

To the "Art" of the Matter

Spring-Summer 2009 Newsletter

An Economic Stimulus Package for Our Artists

With the recent state of the economy, we all seem to be hearing the same glum news – along with some occasional encouraging talk of Economic Bail-Outs & Stimulus Packages to help things improve.

One thing we do like is the concept of involving the American public, of enlisting the help & support of everyone who has something positive to offer. We think that this notion could become positively contagious: if everyone pitches in, tremendous change can happen. After all, tall mountains are climbed not in huge single leaps but one step at a time.

We at Color Simulation Service began thinking about what we could do; how we could play a part? What we determined was that we could help those in very small businesses (so small that they are almost invisible at times): our artists ... Yes ... You. We know how hard artist work to create & market their work; we also know that it becomes harder to make a profit when the costs of everything seems to be increasing. Here are four things we decided to do to help out:

1. REDUCED COST of SHIPPING & HANDLING: We have decreased **your** costs of shipping & handling. We've revised our shipping & handling table & lowered the prices you will pay to have products shipped to you.

2. FROZEN OUR 2008 PRICES THROUGH OCTOBER 2009: In response to the yearly price increases for "raw materials" – paper, ink, envelopes ... we typically increase our prices to our customers in order to maintain our same profit margin. This year we decided to say "no" to price increases & have frozen our prices from Oct. 2008 through Oct. 2009. So you won't pay a penny more for the same fine art reproduction services you've always gotten.

3. ELIMINATED PRICE INCREASE for NOTE CARDS PRINTED between HALLOWEEN & CHRISTMAS:

This policy of charging more for note cards during the "Holiday Rush" period was created to encourage artists

to get their holiday cards in earlier...rather than trying to process so many orders during the last three months of the year. When we looked back at the pattern of orders, we discovered that--regardless of the price increase--artists ordered holiday note cards after Halloween anyway. So we did away with the increased seasonal pricing. This means that you can order note cards at the same low prices throughout the year.

4. ONE SETUP FEE FOR PRINTS REGARDLESS OF THE SIZE OF THE PRINTS: We are now offering one set up fee of \$35.00 regardless of the size prints you intend to order. And it's still only \$10.00 more if you would like to have a "proof" to approve before we print your order. That's a nice savings from the previous \$60.00 for a set-up fee with proof on larger prints.

These steps should greatly assist you in keeping your profits consistent & perhaps in even increasing them.

While we don't have the "Trillions" of dollars that the government has to work with, we are trying--in our own way--to make it easier for our small business artists to continue to be creative & productive. Economic better times are coming (especially with everybody pitching in to improve things). We hope you too will adopt our positive attitude & do your share. We understand artists because we are artists. We will always do what we can to help. We are open to suggestions too...Got any good ideas? We'd like to hear them.

You Wanted A Variety of Note Card Sizes...We Responded

In the beginning we offered only 5x7 note cards because, nationally, they are the most popular greeting card size & most vendors have racks to accommodate 5x7 cards.

As time went by, our customers asked for *Letter Box* cards(4"x9¼"),

Quarter Fold cards (5½"x 4¼"), & *Square* cards (5¼"x5¼"). The result is that today you can choose between 4 different note card sizes – all at the same price. Furthermore, we've made buying bulk note cards cheaper by the dozen – literally – for both loose & cards in sealed bags.

Of course, we continue to offer clear boxes of "Same-Image" note cards (with as few as 5 & as many as 12 cards per box) & our popular boxes of "Assorted Image" note cards with a thumbnail insert showing all the images contained in the box.

We've gone to printing the note cards on a heavier, 80 lb stock, & we're using machinery to score the "fold" on the cards for a more professional appearance. As always, the price of our note cards includes the cost of envelopes.

Note cards can act as an ambassador, getting your name around & building your reputation as an artist. Here is a fictitious example based on a real-life story:

Artist Sue worked out a deal with a local manufacturer who sold products online. She created a special painting design for the front of a note card; inside she had printed the following:

"We hope you will enjoy these products made by authentic South Louisiana Cajuns. Thank you for your order." Then she added the Company's website.

Sue had stacks of these note cards printed & gave them to "Three Pigs" company to include in packages shipped all over the country. Why would Sue do something as generous as that...at her own expense?

Simple: Sue used their Thank You card to publicize her art. Her Cajun Culture painting was on the front of the card; and, on the backside of the card she had printed:

Sue Boudreaux
Cajun Art Gallery

Landscapes, Still Life, Commissions
www.SueBoudreauxCajunArt.com
1-800-123-4567

Sue tells us that her web-site activity & sales have increased considerably from this one inexpensive marketing endeavor; and her local gallery traffic

MARKETING IDEA



Color Simulation Service

Your home for fine art reproduction prints
& original art note cards
We don't just serve artists... We are artists!



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has increased considerably as well. She reports getting calls from tourists who visit the area, too. Sales of her paintings, prints & note cards have doubled in one year's time.

This is a "Win-Win" situation: The vendor gets to include a classy, custom, "Thank-You for Your Business" note card in every parcel they ship & Sue gets to introduce her art to people all over the country. At the cost of marketing these days, a couple of hundred note cards every month is a pretty economical way to get national publicity.

So what about you? Is there a company who manufactures or ships something from your local area that you could work with? Start with the yellow pages. Create a prototype so they can see exactly what you are proposing & contact their sales or marketing department. You may happily find a small gold mine in your own back yard. In this example, Sue & the manufacturer are fictitious for purposes of creating an example...your experience can be REAL!

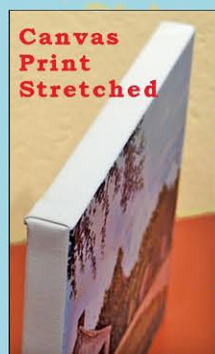
ON GICLÉE PRINTS & PROGRESS

In a remarkable progression between 2003 & 2009, Color Simulation Services has gone from being a small, boutique, hometown company, to being an internationally recognized producer of certified Fine Art Giclée Reproduction prints. Our dedication to capturing the detail & authentic coloration of the original painting in our giclée prints, has won us prominent museum and gallery placement -- as well as satisfied, established artist customers from as nearby as Thibodaux & New Orleans, to as far away as Jansenville, South Africa.

In the very beginning, the largest print size we offered was 8"x10". Now we print reproductions up to 40" x 60" on three different types of media: Canvas, Watercolor Paper, and UltraSmooth Fine Art (matte) Paper.

During 2008, we acquired three new printing machines which are not only cutting edge technology in terms of accuracy of reproduction -- but they also use color-fast, ultraviolet-light-resistant, pigment-based inks, which can last without fading for 108 to 200 years under normal indoor & environmental display conditions.

A most exciting, recently added feature for mounting of canvas prints: Stretched for framing, or Stretched in the nouveau-style "gallery-wrap," requiring no frame whatsoever. We have acquired the services of a local artisan who, for a very reasonable fee, does the stretching & we simply pass on his costs for doing so to you, without any mark-up on our part. And at no extra costs all stretched canvases are sprayed with a lacquer-mat finish which both assists in simulating the richness & depth of the highlights & shadows of the original, and in protecting the print surface.



Watercolor artists love our textured, cotton rag Watercolor Paper for its weight & its ability to replicate their originals such that it makes telling them apart from the originals difficult. And we also offer a heavyweight, ultrasmooth, velvety fine art (matte) paper suitable for reproductions from any type of original.

All prints come with a *Giclée Certificate of Authenticity*. A place is provided for the artist to sign. Printed information includes information the artist would like to furnish about both the image & themselves. Because the certificate assures the customer of the quality of materials, it has become a major sale-closer. They are elegantly printed on sepia-toned parchment paper.

COMING ATTRACTIONS on the WEB

The Internet has grown tremendously during the last 20 years & so have we. We are still growing. Here are some "COMING ATTRACTIONS" that will be of interest to our artists who are also Internet savvy:

1. We have just completed a re-organization of our entire web site so that visitors will find it easier to go right to the information they are seeking. We've provided all of our pricing & made our order forms "printable" to accommodate those who want to get started right away. Please check it out our progress to date:

www.prints-and-notecards.com

2. Presently, we are working on creating "interactive" forms so that customers can fill out their order forms by typing them on the web & sending them to us electronically.

3. Soon there will be complete instructions on "uploading" your digital files of your art directly to us. For those of you who can adequately photograph or scan their art, there will be no need to send us the originals...just upload your digitals. This feature will be especially handy for meeting deadlines & for saving on the cost of shipping originals!

4. VIDEO DEMONSTRATIONS OF PRODUCTS on the web: Soon, when visiting our website, you will be able to view short movies explaining & depicting various aspects of our product line. These movie clips will be used to explain or show (for example) what an "assorted" box of note cards with a thumb nail insert might look like. Or what the differences are between Canvas on foam board, stretched canvas & Gallery wrap canvas. The average customer will not need any special software to view these movies nor, will they leave our web site to view them.

TO THINE OWN SELF BE TRUE...

By Dan Junot, LPC - retired -Licensed Mental Health Professional #1250, State of Louisiana

In "Hamlet" is this line: "This above all: to thine own self be true..."

Before retiring to paint, I was a psychotherapist. A common thread surfaced: People would be better off if they took charge of their lives & were responsible for outcomes. People need to set realistic, measurable goals, based on their talents & abilities & pursue them like their life depended on it.

Younger clients didn't appraise their own abilities realistically, or set any life-goals. Older clients regretted that they had wasted opportunities by not making the effort or by being negatively influenced by other's. That's them; what about you? It's YOUR life, talents & abilities; what are you DOING with them?

For those who subscribe to the Bible's teachings, Jesus said, "To whom much is given much will be required." If you claim God as your inspiration, you can expect to stand before Him & answer, "What did you do with what I gave you?" The biblical admonition to make use of the talents you have been given does not seem to be "conditional." In other words: If you have talents you must use them...or answer for not doing so...later.

It is disheartening--as a parent of a Down Syndrome child--to see artists throw away the talents, skills, & brainpower that no money can buy for my daughter, Jackie.

Why draw and paint & share your talents with others? Because YOU CAN! It's about not throwing away your own talents. About maximizing the contributions & the legacy of your own life. What will remain as your artistic legacy after you're gone? You say that you are an artist, but are you? If I am an artist then what do I do? I paint & draw. I don't consult the economic forecasts first; I have my own mission in life. If the economy is puny today; it will recover in time. In time all things have a way of changing. And if I've been painting, I'm preparing for better days ahead (with optimism) & living true to my own mission: making contributions to my own artistic legacy; using my own talents. And to myself -- being true.

Enough said: Go ye forth and create!

