

# ART MAKERS

## biARTisan

It's not politics. It's pastel.

### Great Things Happen When Artists Collaborate

by Sabrina Hill

If you have tuned into Cable news or read a newspaper lately, you may have been bombarded with partisan political jibber-jabber. And you may be thinking, "Can't we just all get along?"

Frustrated by the state of discourse on social media, artist and gallery owner Lisa Ober was having this very thought when she received a Facebook friend request from artist Rob Weinblatt. A friendship developed over Facebook, then text messages and emails. A phone consultation about building a website for Rob found the two artists finding common ground in pastel painting. And a spark of an idea began to form.

Rob is primarily a contemporary impressionist landscape painter. Lisa focuses on stylized, pho-

to-realistic portraits and still lifes. Their styles are distinct and very different. Both artists were looking for something a little different in their art. What if they could share their painting tips with each other?

They decided to try a painting exchange. The rules were simple—Lisa would send five small paintings with minimal work and few details. Rob would add some details and develop the painting, then return it to Lisa for completion. At the same time, Rob would send five small paintings to Lisa that he had started. She would add midtones and details then return them to Rob for completion.

The spark turned into a flame. Forty paintings have flown from New Mexico to Missouri and back. The paintings were created from different materials, featured different approaches, used different philosophies, and incorporated different textures and color choices. The most amazing thing is that there was no dominant artist—it was as if a third artist was born. Lisa and Rob each adapted their own styles to the art that came in, like presents from the other artist.

The collaborative process was exhilarating and addictive. And it was so effective that Lisa and Rob decided to take it to a new level. In August 2018 the **BiARTisan Project** opened its virtual doors to the art community. The project concept, in partnership with the non-profit *Heartland Art Club*, (a 501(c)3) is simple: (1) find a fellow artist, (2) agree to a painting exchange, (3) register on the BiARTisan website, (4) set some rules for yourselves, send paintings back and forth, then learn, create, and enjoy! When you have some finished pieces, submit your best collab-



Lisa Ober



Head Over Heels  
by Lisa Ober  
Pastel  
19 X 27

orative work to the exhibition. All pieces will be featured on the website and a juried show will be held at OA Gallery in Kirkwood, Missouri.

Lisa and Rob's tips for selecting an art partner:

- **Consider someone with a different style than your own.**
- **Set ground rules about materials, subject matter and size**
- **Allow wiggle room for the creative process (not too many rules)**

### A Mentor and Friend

I met Lisa Ober when I took her three-day still life painting class through the Pastel Society of Southern California. We became instant BFF's. She is an amazing artist, but she is an even better teacher. She's funny as all hell, tells great stories, and loves barbeque ribs. We made pigs of ourselves at a local rib place in Redondo Beach.

She is a serious, serious artist. Her portraits are beautiful. John Singer Sargent is famous for saying, "a portrait is a painting with something wrong with the mouth." Not Lisa's. They are spot-on, as is evident in one of her most recent commissions for



Rob Weinblatt

Ozzy Osbourne (yes, I am friends with the artist who painted Ozzy Osbourne.) As a teacher, she combines expertise with encouragement but not false

flattery, helping to grow and encourage artists and positively impact the art world. I watched her work a room full of very talented artists/students, offering commentary and critique on each one's work. No matter their skill level, every student had improved by the end

of the class, and every painting had its own personal style. As a gallery owner, Lisa has brought together a diverse group of artists and styles that appeal to both the serious and casual collector. Through her gallery and her own workshops, she offers opportunities for growth and expansive learning to artists around the country.

Ron Weinblatt is also a serious painter. He studied fine art and received a BFA from Queens College in New York City. After a long and lucrative career in editorial hair and makeup in the fashion industry, he felt the pull of his art background and moved to New Mexico to focus on painting. He has immersed himself in landscape painting in the land of breathtaking vistas and light. Rob a one of a select group of pastel artists invited to represent a maker of luscious handmade pastels, Unison Colour.



Ozzy Osbourne by Lisa Ober

One of the reasons I registered for the **BiArtisan Project**, and why I am encouraging other artists to do the same, is the impact that this approach has had for Rob and Lisa. If this technique can create artistic growth for these gifted artists, it's worth trying it! I have registered with Susan Goodmundson, and we are planning our piece this fall. We have a stack of sanded paper and a box of pastels ready to go!

For info go to [www.biartisan.com](http://www.biartisan.com)



Amarillo  
by Rob Weinblatt  
Pastel



# ART SCHOOL

## Try BiARTisan Painting and Make Beautiful Art with a Buddy!

by Lisa Ober with Rob Weinblatt

The **BiARTisan Project\*** presents a unique opportunity to collaborate with another artist to create one piece of artwork. Lisa Ober and Rob Weinblatt have developed the project to encourage the trading of ideas, techniques, and material skills.

On the next three pages, Lisa and Rob demonstrate how their process looked. The best result from working together was how much each learned about making art. As Lisa revealed, "It was not competitive but collaborative."

PSWC would like to encourage you to participate in this project and learn from this process. Find a partner, register, and start seeing art from a BiARTisan perspective!

To register for the process go to the [website](#) and click "register" to walk through the steps. Let us know how you are proceeding! Post your collaborations on PSWC's Facebook page to show us your progress and process. Then plan your trip to Missouri to see your selected works in the show!

Here's how their art looks in the process...



From this loose beginning...

...to finished painting



...to details emerging...



*\*Biartisan is a special project and event enthusiastically hosted by Heartland Art Club and The Academy of Nature and Wildlife Arts as a unique educational opportunity for artists to build bridges across philosophical boundaries and technical challenges, and to create new solutions and artistic opportunities by learning from each other.*

*Pastel artists collaborate to develop an understanding of multiple viewpoints and perspectives while broadening their artistic experience and growing from exposure to new techniques, styles, subject matter, and approaches.*

*Heartland Art Club and The Academy of Nature and Wildlife Arts are 501(c)3 organizations incorporated in the state of Missouri. Your donation may be tax deductible. Please contact your tax advisor.*



1

## Painting One



### Step 1-Rob

Rob started this painting with an acrylic ink wash, waiting for the surprise of what the wash revealed to him. He followed with hard pastels (Rembrandt and Prismacolor Nu Pastels) so as not to fill the paper tooth. Finally, he indicated the location of the darker shadows as well as the light areas using some Unison and Terry Ludwig pastels.

#### MATERIALS:

**Mounted Uart Sanded Pastel Paper, 400 GRIT 12 X 9**



### Step 2-Lisa

Lisa responded to Rob's palette and composition by building a variety of middle values to add elements to the painting. Intending to lead the eye from the left of the painting toward the path that leads around the tree mass on the left, Lisa began building the left foreground by adding bushy branches to catch the light, helping to "point" the viewer to the lighter path in order to lead the eye through the painting. Lisa built toward the highlights in selected areas and added more definition to tree trunks and branches. Lisa used Unison, Sennelier, Blue Earth, and Terry Ludwig pastels.



### Step 3- Rob

Rob softened the shadow side the front left tree area helping to add a sense of volume to the tree as well as variation to the painting. He added lighter tree trunks and branches and defined the areas where sky peeks through the foliage. He placed more vivid color at the entry point of the painting in the lower left shadow section, giving the painting a more colorful and inventive feel. He used Unison, Mount Vision, Schmincke, Sennelier, and Terry Ludwig pastels.

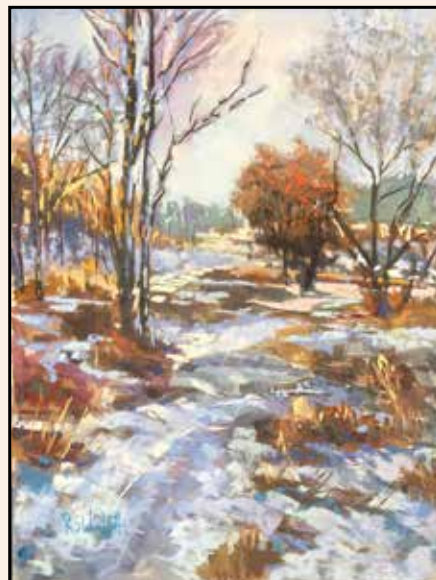


## Painting Two



### Step 1-Lisa

Lisa started the painting with an acrylic ink sketch to establish the composition, color palette, and major elements. She then indicated snowy pathways with cool blues, purples, and grays to convey a sense of direction for the eye to travel (and rest).



### Step 2-Rob

Rob began by establishing the sky, keeping the cool temperature in order to retain the complementary color palette (warm oranges and reds against the cool purples and blues). Pops of more vivid colors (like the blue-green dabs) were interspersed throughout the painting, bold strokes were placed for dry grasses, and softer leaves were added, making for texture variation within the painting.

### MATERIALS:

Mounted Uart Sanded Pastel Paper, 400 GRIT 16 X 12



Pale yellow horizontal strokes were placed near the focal point of the painting, and middle values were developed, laying the important ground work for highlights and finishing touches. Girault, Unison, Mount Vision, Sennelier, Terry Ludwig, and Diane Townsend pastels were used.

### Step 3-Lisa

Lisa continued building toward the highlights throughout the painting. She softened the trees in the background to create a sense of distance. Lisa added more variation in the strokes she applied, paying particular attention to the warm orange tree. Around the snowy pathway, more directional marks were made within the grasses to lead the eye through the painting. Additional leaves were added to soften the trees with the intent of keeping the viewer's eyes near the center of the painting. Lisa used Diane Townsend, Unison, Sennelier, Schmincke, Mount Vision, and Unison pastels.

## 3

## Painting Three

**Step 1-Lisa**

Lisa began with a wet in wet ink wash, sketching the composition with the inked brush to provide just enough information to establish a scene but to leave plenty of freedom for color palette, mood, and depth. No pastels were used for this stage.

**MATERIALS:**

**Mounted Uart Sanded Pastel Paper, 400 GRIT 9 X 12**

**Step 2-Rob**

Rob began by shaping the trees in the distance, creating interesting shapes without fussing. He established the value and temperature (cool) for the large darker mass of trees on the right side of the painting, a great anchor for the eye against the lighter and sunnier background. Rob's color palette included lots of lovely lavender for the ground shadows to pair with the warm yellows in the areas where light was hitting the path. Rob used Unison, Sennelier, Girault, and Mount Vision pastels.

**Step 3-Lisa**

Taking her palette cues from Rob, Lisa maintained the cool foreground and warm and diffuse background. She broke up some of the large strokes in the pathway, keeping their horizontal movement. Lisa continued to build toward the highlights in the background, being careful to keep the marks soft to place them in the distance. She further defined the dark mass of trees and balanced that with darker grasses on the lower left. Lisa finished the painting by focusing most of the more detailed pastel marks around the bend of the path. Lisa used Prismacolor Nu Pastels, Unison, Terry Ludwig, Mungyo Gallery, and Sennelier pastels.