

COMMON MISTAKES.

The Art League notes some mistakes artists make when signing their work. The signature:

- ☞ **Distracts from the artwork.** Your signature should be small and unobtrusive. This is not the time to break out your glitter marker.
- ☞ **Is illegible.** The signature is there to identify you as the artist. If no one can read it, it's a mysterious mark that serves no purpose. However, it shouldn't draw attention to itself.
- ☞ **Is on the matboard.** You should sign the work itself. This way, if the piece gets reframed, the signature goes where the art goes.
- ☞ **Consists of non-archival materials.** Just like the artwork, your signature should be made to last. Don't use ink that will fade over time, for example.

CREATIVE STYLES?

You decide. I know of some artists who like to hide their signature somewhere in their painting. Very clever. But what the hell is the point? I don't get it. Is it a game (find Waldo)? First-time viewers who aren't familiar with your work won't even know they are supposed to hunt for it.

Then there are those artists (mostly decorative painters) who like to incorporate their signature into the contour of their work: wrapping it around a flower, for example. Hmm. Kind of kitschy for my taste.

My award for interactive participation is the artist who signs all four corners

of his abstract paintings so the buyer can choose whatever orientation of the painting appeals to them. Or maybe he just can't make a decision.

I think a signature can be creative and distinctive, but it should also be readable and straightforward. After all, it is there for a purpose.

WHOSE NAME IS IT?

Some of these symbols, markings and single names used as signatures are instantly recognizable because the people who signed them are universally known. Many famous people sign both names legibly anyway, so of course we know who they are. But what about the other signatures here? Whose are they? As artists, we would be wise to not only sign our artwork, but make our signatures decipherable without distracting attention from our art.



About CPSA

The Colored Pencil Society of America (CPSA), founded in 1990 by artist Vera Curnow, is a nonprofit organization for colored pencil enthusiasts. Through efforts by its 13 volunteer board members, CPSA promotes colored pencil as a fine art medium by sponsoring exhibitions and workshops, participating in product research and testing, and educating the public in general. Membership is open to anyone in any country who is age 18 or older.

The organization strives to elevate the medium, educate others about it, and encourage innovation with its use. Some of the ways

CPSA benefits its members and works to gain recognition for colored pencil include:

- ☞ Sponsoring two annual exhibitions open to colored pencil artists anywhere in the world.
- ☞ Providing a network of district chapters in the United States.
- ☞ Promoting colored pencil art and artists.
- ☞ Sponsoring workshops at its annual convention.
- ☞ Maintaining a presence on its Facebook page.
- ☞ Representing CPSA on the ASTM Artist Paints and Related Materials subcommittee,

which publishes the colored pencil lightfastness standard.

- ☞ Providing members with an informational, 80-page, full-color magazine each May and November.
- ☞ Testing lightfastness of colored pencil brands and offering a testing results workbook to its members.

To learn more about CPSA and become a member, visit its website at www.cpsa.org.

