Strathmore®
ARTIST NEWSLETTER

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MAIN FEATURE

Painting the Everyday Object…Every Day

By Kate Jarvik Birch

THE PRACTICE OF DAILY PAINTING:

I haven't done the exact calculations, but I've been creating a painting every day for approximately 1,200 days now. When I think about the sheer quantity of work inherent in that daily practice, I'm astounded that I've been able to produce SO MUCH. But when I break it down into the smaller, and much simpler task of picking up my brush each morning and laying down some strokes for an hour or two, it suddenly seems much more ordinary and much more doable. That's the beauty of daily practice…it adds up! And it adds up FAST!

IN THE BEGINNING:

I began my daily practice out of necessity. In the beginning of 2019, after a twenty three year marriage, I separated from my husband and I was suddenly faced with the reality of having to bring in a steady income that I could rely on. Even though I'd been creating art on and off since I graduated from college with a degree in painting and drawing in 2005, I'd never had to rely on my art to support myself. The prospect was terrifying! But after a small stint working as an assistant for a friend of mine who wrote and illustrated children's books, I realized

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that I wasn't going to be happy or fulfilled unless I was creating my own work. So after some brainstorming, I thought I'd try making a tiny painting every day for a month and offer them for sale to my friends on Facebook and Instagram. The paintings were small, only 6" x 6", so I could easily finish one in a sitting.

To begin with, I offered mostly landscapes. Years earlier, after I graduated from college, I used to sell my artat the downtown Farmer's Market in Salt Lake City. At the time, I'd offered little landscapes of the Utah mountains and pasture land. I was already comfortable with the colorful style I'd created for those paintings and they seemed like a comfortable style for me to return to. Luckily, my friends fell in love with these small paintings. I was surprised how excited they were to buy them from me and before I knew it, strangers who'd come across my work on Instagram were buying pieces too.

People began to look forward to my posts. They'd reach out with little notes of encouragement and delight. And this form of accountability from people that I didn't even know, kept me going.

THE BENEFITS OF POSTING DAILY:

One of the most immediate benefits that I experienced after I began posting my work every day was the delightful surprise of watching my social media following begin to grow. I'd started with around a thousand friends and followers, but soon, that number began to climb. I attribute this to consistency as well as to the affordability of my paintings. Yes, I was trying to put out quality work, charming and colorful little pieces that I hoped would speak to people, but just as important was the fact that I was posting one each day, consistently. Same time. Same place. Same size. Same price.

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The accountability of daily painting, whether it be solely to yourself, to a friend or family member, or to fans or colleagues on social media, is one of the most powerful parts of daily work. If daily practice is something you strive to incorporate into your art making, I recommend figuring out what kind of accountability motivates you the most. For me, it's a combination of feeling like other people are counting on me and that I'm counting on myself. I get a great sense of pride when I think about my daily art practice and this sense of accomplishment is like a self-fulfilling prophecy.

It can be difficult to put our art out there for the public to criticize, but the truth is, no one will ever be as hard on our art as we are ourselves.

The first few weeks of creating art daily will be the hardest, as it always is when you're trying to turn something into a new habit, so you might consider enlisting someone else to paint with you. They don't need to physically be in the same space with you, instead you can just hold each other accountable, whether that be by sending each other photos of your work, or simply by asking if you spent time creating that day.

One of the other amazing benefits of daily painting is the way it makes you confront your inner editor. One of the most difficult parts of creating is that overly critical voice that tells us the things we create are never as good as we want them to be. It can be difficult to put our art out there for the public to criticize, but the truth is, no one will ever be as hard on our art as we are ourselves. Because of this, I'd actually encourage you to post your daily art on social media. There are a few things that will happen when you do this. First, you'll have a wonderful documentation of your work. Over the weeks, months and even years, you can scroll back through your daily art and see how your work has grown and

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changed. You'll be able to study your work where you can see your artistic voice emerge. Second, you'll learn to set aside your ego. Inevitably, you're not going to love every painting you create every single day. But if you're invested in posting your work consistently, you'll have to overcome the part of your ego that is embarrassed by your mistakes. I found this aspect of daily art the

most freeing. Each piece of art exists on its own. Some days I love it. Some days I don't. But each day when I sit down at my desk, I know that I get to create something new.

WHY EVERYDAY OBJECTS:

Even though I do still frequently paint landscapes, over the years, I've turned to predominantly painting still life, and more specifically, everyday objects. This subject can run the gamut from bowls of fruit, to pencil sharpeners, to burned matches. I'm one of those people who finds beauty pretty much everywhere I look, so I gravitated to painting the objects that surround me. I've found that I don't have to look far to find inspiration, whether it's in a shadow cast by a piece of fruit or in the clear cellophane wrapper of a piece of candy. Most people don't realize how much meaning we put on the small objects that make up our daily lives. Too often, we overlook the small things. Over the past few years of sharing my daily works on social media, I've grown to realize how significant these objects can be to people. And how personal. It turns out, these small objects often hold the stories that make up our lives. They connect us to one another and connect ourselves to our own past. I'm always pleased when these ordinary objects end up having a special significance to my audience. I tell this story often because it exemplifies this so well: a couple years ago, I painted a can of cranberry sauce on Thanksgiving. It was just one of those ordinary cans that you get at the grocery store, the kind that leaves the little ridges in the jelly when you remove it from the can. My mom couldn't believe I'd wasted my time on that painting. To her it seemed so peculiar and trivial. But later that day, I sold it to a woman who'd lost her own mother the year before and had a very personal memory of her mother serving cranberry sauce at their family dinner. My painting brought her to tears, and she ended up getting it as a reminder of her mother.

FINDING YOUR COMMUNITY ONLINE:

Whether or not you decide to take up the practice of making art daily, you can still have some of the benefits of putting yourself out there every day. Even if you're not posting your own art, you can still engage with other people's art on a daily basis. Find

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inspiration in others, lift them up, encourage them, and it will come back to you tenfold. I've been astounded by the beautiful art community that I've found in spaces like Instagram and TikTok. We hear so often about an internet full of trolls who tear people down, but I think the art world is special in the ways it lifts people up. I'd encourage you to find people whose art inspires you. Reach out to let them know. Build friendships wherever you can. The world of art isn't a competition, it's a community and I'm grateful to be a part of it.

> *We hear so often about an internet full of trolls who tear people down, but I think the art world is special in the ways it lifts people up.*

ABOUT THE ARTIST:

Kate Jarvik Birch is a full time visual artist, author, playwright, and daydreamer. Her art has been featured worldwide in stores like Target, Pier One and World Market, as well as in television series and major motion pictures such as, Transparent, Medium, Glee, Twenty-One Jump Street, and Looper. For the past few years, Kate has been working on her painting-a-day series, creating one small piece in gouache to share on social media where she's grown her following to over a hundred thousand. Kate graduated with a degree in Painting and Drawing from the University of Utah in 2005 and lives and works in Salt Lake City, Utah.

See more of Kate's work:
Instagram: @kebirch
Facebook: Kate Jarvik Birch Art
Etsy: www.etsy.com/shop/KateBirchDesign
Tik Tok: @kebirch

400 Series
TONED **BLUE** SKETCH

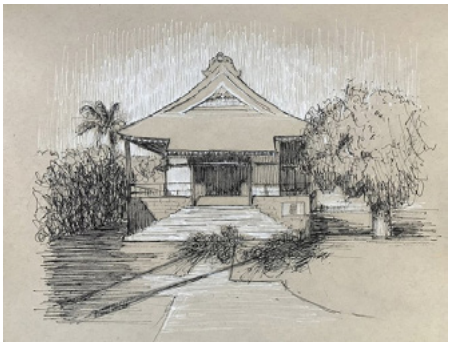
art by Justin Maas

Toned Sketch Paper is Now Available in **BLUE!**

Introducing ***NEW* Toned Blue Sketch** paper to our very popular family of toned paper products! All Strathmore Toned Sketch papers contain 100% recycled and 30% post-consumer fiber, as well as kraft and bark fiber inclusions for visual interest. Ideal for light and dark media including graphite, chalk, charcoal, sketching stick, markers, china markers, colored pencils, pens, and white gel pens.

• 80 lb./118 gsm • toned blue color • acid free • made in the U.S.A.

Strathmore®



ARTIST FOCUS

Interview with Brandon Schaefer

Who are you and what do you do?
My name is Brandon Schaefer and I'm an artist focusing mostly on drawing and watercolor painting. When it comes to drawing, I love to draw animals and wildlife with pen & ink on toned paper. For watercolor painting, nothing beats going outside and finding an interesting landscape or subject from life. I also share my art journey on my YouTube channel and website.

How and when did you get into art?
I've always enjoyed art and I started drawing when I was 5 years old. I was heavily influenced by Disney animated movies and cartoons and I would draw many of the characters I watched. When I was younger, I thought I wanted to be animator when I grew up. That didn't end up happening and I didn't pursue it but I'm happy with the choices I've made with my art.

How has your practice changed over time?
It has changed a lot over the years. I mainly drew throughout my childhood and only ever tried painting once I was in college. Only then I began to pursue painting and art a bit more seriously. I decided to learn watercolor painting but this phase lasted around 1-2 years. I then moved onto acrylics in search of more bold colors in my work. I used acrylics for about 4 years before trying oil painting. Once I tried oils, I was hooked. I used them exclusively for about 4 years as well. Eventually, I decided to take a trip for painting but I wanted a lightweight, minimal travel sketching setup and for me, oils didn't do it, so I began relearning watercolors for plein air painting. Eventually I stopped using oils altogether and went back to watercolors where my painting journey began. I also started using pen & ink about 2 years ago and love it as well.

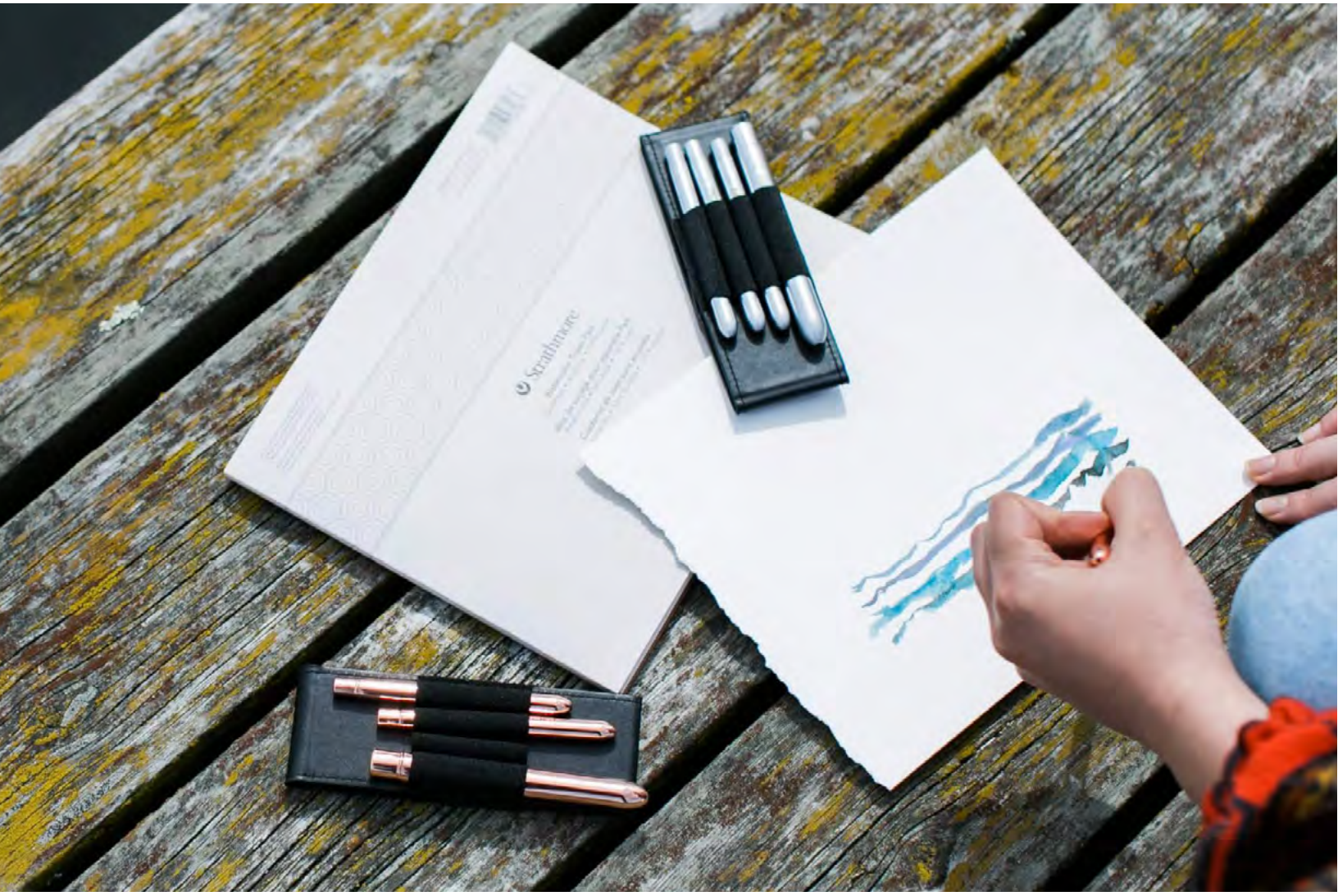
What's the best piece of art advice you've been given?
Read Brandon's answer and the rest of the interview and see more of his artwork ***HERE.***

Strathmore® 2022 ONLINE WORKSHOP SERIES

LEARN MORE

Workshop 3: Sketching & Drawing: The Foundation of All Art with Brandon Schaefer
Start Date: August 1, 2022

Discover the world of sketching and drawing; the foundation of creating any type of art. Learn the fundamentals, which will help you grow in confidence while deepening your knowledge and understanding of sketching & drawing.



IT'S PLEIN AIR SEASON!

Summer is the perfect time to get outside to make some art! Princeton Brush Company has Neptune and Aqua Elite travel brush sets that are perfect for your on-the-go art kit. We love these brushes because they include 4 round brush sizes in a compact carrying case. The brush tips tuck away inside the handles to keep them protected and clean.

These brush kits are the perfect match for the Strathmore Travel Series, our hardbound or softcover journals, or our Visual Journals. What are you waiting for? Get your gear together and get out there!

Learn more about the Princeton Neptune and Aqua Elite Travel Brush sets ***HERE.***

PRINCETON ARTIST BRUSH CO.™

Think Small!

Miniaturist *Blake Gore (AKA Professional Squinter)* creates tiny masterpieces with ink and marker on Strathmore paper.

Blake created a helpful tutorial video demonstrating his quick and approachable process for drawing tiny trees. One important piece of advice Blake shares to ensure success is to start with the lightest colors and add the leaves in random, organic bunches instead of trying to draw individual trees. Slowly progress to adding darker layers of green towards the under side of the leaf bunches and leave the tops lighter where the light would hit.

SUPPLIES:

- Strathmore 300 Series Bristol Smooth paper (100lb/270gsm)
- Lyra Aqua Brush Duo Markers (yellow, light green, dark green, gray)
- Lyra Graduate Fineliner (black)
- Graphite pencil

Watch the full tutorial and give it a try!

Strathmore 2022 ONLINE WORKSHOP SERIES

Join us for Strathmore's **FREE** 2022 Online Workshops!

Strathmore's Online Workshops feature free video lessons and downloadable instructions created by experienced artists. Follow along in the online classroom as instructors guide you through various art topics. After a lesson is released, it remains on the site for viewing the rest of the year.

Share all the fun on *Instagram* **and** *Facebook* **using #StrathmoreWorkshops**

Workshops start March 7 and continue through December 31, 2022

BEGINNING SOON!

WORKSHOP 3

Sketching & Drawing: The Foundation of All Art

Instructor: Brandon Schaefer

Start Date: August 1, 2022

Discover the world of sketching and drawing; the foundation of creating any type of art. Learn the fundamentals, which will help you grow in confidence while deepening your knowledge and understanding of sketching & drawing.

LEARN MORE & SIGN UP

WORKSHOP 1
Easy Breezy Beach Art with Acrylics

Instructor:
Ashley Krieger

All Workshop 1 Videos Available Online Now!

Acrylics are a remarkable permanent, rich, colorful, versatile, and adaptable medium that gives artists endless possibilities. Get started with acrylics as you paint some simple beach art.

SEE THE VIDEOS

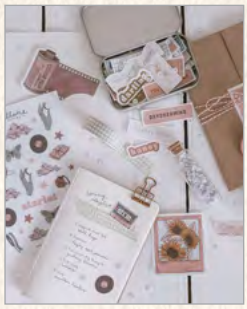
WORKSHOP 2
Joyful Watercolor Finding Your Style

Instructor:
Shayda Campbell

All Workshop 2 Videos Available Online Now!

Fill the pages of a watercolor sketchbook with practice illustrations, floral compositions, watercolor techniques, and finished pieces, Shayda will help you feel confident, calm and creative in your art-making journey.

SEE THE VIDEOS



WORKSHOP 4
Art Journaling 101

Instructor:
Jordan Clark

Start Date:
November 7, 2022

Learn the basics of art journaling to strengthen your ability as an artist. Use a variety of mediums to make beautiful illustrations, sketchbook pages, and postcards.

LEARN MORE about Workshop 4

Join us for our free workshops at: **strathmoreartist.com/artist-studio**

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NEW ARTIST SPOTLIGHT

Welcome to **"New Artist Spotlight"**. This feature provides us with an opportunity to share the work of artists we love who you may not know about yet. This edition we meet **Blane Asrat,** an artist who strives to make the world a more empathatic place through art. You can explore more of Blane's work using the links at the bottom.

BLANE ASRAT

I'm a San Francisco based freelance artist, creating comics, traditional paintings, and digital illustrations!
I work primarily in charcoal, oils, acrylic, and digital mediums.

My paintings aim to answer the question "What would this feeling look like If you could see it?" Painting light, faces, bodies, and shapes, is how I explore the sensitivity of everyday human experiences.

I want to create a world in which no one feels they are alone in the intensity of their sensations!

See more of Blane's work:

Webstore • Portfolio

Get Toned With Strathmore

Celebrating 10 Years of Being Toned

Where does the time go? It was 10 years ago Strathmore introduced our 400 Series Toned Sketch papers in Tan and Gray. Artists rejoiced and asked for more so we responded with additional formats and types of Toned Paper.

10 YEARS OF TONED TIMELINE:

2012

Toned Sketch Paper Introduced

In response to the needs of artists as expressed in forums, discussion groups, blogs, and social platforms, Strathmore Toned Sketch papers in Tan and Gray.

2017

Toned Mixed Media Paper Introduced

Artists loved Toned Sketch papers but wanted to have the option to use wet media as well as dry media. We listened and launched Toned Mixed Media papers in Tan and Gray.

2018

Toned Blue Mixed Media Paper Introduced

Originally used as customizable covers for the Strathmore Vision pads, artists loved the Toned Blue mixed media paper and wanted it in pads, so we made it!

2022

Toned Blue Sketch Paper Introduced

Strathmore has rounded out the Toned Paper family with the addition of Toned Blue Sketch paper because, you guessed it, artists asked for it!

TONED PAPER COMPARISON CHART:

FEATURES	TONED TAN SKETCH	TONED GRAY SKETCH	TONED BLUE SKETCH	TONED TAN MIXED MEDIA	TONED GRAY MIXED MEDIA	TONED BLUE MIXED MEDIA
Pad Cover			NEW!			
Paper Color						
Weight	80 lb/118 gsm	80 lb/118 gsm	80 lb/118 gsm	184 lb/300 gsm	184 lb/300 gsm	184 lb/300 gsm
Surface	medium	medium	medium	medium	medium	medium
Binding	wire	wire	wire	glue	glue	glue
Pad Sizes (inches)	5.5x8.5, 9x12, 11x14, 18x24	5.5x8.5, 9x12, 11x14, 18x24	5.5x8.5, 9x12, 11x14, 18x24	6x8, 9x12, 11x14, 18x24	6x8, 9x12, 11x14, 18x24	6x8, 9x12, 11x14, 18x24
Media Applications	all dry media	all dry media	all dry media	all dry and wet* media	all dry and wet* media	all dry and wet* media

*not recommended for oil paint

CLICK HERE

to learn more about the history of Strathmore Toned Papers plus see stunning examples of artwork created using Toned Sketch and Toned Mixed Media papers on our blog.

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