

Artist Statement – John Ursillo

It's All About the Light! The love of light is my inspiration and informs all the subjects I choose.

I work primarily in colored pencil on a variety of surfaces and in widely different techniques from 'tight' to 'loose' yet always with a proclivity toward realism. For me there is no perfect or 'always' surface or method; which I choose for a particular project depends - on the subject matter, the effect or texture I want and sometimes just what I *feel* will work. One reviewing author wrote of my work - "the subject matter and composition always leaves the viewer with a visual mystery - what's behind the door or just out of the field of view?" When I conceive an idea or plan a composition I *do* attempt a bit of mystery to keep the viewer engaged in the 'story'. I hold that once the obvious subject has been taken in there should always be something left suggested rather than stated to help the viewer get beyond the *what* of the piece to the *why*.

But I always seem to be pushing the technical envelope of my medium. A frequent comment made by gallery viewers of these paintings is, "I can't believe that's colored pencil! How did he *do* that?" I like explaining.

My works rely on strong composition and design, contrasts, and subtle atmospheric perspective techniques learned from my mentors and study. Art critic Brian Sherwin recently commented on my work, stating, "John Ursillo's colored pencil pieces are absolutely brilliant. Every colored pencil piece I've observed is strengthened by John's ability to capture light and texture." Sherwin Added, "John Ursillo explores what many describe as a difficult medium with apparent ease... a true master."

The range of subject matter in my work has been rather broad: still life, landscapes, the American Civil War, seascapes, ships, mountains, deserts, people...almost every genre one can put on a surface. Maybe one day I'll get so passionate about some one subject that I will paint nothing else. But I hope not...there's just too much out there given to us to work with.

Artist Bio

John Ursillo is an award-winning Whidbey Island Artist and popular instructor. He is a Life and Signature Member of the Colored Pencil Society of America (National and Seattle Area Chapter), and active in the American Society of Marine Artists (ASMA), Artists of South Whidbey, and the Santa Clarita (California) Artists' Association (Founding Member and Past President).

He began his art career at the age of eleven with three years of private study in various art media under Laura Grande, the prominent Massachusetts pastel artist. Since then he has worked continuously, furthering his art education with classes, workshops, seminars, and much self-study. His formal education was in chemical engineering and he continues to pursue life-long interests in the science and history of art and the craft of painting. He believes the combined knowledge gained produces a final product that has been called "authentic" by reviewers.

Ursillo is the developer of an advanced colored pencil technique called "Solvent Enhancement" which he teaches and which will be published in "CP (Colored Pencil) Magazine" in 2014.

In December, 2013 John was featured in Ann Kullberg's new book "Colored Pencil Treasures from Around the Globe, Volume 2", available from Amazon.com or at annkullberg.com.

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