program.

Here are some highlights of his most recent art activities. George has participated three times in the orchid art contest and exhibition which is part of the International Orchid Festival held annually in his hometown. He was also featured in the 2008 Art-Wanted calendar (ArtWanted.com) with an orchid oil painting (day assigned May 08). And in mid-2008, 3 head portraits were included in Mark Simon's Facial Expressions books: *E-book Companion Volume 3* (pages 119 and 120) and *Babies to Teens* (pages 79 and 171) (FacialExpressions.com).

Currently George is both a fine artist and a professional English / Spanish translator. He is still in the process of learning, researching, practicing and acquiring more knowledge and expertise in art and fine art in order to render the most in his artwork.

His current personal website which exhibits many of his oil paintings and drawings is <http://www.georgemax.co.nr/>.

He can be contacted at georgemaxart@hotmail.com.



Highland Boy (2008)

Soft pastel drawing on Strathmore 400 Series Pastel Paper,
11" x 14"

Featured Product

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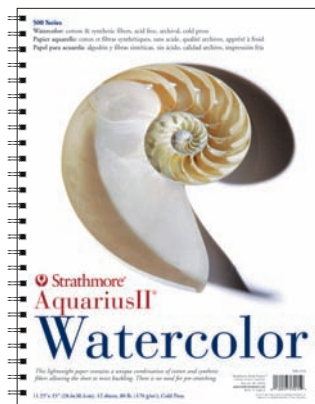
Original artwork by writer,
illustrator Tommy Castillo

Available at fine art stores.

www.strathmoreartist.com

Questions From Our Website

Can watercolor paper be used with oil paints?



Watercolor paper is not recommended for use with oil paints without priming the surface. Oil paints contain a pigment which is held in a suspension or dispersion in oil (e.g. linseed oil).

Watercolor paper holds color on the surface longer than most other paper but is still porous which results in the

oil draining into the sheet. Priming the surface will protect the substrate fiber and it will provide a more receptive surface for ground paint. Though the purpose of a primer is not to provide a barrier coating, it will help in this respect.

I bought your Canvas Paper pad for practicing my techniques with oil and acrylics. Do I need to gesso the paper before I work on it?



No you do not need to gesso the paper. This paper has been coated to protect the substrate fiber and provide a receptive surface for both oil and acrylic.

I would like to give your ATC cards a try. I use oils so I need a fairly heavy card, which of your cards would work the best – the textured or the acrylic?

The Canvas Paper card or Acrylic card will both work with oils. The Textured Paper is sized but not coated, so like watercolor (see question 1) it is porous. Our Textured Paper is recommended for dry media (pastel, sketching stick, colored pencil etc.).



Artwork by Sherie Sloane on Strathmore® Artist Trading Card