



Hello everyone, The Voice is back and so is Artist's Palette.  
I am delighted to have the opportunity to voice my thoughts with all of you once again.

### **You Get What You Pay For**

Once bitten, no, not by the black flies, by the painting bug, the creative child within me came to life. I viewed my surroundings as though all was anew.

I began my painting journey as a self-taught oil painter. I attended a few oil painting classes and eventually joined the Kirkland Lake Art Club, ( Englehart did not have an art club back then) Once a member of the Kirkland Lake Art Club I began to entertain the thought of trying my hand at watercolour painting, as this medium seemed to call out to me. At one of the meetings, a well-known Kirkland Lake artist, Sheila Langlois pointed out to club members that she would be holding painting classes at the Jsano School of Arts. I later spoke with Sheila and told her how much I have admired her work and how I had this urge to try my hand at this magical medium. Over time, I attended several of Sheila's watercolour workshops and I thanked her for introducing me to the wonderful world of watercolour. Sheila was a fun loving person and a joy to have as a friend, she has since past away and is missed by many of us.

Like many beginners, we get inspired and immediately go on a search for supplies. Finding art supplies today is a bit easier then twenty some years ago and as a beginner, we make due with what is available or purchase what we can afford.

#### **This is where most of us go wrong!**

When it comes to the watercolour painting, purchasing the correct supplies is more important then any other medium.

In my previous column I talked about my earlier paintings and that, I still have a few of them. Several of these paintings turned out pretty good, but the paper has since yellowed; (as it was not acid free paper), mixed pigments have faded or changed to a completely different colour. (student pigments were used)

Student paints react completely different, they are less intense, much chalkier looking, and you have to work harder at achieving the techniques notorious to watercolour painting. Student paints, type of brushes used, paper weight and brand; how much paint or water the paper will absorb or will not absorb, is the paper acid free, (*Archival quality*) or 100% cotton; all of the above are important factors one must look into before purchasing materials. Depending on how you intend to use the watercolour paints, is also an important factor. As beginners, we purchase the least expensive material thinking it is not a big deal.

Watercolour is watercolour, right? Wrong!



***Student quality versus artist quality; there is a huge difference.***

The surface of which you are going to paint on is one of the most important factors. Watercolour paper should be no less than 140lb weight.

I prefer 140lb cold press D'Arche paper. Many professional artist as well as *How to Books* recommend D'Arche's 140lb paper. Heavier weight paper is also available. There are many other name brands and although my preference is D'Arche, you may prefer a different brand but it should not be less than 140lb weight paper. (*Paper weight; this does not mean the paper weight in itself, something else for you to read and find out about*)

Lesser weight paper or cheaper paper will buckle; the paint will sit in a puddle, not soak into the paper and leave you pulling your hair out from frustration or worse, giving up watercolour painting all together.

As for watercolour brushes, synthetic fibers work very well and come to a nice point when wet. Soon as the brush touches the paper, the paint or water should not puddle off but gently flow into the paper. When it comes to paint brushes, again you need to do you homework.

In August of this year, I held a watercolour workshop at Jsano School of Arts and as always I handed out my list of materials and I asked each student to purchase the supplies suggested. Most of them came to class with the correct material but those that did not were frustrated and wondered why their pieces did not work out. By the end of the week, I think they got the message.

When I hold a workshop, I insist my students purchase Artist Quality supplies. After all, if we are both going to invest a lot of our time, then we may as do it correctly, right from the get go. I could have saved myself so many years of frustrations and disappointments if only I had purchased the recommended supplies right from day one.

I surely did struggle in the beginning. The problem was not with me but with the material I was using. I kept asking myself if watercolour painting was for me, even left everything in the closet for a few years. To this day, I am still learning. Painting is a never-ending learning experience no matter which media.

Have you heard the saying, "You get what you pay for"?

If you want to succeed at watercolour, having the correct material is just as crucial as is the learning all that you can as to how everything reacts to one another.

I will be holding some Watercolour Workshops on Colour Mixing and Techniques sometime in the New Year. I will also hold a Fabricscape Collage workshop. No set dates and places yet.



I also have One on One Art Instructions here in my home. If you have, any questions regarding any of these classes please Email me at [paint@ntl.sympatico.ca](mailto:paint@ntl.sympatico.ca) and please add on subject line what your email is about so I do not delete you.

You can view my work on my web site: <http://www.@artistmom.net> and please sign my guestbook with your thoughts.

Keep that brush wet,

Alice Y. Sawicki signing off