

New Revolution

With all of the turmoil in this world, you probably read the title of this article and thought it would be about terrorism, liberalism or some other “ism.” Not today. Sit back and relax. Art is our subject. Forget about bailouts, greed, and foreclosures. For the next few minutes enjoy a story about painting and the wild new way to do it.

Most people have heard of watercolor, oil and acrylic paint. Whenever someone wants to take up painting, they seem to gravitate toward watercolor. I guess they are wooed by the easy cleanup. Watercolor dries quickly so the artist layers the paint in transparent washes building color upon color. Those that have mastered this form of painting are truly gifted.

Oil paints on the other hand, dry very slowly and clean up with solvents. Oil painters are able to manipulate paint with various blending techniques ranging from cotton swabs to paper towels. Oil painters can also apply the sgraffito technique because of the slow drying time. Sgraffito is the lifting of paint to reveal an underpainting or toned canvas. Basically it means you paint your canvas with a color and let it dry. You then paint over it and while the new layer is still wet you can lift paint off in certain areas to let the dried color on the canvas show through. This method creates some very dynamic effects in a painting.

Acrylic paints, like watercolor, are water based. They can be thinned with water to create washes of color that can be layered thinly over other colors. As mentioned earlier, watercolorists enjoy doing this in their creations. However, acrylic paint can also be applied opaquely like oils. The drawback has always been that you have only about a fifteen minute window of opportunity to blend it while it is still wet on the canvas. After that, it forms a skin and is dry. It is like having an oil painting dry on you after fifteen minutes and the only thing you can do is keep painting over the areas that you did not finish blending.

Now comes the new revolution. The Chroma company has come out with a new line of acrylic paint, Atelier Interactive. With this paint you get the benefits of watercolor and oil painting. The Interactive acrylics stay wet longer allowing the acrylic painter to blend wet into wet techniques like the oil painters have done for centuries. You can spend all day blending it. Plus, with these new paints, the acrylic painter can now do something that oil painters cannot do...re-wet the paint *after it has dried* to rework it! In the past, the acrylic painter had to paint over the dried areas on the canvas to continue refining their painting. Now they can spray an Unblocker Medium on it and the paint refreshes itself to be *reworked*, not just painted over.

I recently got the opportunity to start the revolution in Hartsville, SC at the Every Child Is An Artist workshop and at the Stanly Arts Guild in Albermarle, NC. Over 100 children and twenty five adults experienced the joys of this new painting medium thanks to the generosity of Chroma Inc. Never underestimate the power of art and the creativity it brings to young and old. Join the revolution and pick up a paint brush.