

KYLE MARTIN



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LEFT: MIXING UP BRIGHT COLORS ON HIS PALETTE TO GET THE PERFECT SHADE.

Just the Facts!

Kyle Martin - [Chicken Coop Studio](#) - Baraboo

Primary method of working: I enjoy creating impressionistic landscape paintings from direct observation, in the en plein air tradition.

Equipment used: My painting studio is contained in the back

of my car. I use a large format outdoor easel, that is portable, easy to set up and will not blow over in the wind. I have created my own palette box which safely contains my large glass palette and big tubes of paint. I use around 25 colors of oil paint.

My brushes are synthetic, which hold up better than traditional animal hair brushes. It is much easier for plein air painters to see color when they are in the shade, so I attach a large umbrella to my easel to create shade in any location.



AUTUMN PLEIN AIR PAINTING



INSIDE CHICKEN COOP STUDIO



PLEIN AIR PAINTING DOWNTOWN

Artist Conversation!

Let's Learn a Little More...

Do you have a favorite surface or technique treatment:

I enjoy painting on linen covered panels

What are some of your favorite tools when you paint?

I have a few tools that help me work. First is my “red glasses” that reduce the color information and allow me to observe the landscape in terms of large shapes and value contrasts. Next, my mirror is also very important and I use it and view my paintings backwards while I am creating them. Artists have been using mirrors in this way for centuries because it allows them to easily see compositional errors when viewing their paintings backwards. My iphone acts as a black mirror when I have

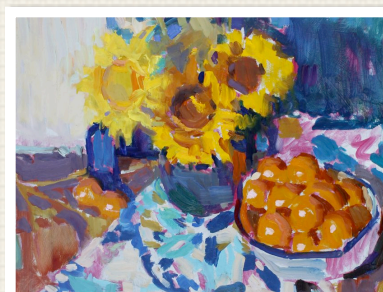
misplaced my regular mirror, I simply lock the phone so the screen is not on, and use the blank screen as the mirror. Finally, I enjoy mixing colors on my glass palette using a palette knife. I find that mixing the colors by using a knife helps me to create large quantities of clean color.

Do you have any favorite music or a “studio playlist” that inspires you when you work?

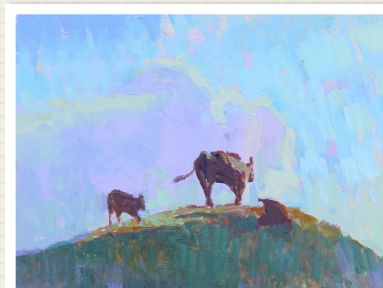
I like to listen to jazz when I paint. Improvisation has been defined as composing while performing, and I feel that my painting comes from the same place that as improvisational jazz music.



VERNON COUNTY FARM



STILL LIFE SUNFLOWERS



AFTERNOON
CLOUDS & COWS



SUMMERTIME BARN



PLEIN AIR PAINTING IN 2019

Tell us a little more about your studio and how it came to be?

My studio and gallery is a converted chicken coop, located on my family's farm in rural Rock Springs. The farm has been in the family since 1911, and the road that the farm is located, Schneider Road, bears my Mother's family name. The chicken coop was built in the 1930's, and it was designed at the University of Wisconsin. My grandfather was a dairy farmer and my grandmother had 300 laying hens in the chicken coop, My Mother and Aunt were responsible for gathering eggs from the chickens. My father took over the dairy farm from my Grandpa, and the chicken coop housed calves, instead of chickens during those years. The chicken coop has served several purposes over the years.

2011 was my first year on the Fall Art Tour, and we decided to renovate the chicken coop so that I could use it as my show place on the tour. We removed the low ceiling, which previously added insulation to the livestock, to showcase the vaulted ceiling, and we also added a

chandelier. The walls and ceiling were all painted white, which allows the light to bounce around in the space and illuminate my work.

The studio is around 600 square feet. I installed a pellet stove, which burns small wood pellets, and also some dried corn that I collect during the harvest every year. The floors are painted blue because I have found that the cool color makes the warm colors in my paintings pop out, such as the reds in my barns. I added some additional lighting that hangs above the paintings on the walls. I show around 120 framed paintings on the Fall Art Tour each year.

I do most of my painting on location because I find that immersing myself in the landscape leads to my best work. However, for poor weather days, I installed a digital projector in the studio, which projects a huge image onto one of the walls of the chicken coop. I no longer have to squint at a small printed photograph, I can stand back from the projected image and view it in a similar way as when I am outdoors. I simply set up my outdoor easel, load my palette with

paint, and work in the same way that I do outdoors.

Where do you find your Inspiration?

I am inspired by the light falling across the landscape. My initial inspiration came at a young age. One day while milking cows in the morning, before school, I noticed that the barnyard was transformed by the warm early morning golden light. Every illuminated object glowed orange from the rising sun, and every shadow was turquoise at that moment. That was the first time that I felt inspired by the light. I observed it, and thought that I would like to paint the landscape, transformed by the golden light effect, one day. A few years later, I went with a high school art group to the Art Institute of Chicago and viewed the paintings of Claude Monet, Paul Cezanne, and Vincent van Gogh. The work of Monet, his haystacks series in particular, showed me that specific effects of light could be painted. I had no idea how to paint it then, but it started me on the journey towards painting en plein air.

How do you keep your mind fresh?

Painting has given me such freedom and variety in my life. Painting has presented so many unique opportunities to me, and painting also has given me the opportunity to design my lifestyle in a way that respects a life and work balance. Every person defines balance in their own ways, and for me every day is different. The very nature of painting can be a balancing activity, because capturing a fleeting effect puts the artist into the moment.

Painting allows me the flexibility of time, to be able to skateboard and do yoga each day. Doing yoga and skateboarding gives me the ability to paint with a fresh eye each session. I get a lot of painting done, and I rarely feel like I am forcing it. Having a part time job as a substitute teacher also brings balance into my life.

Working with students is a needed contrast to the time spent alone painting, and the time away from the easel allows me to recharge my creativity. Additionally, the money that I earn from my part time job enables me the freedom to focus on the paintings that I want to create, rather than needing to take every commission or money making opportunity that presents itself.

Do you find it financially challenging to have a career in the arts, or how do you make it work?

I enjoyed painting in High School, and pursued an Associates degree in Commercial art and Illustration from Madison Area Technical

college. I had amazing professors, and got to experience all of the fine art classes such as figure drawing that I would have gotten at a 4 year school. I was taught to think as a designer, and I was taught to draw and paint with traditional media. Composition and design are extremely important in painting, and I got a great foundation in both of them in college.

After college, I worked as a graphic designer, mural painter, and also designed and screen printed my own line of skateboards. My skateboard business eventually led me to open my own brick and mortar skateboard shop and indoor skateboard park. This business continued until 2008, when the warehouse that my shop and skatepark were housed in was condemned after monumental flooding of the Baraboo River. One day, after the flood, I set up my easel behind the old skateboard shop, and painted a view of the Baraboo River. I decided that Instead of rebuilding the skateboard business, I would start to paint landscapes en plein air every day, and see where it would lead me. It became evident to me very quickly that I was passionate about plein air landscape painting. I also returned to college, to work towards a degree in Art-Education at that time.

From 2008 until 2013, I painted nearly every day, while attending classes full time at the University of Wisconsin Platteville. I drove the 75 miles each day to school, down Highway 23, stopping to paint before and after school each day. There are so many beautiful locations to paint on that stretch of road, and they are the same

roads that our visitors on the Fall Art Tour drive along as they travel from studio to studio.

Because I was painting on location so much, people started to notice me out in the landscape with my easel set up. I enjoy talking with people, and this led to my first opportunities to show my paintings. I had my first show in a great gallery, and that led to more shows. I was also contacted by the continuing education department at the University of Wisconsin Baraboo to teach night classes in drawing and painting to adult students.

In 2012, I started to attend plein air painting festivals and competitions across the state. My work has been honored with best of show awards at the Beloit plein air festival, New Berlin, Kewaskum, and also best quickpaint at the Milwaukee Museum Mile plein air and the Best of Downtown Cedarburg at the Cedarburg plein air festival. During this time I was also an invited artist at the Door County Plein Air Festival. All of these endeavors expanded my network and gave me the recognition that is important to any artist who wants to sell their work. Those experiences have led to teaching opportunities, shows, commissions, and other art related work.

Today, I am painting faculty at the Peninsula School of Art in Door County, I teach plein air painting workshops in my Chicken Coop Studio, and I am a member of the Fall Art Tour. I also work part time as a substitute teacher for Baraboo Schools.



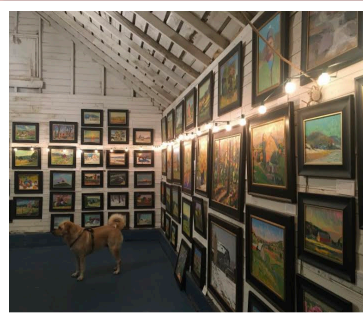
CHICKEN COOP STUDIO



BELTERS COWS



CHECKING PERSPECTIVE



CHICKEN COOP STUDIO
FALL ART TOUR 2019



Where can we find your work and learn more?

I do a couple of things to market myself, and I also rely on others to help out.

I am out in the field painting, so I am visible in that way. It seems sort of small in today's world of instantly broadcasting ourselves across the planet, but if someone pulls the car over to see what I'm doing, I have the opportunity to share my work with them while it's happening right in front of them. The best way to market art is to share your story, and I can do that with a brush in my hand.

For the [Fall Art Tour](#), I am on the committee that creates the brochure

design. This is a good fit for me because of my graphic design background. We distribute thousands of brochures, and it's important that we make a quality brochure to represent all of the studios on the tour. The Fall Art Tour also does print and radio advertisements, as well as social media. Everyone on the tour benefits from the advertising that we do, so I focus my energies in that area. I also pay for an email marketing service, called Constant Contact. I collect emails from those who are interested in my paintings and save them onto my Constant Contact account. I make an email newsletter every month or two, showing images of recent paintings and

the stories that go with them. I also share any other news or classes that I will be teaching. I find that I get a great response from this email marketing. I keep it simple, and I don't do very many of them, so when people do get something from me, I have something new to show, and people respond to that. I also have a [blog](#) that started in 2008, and it has been a fun project to see it grow.

This year I also started making [youtube videos](#) of painting sessions. I make the videos to share my process and it's fun to look back and see how some of the paintings got created.