

C. Schuld StudioNews

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How long did it take you to do that?

This is a question I'm often asked that is loaded with a wide variety of meanings. Sometimes I answer with my age because I really believe it has taken my lifetime to achieve the level I am currently at in my work. But that can come across as being secretive, or worse, smart-mouthed. For my painting "Summer Storm Front" (30 x 40" acrylic on canvas) I worked for several work sessions each day over a three day time period. Also, before that first brush stroke happened I did a value study and a small watercolor to work out the color palette.

This painting needed multiple layers to build up the storm and has a fine repetitive texture in the water area. One person hearing this answer said "I couldn't do that in three YEARS time". But I'm sometimes afraid I'll hear "And you're asking how much for only three days work?!?" Like I said – it's a loaded question.



On this other painting, "Passage" (30 x 48" acrylic on canvas), I worked over a week on it and spent long hours because every brush stroke required attention to its shape, color value and direction so the waves would flow evenly and in the diagonal direction I wanted. There was also quite a lot of work to mix blues from cold to warm to help show the water swells and valleys. It was a more complex piece.

I think, overall, the general public puts a great deal of value in an artwork having taken a long time to do. Sometimes, though, all the elements needed to create (time, energy, inspiration, etc) all come together in a golden way and the work gets done pretty easily. At other times it is just truly a lot of hard-core discipline to get to work and create the piece through sweat equity.

I once sold a watercolor for very little, because I had been able to dash it off so quickly. I figured I'd just paint it again. I never was able to redo that painting and make it look fresh like the first one.

Because the time element, therefore, is sometimes such a varied entity I price my work by square inch. This makes a pretty widely varied pay scale when the going is slow vs "dashed off". It does, however, simplify things. Emotional pricing is not a good idea in reality.

Until next time – keep your paint wet and your brushes clean.

Charlotte

PS. Concerning inspiration as a work motivator, a favorite quote by the artist Chuck Close "Inspiration is for beginners-the rest of us just get to work" has taught me a good lesson. I've gotten to the point where I've learned I don't need to feel inspired to start painting. Going to work in my studio starts the creative process flowing and inspiration follows quickly. The truth also is that I lose track of time when painting so the time element of my work isn't a big issue. It took how long it took- another answer-but definitely snarky sounding!