

Oils on Watercolor Paper

By Caroline Jasper

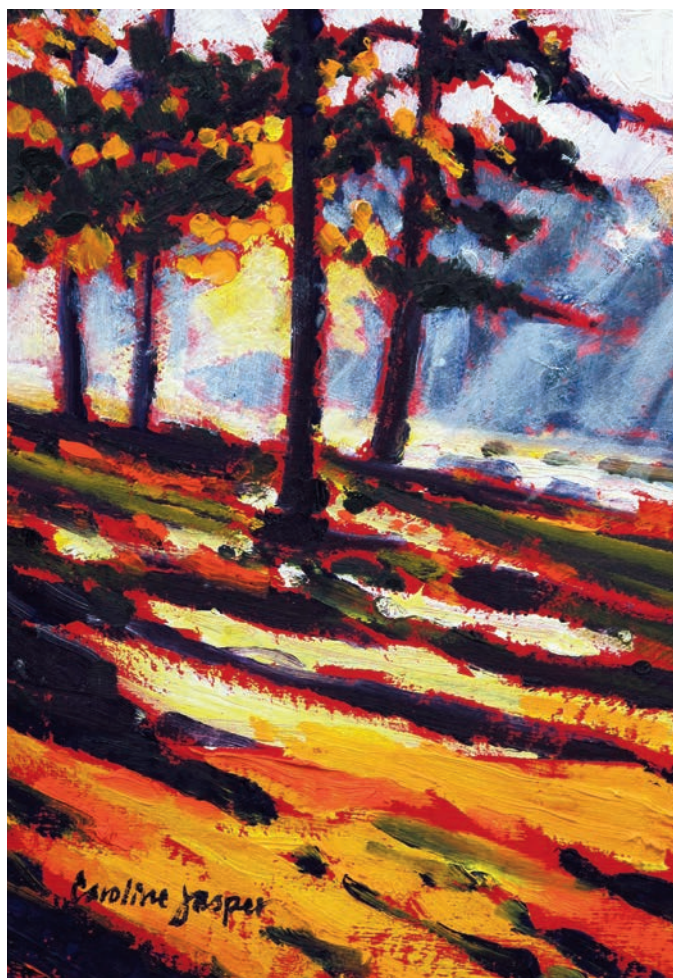
I paint oils on watercolor paper (unexpected words from an artist who works in traditional oil paint). Oil painters generally steer clear of paper substrates in favor of canvas, linen or board, which are better suited for oils.

My use of watercolor paper is specialized. As a standard practice, I paint several small oil studies of images planned for larger paintings on stretched canvas or linen. Strathmore® 500 Series Gemini 300 lb. cold press watercolor paper is ideal for this purpose. On a small scale (5" x 7"), the paper is rigid and not prone to "bends." I like its thickness, stiffness and texture.

Because watercolor paper is not suitable for oil paint it must be prepped to protect it from the oils. I apply two coats of standard white acrylic gesso on the front surface (drying in between) and one coat on the back. Both seal the surface and counterbalance potential warping which is common in surfaces coated only on the front side.



Laze, 7" x 5" oil on paper
Strathmore 500 Series Gemini Watercolor



Light Down Petite, 5" x 7" oil on paper
Strathmore 500 Series Gemini Watercolor

The paper is good to go at that point. However, I like to paint on color ground. So, my final step is a coat of color gesso, usually red. The added layers of gesso further stiffen the watercolor paper.



Glint, 7" x 5" oil on paper
Strathmore® 500 Series Gemini Watercolor

I usually prepare a full sheet of 22" x 30" Gemini 300 lb. as described above, then cut it into rectangles a little larger than 5" x 7". At a smaller size, stiffness is proportionately increased, making the paper feel more like lightweight board. Next, I attach each small study paper to a stiff piece of cardboard backing (roughly 8" x 10") using masking tape (covering about 1/8" around the edge). Once attached to a stiff backing, it can stand on an easel.

I like the idea of working on paper for making studies. The best way to get the most from studies is to not take them too seriously. I treat a study as "no fault" work... something I don't expect to keep. While painting a study, I think of it as just a quick sketch; color notes for the big painting to follow. Using stretched canvas or board for painting studies makes them seem too official, too important. On canvas I start to think of it as a finished painting instead of a study, defeating my purpose. Painting a study on paper rather than canvas helps me to stay loose.

Taking a sketching approach, I use the little studies for exploring compositional options and experimenting with various color treatments. Through painting the studies, I become more resolute about how to approach the final work. Painting on canvas thus begins with increased confidence. I've already toyed with approaches and discovered some good-to-know things about the image that I would not have otherwise stumbled upon. Things that go wrong in a study are no big deal. Those same missteps can subsequently be avoided in the big painting. Studies lead to a stronger painting.

I throw away many studies. Once they've served their purpose, I have no further need for them. Some of the studies are worth keeping. I go back to the favorites and add finishing touches, turning the studies into little finished paintings. These little gems eventually get matted (due to painting on paper) and packaged to become part of my "Little Moments of Light Series." Since the watercolor paper was properly prepared with gesso, these former studies may in the end qualify as finished paintings.



Fortune
67" x 55" oil on canvas

About the Artist

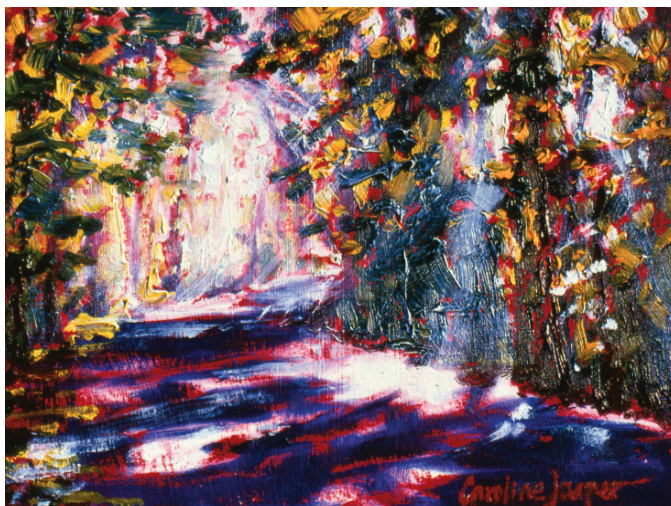


Contemporary Impressionist Caroline Jasper's paintings are "always about the light," says the artist. "It can dramatize the most ordinary places." Red is her trademark. Each of her colorful landscape and water scenes begins on red ground, which serves to invigorate visual interaction against loosely applied color marks.

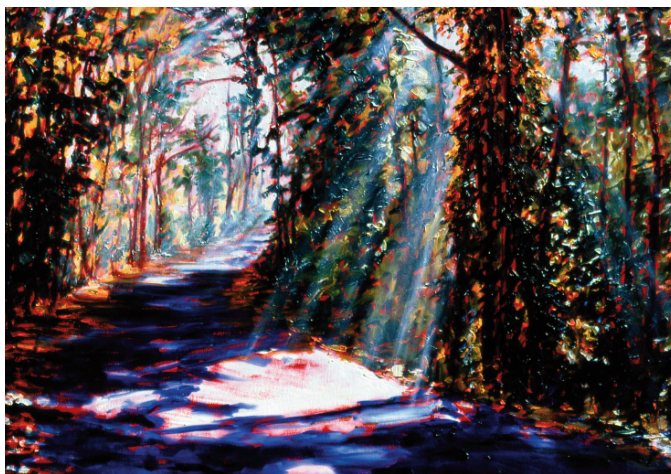
Paintings by the critically acclaimed artist have been in numerous solo and group exhibitions at museums and galleries throughout the United States. Jasper's honors include Best of Show in the 70th Annual Cumberland Valley Artists Exhibition, Washington County Museum of Fine Arts; Best of Show in the Havre de Grace Arts Commission International Juried Exhibition; Cover Award, *North Light Magazine*; and York Art Association's Rottler Award for Excellence in the Visual Arts, York, PA. Her paintings are held in private, public, and corporate collections internationally.

Author of "Powercolor - Master Color Concepts for All Media," Watson-Guption Publications; "Painters' Guide and Color Manual-Strategies for All Media," Caroline Jasper Studio Publications; and DVDs: "Color Moves: Painting Water With Oils, Landscape Oil Painting on Red Ground, and Dramatic Depth in Painting." Jasper's works and words also appear in North Light Publishers' book by Sean Dye, "Painting with Water-Soluble Oils." She has been featured in periodicals such as *Focus Santa Fe*, *North Light*, *The Artist's Magazine*, *Décor*, and *American Artist Magazine*, including her article, "I See Red" in the Nov. 2002 issue.

Caroline Jasper has an MFA from the Maryland Institute College of Art, Baltimore and is a member of the



Through, 7" x 5" oil on paper
Strathmore 500® Series Gemini Watercolor



Lumintice
32" x 24" oil on canvas

American Impressionists Society. During over thirty years of teaching experience Jasper has been high school art department chair, Maryland College of Art and Design Admissions Advisory Board member, exhibition juror, gallery and college lecturer. She currently teaches at art workshop venues nationwide. Galleries in Arkansas, Florida and Texas represent her work.

Featured Product

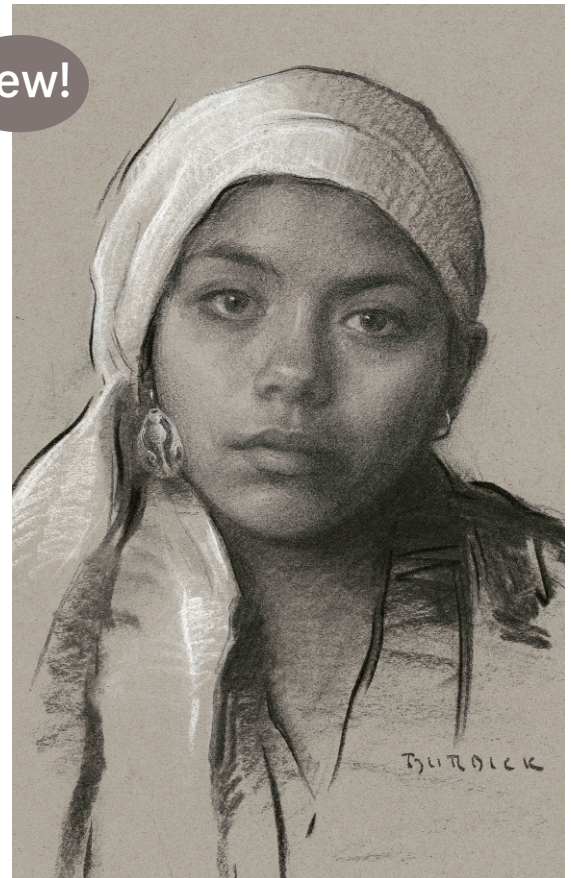
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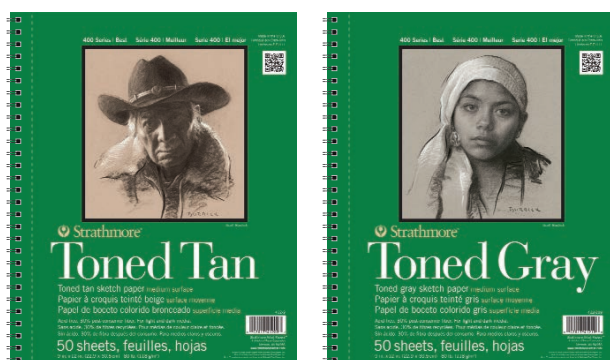


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Questions From Our Website

On your website, it says that Strathmore's new Toned Sketch paper has "kraft and bark fiber inclusions." What are fiber inclusions?

Fiber inclusions are fibers added to paper for the sole purpose of creating a decorative or visual effect. Our new Toned Sketch papers incorporate the natural colors of two different types of inclusions – kraft fibers and plant material. The result is a soft, natural look compared to traditional art papers, such as pastel papers, which typically use dyed rayon fibers.



Kraft fiber is created from a specific pulp-making process that uses wood chips and results in very strong papers. Most cardboard boxes and grocery bags are manufactured from kraft fibers. In our case, we use a small amount of acid-free kraft fibers to create visual interest.

The unbleached kraft fibers in our Toned Sketch appear as fine strands throughout the paper and feature the kraft's natural color which is brown or tan. You will also see random patterns of small flecks throughout the paper. This visual effect is created with plant materials (usually waste from another process) such as tree bark. **For more information on new Toned Sketch paper, visit strathmoreartist.com**

What does Smyth-sewn mean as it relates to hardbound sketchbooks?

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Smyth-sewn binding is associated with durability and quality, and is able to stand up to years of wear and tear. This binding method is ideal for sketchbooks and journals since the pages lay flat.



Strathmore's Hardbound Sketchbooks and new Hardbound Art Journals feature Smyth-sewn binding.



For more information on new Hardbound Art Journals, visit strathmoreartist.com