

NOVEMBER

November 2020 | Vol. 29, No. 3 | ISSN 1058-5303

30
Years
1990-2020

CPSA
Colored Pencil Society of America

November 2020

Windows to the Soul
**Capturing the Glow—
An Undercover Story**
Painting the Shape of It
**Get Creative with Your
Creative Business:
How to Go Virtual**
**Drawn to the Wild—
Nature's Inspiration**

Detail of *Undercurrents* (26 x 39) Jesse Lane, CPSA (TX)

Confessions of an OCD Colored Pencil Hoarder

Tina Gagnon (NH) • CPSA Member

Pencil storage is one problem...pencil organization is another issue. Having my first colored pencil set was so nice. I flipped open the top and there were all my little colored pencil friends lined up, waiting for me to pick one of them. As I acquired more, and more—OK, let's cut to the chase, I am now up over 1,551 pencils! How do I keep track of all of them? How do I find the exact right color when I need it without making it an all-day project?

I tried keeping them neatly in their original manufactured tins, but that proved to be cumbersome. I tried using mason jars and dividing up by color hues; but that took up way too much space (over 50 jars), plus I had to fish for any pencil less than half its original size.

Having previously come from the printing industry, I have always been enamored with the old printers' type-tray cabinets. What if I found one of those and laid out each pencil set in a different drawer . . . hmmm? Shopping around, an intact antique printers' cabinet was sadly found to be way too cost prohibitive. Back to the drawing board.

Handy husband to the rescue

This is where my handy husband, Steve, comes in. He is in engineering by day, and a wood worker hobbyist on nights and weekends. He also comes from a long line of French-Canadian carpenters, and god bless him, he will make anything that I dream up. What a good sport.

So, batting my eyelashes, I approached him about my latest idea. We talked it through and came up with a plan—a colored pencil bureau. It would be 43 inches wide, 25 inches tall, and 18 inches deep with six drawers. In each drawer, the bottom would be able to hold two rows of pencils going across. Two sliding trays would be in each drawer, thus doubling the capacity of the pencil storage.

Knowing that I would want to be able to put my pencils back—in order, of course—after each use (have you noticed a little OCD yet?), how would I keep them from rolling together



when I took one out? I liked how pencil tins come with grooved holders in them to keep the pencils separate from each other. How could we achieve that in our drawers?

Hubby to the rescue, he used his router to individually cut grooves for each of the pencils to sit in. Well, he rued the day that he came up with that thought! Which, by the way, is how I know that I have 1,551 pencils—that's how many grooves he routed. He thoughtfully even routed one tray in a straight channel to hold art sticks.

After assembling and finishing, I became the proud owner of a custom colored pencil bureau. Now the really fun part—moving the little fellas into their new home. I organized the pencils by their brands and their original order, marking each groove with the name or number of the pencil so I could easily find or replace them during use. Not to mention, knowing which ones have gone AWOL by rolling under furniture when I was not looking.



Color matching and pencil finding

But now, how do I find what hue I want, and then find that particular pencil in amongst all the rest?

When I worked in the print shop, we had what was called a Pantone Matching Book, AKA "The PMS Book." That's what I would do—make my own matching guide. I typed out, in columns, the name and number of each pencil that I owned, divided by their individual brand. Next to each name was a half-inch blank square. After printing out all the columns, I carefully colored in each square with its corresponding color. Boy, am I feeling hubby's pain in routing out each groove.

Cutting the columns apart, I made sure that the edge of the boxes was trimmed right to the edge of the color. Punching





a hole in the top corner and attaching a ring, I now had my chart. If I run the edges of the color samples against my reference materials, I can now match colors perfectly, then read the name of the pencil and find it in my bureau quickly.

Incidentally, the bureau matches a suite of custom furniture that hubby has made for me; a flat file/matting table, and two taborets with

drawers, all for my magnificent studio. This studio, which was our daughter's childhood bedroom, was remodeled by hubby a few years back, down to the studs and customized just for little ole me. I am truly blessed with the greatest, most supportive husband in the world.

(Any ideas on how to tell him I need another bureau . . . ?)

More about Tina Gagnon

In spite of my dream of being an artist, it was instilled in me while growing up to work in a conventional job setting. The compromise was to go into the graphic arts industry. After a couple of decades working in that profession, advancements in technology made what I did for a living vanish. Retiring early, I turned to my first love—being an artist. I took classes in different mediums, always searching for my niche. I found it in a drawer of my desk, a set of colored pencils I had gotten when I was young. At the time, there weren't any avenues to learn this medium. So, applying a lesson from my youth as a 4-H member—"Learn by Doing"—I taught myself techniques in colored pencil. During the year I can be found with my mobile art studio/gallery at various New England art shows and festivals. See more of my work at www.TinaGagnon.com



We, Wee, Oui, Tina Gagnon