

ARTtalk®

Vol. 22/No. 3
January

Welcome to **ARTtalk**, the link between you, the artist, and the manufacturers of art materials.

ARTtalk provides you with information on art materials and equipment—new products, techniques, and tips on using them. Each month you'll find informative articles that deal with subjects ranging from drawing and painting to printmaking and matting/framing to airbrush and arts/crafts. You'll also find information on artists and art history, current events and art world news, competitions and workshops, and a "Kids' Korner." Subjects vary each month.

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Framing

Matting Artworks – Easier Than You Think!

For certain works of art, matting not only adds to the appeal of the artwork but also to its value. When you first begin to consider doing matting and framing, you might wonder exactly what types of art should be matted. You might also be concerned about the materials used in matting (colors, textures, composition of materials) and even what tools you need to complete a project.

In complete truthfulness, all you really need to do matting is a piece of mat board, a steel straight edge guide and a very sharp knife (such as a box cutter or snap-off blade cutter). The actual cutting of the material is fairly simple. If you can cut with a sharp tool, you can cut a mat. It is the preciseness of your cuts, the perfection of corners and the evenness of your borders that make (or break) the look you end up with.

The tool most often used initially is an X-Acto knife or box cutter tool because the blades are thick enough to cut cleanly and through the material in one pass. Yes, the pressure required to cut in one pass is fairly high, but that insures a clean and even edge on your mat window. With caution, you can make multiple passes in order to cut through a mat, but you have to be very careful not to wobble the knife or your cut will be spoiled. Hand cut mats should be straight cuts rather than attempting to bevel the edge. Straight, hand cut mats were used for decades until mat cutting devices were more attainable. The straight cuts look great and are far easier to do than attempting to bevel.

So, mark (on the back side of the mat) the borders you want. Lay a steel straight edge along the lines and cut. Be especially careful at the corners, as an overcut will mar your finished mat and an undercut means you will have to work to keep the angle of that mat area straight. Begin your cut by lightly dragging the blade toward the place you want your cut to begin. As you come to the exact spot, press harder so the cut will start precisely. With a minimum of practice, mat cutting becomes simple and the results will be great.

The types of matting material vary greatly. The most accessible and readily available materials come in a huge range of colors and often with a choice of textural qualities. There are some high-end mat materials that are more costly but provide very unique appeal. Suedes, leather textures, high-sheen metallics, both real and faux cloth surfaces and many more complete the selection available but may be more difficult to find. Most art material suppliers carry a wide range of choices in different price ranges, but there is always something that will suit the art perfectly.

Colors range from a wide variety of whites, creams, ivories, earth tones, pastels and rich jewel tones to everything in between. Which color should you select? One that is present in the artwork. The border should not compete with the art for attention; and if the color is not complementary, the combination will not be successful. When double mats are being used, the top mat is most often a more neutral color and the bottom mat – the narrow border of color – a color with more impact, perhaps even a shiny surface, metallic or brilliant color. Remember, the matting should stand with the artwork as a package, so do not select a mat color to match the room or décor. If the mat does not coordinate with the art, it will never look "right."

Should you find that matting artwork is something you enjoy and the choices you



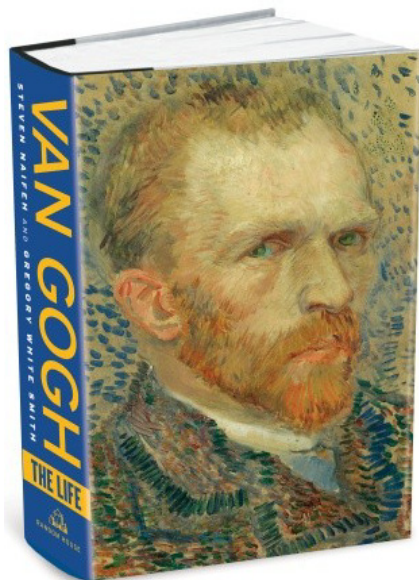
have fit your artwork, you may want to invest in a mat cutting device to aid in your designing. Several choices exist – from small hand-held mat cutters to large, table-top styles that include a fixed measuring device with infinite measuring possibilities, a cutting head and a bottom board to cut against. Mat cutters range in price from \$30 to \$250, so there is one that will help you do matting easier and one that will fit your budget, too.

There are many advantages to doing your own matting. You save a lot of money, you have the satisfaction of having a piece unlike anyone else's and you obtain a skill that adds to your list of talents. A little practice is worth the payoff!

The Art Marketplace

Van Gogh: The Life

This new book by Pulitzer Prize-winning authors Steven Naifeh and Gregory White Smith is an exquisitely detailed portrait of



creative genius Vincent van Gogh. They bring a crucial understanding to the larger-than-life mythology of this great artist—his early struggles to find his place in the world, his intense relationship with his brother Theo, his impetus for turning to brush and canvas and his move to Provence, where he painted some of the best-loved works in Western art. And they question the long-accepted notion that van Gogh committed suicide. Random House Publishing Group, hardcover, 976 pages.

Caravaggio – A Life Sacred and Profane

This new book by Andrew Graham-Dixon is a commanding biography of the Italian master's tumultuous life and mysterious death. With illuminating readings of Caravaggio's infamous religious paintings, the author immerses readers in the world of Italy at the height of the Counter-Reformation and creates a masterful profile of the painter's life and work. W. W. Norton & Company, hardcover, illustrated, 514 pages.

Drawing

Caricatures for Fun—and Profit

A dictionary reveals the word “caricature” comes from the Italian word *caricare*, which means to load. In the case of a drawing, the loading is done in the form of exaggeration of feature or features. Everyone has seen a caricature of a famous person who has pronounced ears or nose. The drawing almost always makes the features the most enlarged part of the likeness. Today, these drawings are fun and playful and most recipients are good natured about such exaggerations. But that has not always been the case.

The essence of caricature is exaggeration, however, and not distortion. A serious caricature artist makes the changes in appearance in the name of truth rather than in denial of truth. During the mid to late 1800's, here in America the prominent caricature artist was Thomas Nast, who helped clean up the Tammany Hall political machine with his truthful drawings. In the late 1800's, Mexican American Miguel

Covarrubias had many caricatures published in *Vanity Fair*, *Fortune* and *The New Yorker*. Sharply geometric, Covarrubias took caricatures to a more refined, yet still exaggerated, expression. In the early 1900's and until his death in 2003, Al Hirschfeld was known for the simple, elegant caricatures of every important person of the time. Even at 100 he was still publishing drawings. Mort Drucker drew for *MAD* magazine from 1955 onward, making famous the special humor for which that publication was known.

But the little known fact is that even DaVinci, Monet and Daumier drew caricatures. Maybe they sought relief from the restrictions of their demanding perfection in other works. And Dick Van Dyke and the ever-popular George Clooney also create caricatures. Although for some this style of drawing is frivolous, it is most serious to many.

Materials used for caricatures can vary, but the most popular drawing instruments include felt-tipped pens and soft graphite leaded pencils. Some artists like to use conte crayon because of the ease in creating thick/thin lines for



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Drawing... Art Competitions & Opportunities...

variety. But ink pens and watercolor pens can be fun to use and you have a great choice of color in which to work. Brush markers offer the feature of thick/thin lines, as well, and the new type with limitless ink in the barrel is of great use to the caricature artist.

Paper choices are pretty open as well. There is a strong interest in slick, vellum-type papers and those well suited for fine art ink drawing. A good choice would be a smooth finished, 100% rag paper – mainly for its longevity and crisp finish color. The slicker the finish, the better, so the instrument can glide easily without drag or restriction. Colored backgrounds are sometimes used, but white and off-white are the most popular.

The act of creating the drawing is done either on an easel or with the pad or drawing board leaned against the lap. Many caricature artists out in the public arena choose to nix the easel for the speed and spontaneity of the pad. Fast and easy, the artist can mill through a crowd, gleaming the most interesting subjects and most willing participants. Some caricature artists use the easel as a measure of the portions of their subject—using the height of the pad to measure the features of the subject's face/ears/nose, etc. Caricature artists will tell you they have fun and enjoy every second of their work.

Caricatures can be drawn almost anywhere you find groups of people: sports stadiums/events, the local mall, car shows, at the park (because even kids have neat features and their smiles are infectious), streets of a tourist town, on a boardwalk at the beach and even as entertainment at wedding receptions. Caricature artists can ply their trade just about anywhere with ease and excitement. Parties are sometimes the best bet

because of the overly festive atmosphere. But, no matter where, drawing caricatures is a great way to start conversations, make new friends and perhaps even earn a little folding money in the process.

Art Competitions & Opportunities

Free Grant Info Sessions

Creative Capital

Jan. 5, 7 p.m. – New Museum, NY, NY

Jan. 28, 2 p.m. – Parrish Art Museum, Southampton, NY

Creative Capital supports artists creating adventurous and imaginative work in Emerging Fields, Film/Video, Literature, Performing Arts and Visual Arts. In 2012 they will be considering proposals in Emerging Fields, Literature and Performing Arts. The online Letter of Inquiry form opens on Feb. 1 and closes on March 1. RSVP to attend one of the free sessions above that's open to the public: grants@creative-capital.org. Any working artist with at least five years of professional experience who is a U.S. citizen or permanent legal resident and at least 25 years old is eligible to apply. Selected grantees are eligible to receive up to \$50,000 in direct support and a suite of services valued at more than \$40,000. www.creative-capital.org.

Call for Applications to *Workspace* Lower Manhattan Cultural Council New York, NY

DEADLINE: Jan. 19

Now in its 15th year, *Workspace* is a nine-month studio residency focused on creative process and professional development for emerging visual artists and writers. Through the program's offerings—studio space/visits, talks/seminars, access to a network of peers and public programs—*Workspace* encourages creative production, professional development and community building in the early stages of an artist's or writer's career. Selected residents are expected to be active in their studios throughout the nine months, using it as a space for experimentation and dialogue. See more at <http://www.lmcc.net/residencies>.

The Beauty of Ice Sculpting Competition Scenic Hudson's Long Dock Park Beacon, NY

Feb. 11, 12-4 p.m.

DEADLINE: Jan. 20

Scenic Hudson and Mill Street Loft have partnered to bring some of the region's best sculptors to Long Dock Park. Watch as they turn river ice, driftwood and other objects found along the Hudson River shoreline into intriguing works of art. Sculpting will begin at Noon and works will remain on display until they melt. This event is open to all artists, but space is limited to the first 30 registered: lclark@millstreetloft.org, 845.471.7477. Prizes will be awarded by a public vote to first, second and third place. No registration fee. http://salsa.democracyinaction.org/o/2156/t/10452/p/salsa/event/common/public/index.sjs?event_KEY=72275

19th San Angelo National Ceramic Competition

San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts
San Angelo, TX

April 20-June 24

DEADLINE: Feb. 1

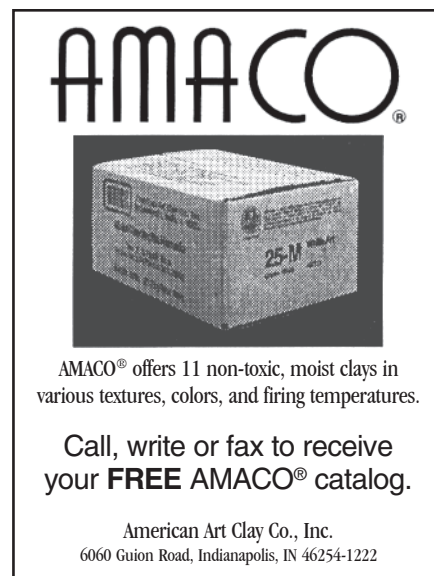
This competition is open to all artists who are residents of the U.S., Canada or Mexico. All ceramic work, both functional and sculptural, must have been completed within the last two years. Awards total \$6,000. 325.653.3333; www.samfa.org/ncc.htm.




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Artists who reside in the U.S., Canada and Mexico and are 2012 OPA members or have submitted an application for membership or renewal for 2012 (\$60 membership fee) may apply for this exhibition. Representational oil paintings of original concept and design only are eligible and must have been painted in the last three years. Paintings created in an instructional setting are not considered original artwork. Awards total in excess of \$75,000, including a \$25,000 Best in Show. <http://www.oilpaintersofamerica.com/events/exhibitions.cfm>.

Sculpt EVV
Juried Outdoor Sculpture Show
Arts District Outdoor Gallery/
Sculpture Park
Evansville, IN
June 9, 2012 – April 21, 2013
DEADLINE: March 1

The City of Evansville and University of Southern Indiana partnership for better living through art invites sculptors and sculpture collaborations to submit proposals to **Sculpt EVV**. All applicants must be at least 18 years of age and have a U.S. tax ID number or Social Security number. Artists whose artwork is accepted will receive \$500 installation stipends. Works must be original and by

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the applicant/collaborators submitting the entry and must be suitable for outdoor installation in weather that might range from approximately -5 to 100° F. Awards total \$36,000 and award winners will be congratulated in a full-page ad in *Sculpture* magazine. <http://www.sculptevv.org>

2012 Our Town Grants
National Endowment for the Arts
DEADLINE: March 1

The FY 2012 Our Town application guidelines are now available online. These grants, ranging from \$25,000 to \$150,000, support creative placemaking projects that contribute to the livability of communities and place the arts at their core. Organizations in all disciplines are encouraged to apply. <http://www.nea.gov/grants/apply/OurTown/index.html>.

Airbrush

Airbrushing Made Easy with the Spectrum 2000 Color Changer, Iwata Airbrushes and AERO COLOR® Professional Colors

Many airbrushers find themselves in a situation where they require multiple colors for the development of their artwork. Some artists have many jars of paint or several different airbrushes to be able to switch from one color to another in almost a production environment, e.g., T-shirt painters, sign painters and custom automotive illustrators. A tool that's ideally suited to perform this function with ease is the **Spectrum 2000 Color Changer** from **Silentaire Technology**. <http://www.silentaire.com/silentaire/spectrum.asp>.



With this equipment you can use up to nine different colors simultaneously without manually changing jars of color or requiring an array of airbrushes. You can simply dial your colors at your

fingertips. The Spectrum 2000 is a pressurized system that allows you to do numerous special effects such as splattering or squirting the paint—with a limited amount of clogging. A dial enables you to quickly select the color you desire; and a unique feature is that you can mix adjacent colors by dialing halfway between the two. Since it's a pressurized system, it's a cinch to back flush from one color to another, thus eliminating any wasting of paint. Cleaning between color changes is easy—just dial to the jar containing cleaner to spray the airbrush clean.

The Spectrum 2000 can be powered by either a compressor or carbonic gas, which can be easily and quickly connected. Then it must be connected to a bottom feed or side feed airbrush that has back seals, such as the **Iwata HP-BC Plus**. http://www.iwata-medea.com/index.php/products/hp_bc_plus.

The 2000 is convenient to transport for on-site usage and will spray virtually any paint that can be reduced to the consistency of milk. Because the paint is under pressure, there is less overspray. Another feature is that you can spray in all directions, as well as upside down. For those working in the cake decorating/culinary arts industry, all the components of the Color Changer are FDA-approved.

An ideal airbrush paint to use with this tool is **AERO COLOR® Professional** by **Schmincke**. This is a high quality light—resistant (colorfast) paint

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developed specifically for airbrush technique, but also can be used through technical pens and with paint brushes. A unique feature of AERO COLOR paints is that they have a pleasant odor and they adhere particularly well to all types of papers and cardboards as well as non-absorbent surfaces such as film, hard plastic, canvas and (prepared) metal. Colors are easy to mask, are excellent for graphic design, dry semi-mat, are water-resistant and are easy to reproduce for illustration. Because they come ready to use, they don't require diluting; but, if

required, they can be diluted with **AERO MEDIUM** or water.

Choose from 36 brilliant colors as well as 12 extraordinary special effect colors. One thing to remember is that these paints become viscous after being stored, but a quick shake relieves them for spraying. AERO COLOR® Professional colors come in 30ml jars and some are also available in 250 and 1000ml jars. See your retailer and visit <http://www.schmincke.de/produkte/airbrushfarben/aero-color-professional.html?L=1>.

ArtPourri

Art Donated – The artist Christo has presented the National Gallery of Art with two original preparatory collages for *Over the River*, a project for the Arkansas River in Colorado that Christo developed with his late wife and collaborator Jeanne-Claude. The works date from 2010 and were given in honor of the official approval of the project by the Dept. of the Interior's Bureau of Land Management. These gifts join four other preparatory works on paper (collages and drawings) from the project on view in the lobby of the East Building Auditorium through Jan. 23.

Grants Announced – The Arts Writers Grant Program has announced the recipients of its 2011 grant cycle. A total of \$565,000 has been awarded to 23

writers representing 20 projects. Ranging from \$8,000 to \$50,000 in four categories—articles, blogs, books and short-form writing—these grants support projects addressing both general and specialized art audiences, from scholarly studies to self-published blogs. www.artswriters.org.

Auction News – Swann Galleries' recent American/Contemporary Art auction resulted in new records and strong prices all around. The top lot of Robert Gwathmey's *Prologue II*, 1962, a large oil on canvas, sold for \$72,000; Wayne Thiebaud's *Blighted Area*, circa 1955, brought \$45,600, the top lot among the Contemporary Art. — **Sotheby's** sale of American Paintings, Drawings and Sculpture totaled \$24.6 million, with a group of four paintings of Native Americans by George Catlin bringing \$4.6 million. — **Christie's** sale of Important American Paintings, Drawings and Sculpture was led by Oscar Bluemner's *Illusion of a Prairie, New Jersey*, which set a world auction record for the artist of over \$5.3 million; and Frederic Edwin Church's Maine landscape, *Twilight*, achieved a robust \$3.2 million.

Fellows Named — United States Artists is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to investing in America's artists and to illuminating the value of artists to society. Through the USA Fellows program, every year they honor 50 of

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America's finest artists with fellowship awards of \$50,000 each. The new USA Fellows for 2011 represent some of the most innovative and diverse creative talents in the country in the categories of Architecture & Design, Dance, Media, Crafts & Traditional Arts, Theater Arts, Visual Arts, Literature and Music. See <http://www.usafellows.org/fellows>.

Art Show a Success – The 10th edition of Art Basel Miami Beach closed on Dec. 4 with many galleries reporting strong sales. More than 260 international galleries from 30 countries exhibited works by over 2,000 artists, and the show attracted a record 50,000 visitors.

Significant Donation Reported – The Miami Art Museum has reported that local business leader Jorge M. Pérez has

increased his contribution to the new Museum Park facility to \$35 million, including a gift of contemporary Latin American art valued at \$15 million. In recognition of Mr. Pérez's generosity and commitment, the board voted to change the name of the museum to the Jorge M. Pérez Art Museum of Miami-Dade County.

Readers' Choose Favorites – www.beyondtheperf.com has announced the winners of the Readers' Picks 2011 Poll of favorite USPS stamps for 2011. The winner is *Owney the Postal Dog*, followed by *Civil War*, *Edward Hopper*, *Garden of Love* and *U. S. Merchant Marine*.

New Lunar Year Stamp – The U.S. Postal Service is celebrating the 2012 Lunar New Year with the *Year of the Dragon* Forever stamp, the fifth stamp in this series. The illustration, based on a photo by illustrator Kam Mak, was originally created using oil paints on panel. Combining Mak's artwork with two elements from the previous series of **Lunar New Year** stamps — Clarence



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Lee's intricate paper-cut design of a dragon and the Chinese character for "Dragon," drawn in grass-style calligraphy by Lau Bun — art director Ethel Kessler has created a culturally rich stamp design that celebrates the diversity of the American experience.

New Grants Awarded – The National Endowment has announced 823 grants totaling \$21.5 million in the **Art Works** category, the agency's principal support category for nonprofit organizations. The grants will support commissions and artists residencies; exhibitions, tours and festivals; lifelong learning in the arts; and increasing community livability through the arts. Projects will be supported in 47 states, D.C. and Puerto Rico. Forty \$25,000 **Creative Writing Fellowships** have been awarded to fellows from 20 states and D.C.; and 162 **Challenge America Fast-Track** grants totaling \$1,620,000 will be awarded to organizations in 46 states, D.C. and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

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