

Sylvie Levesque

Artist

Setting Off on the Right Foot

by David Charles



Sylvie Levesque is beginning her career as a painter – the right way

Although her mother is a great artist, her sister is also a talented painter and art has been "in her blood" since she was a kid, Sylvie Levesque has become a professional painter by a rather circuitous route. In fact she only took up painting as a profession at the beginning of 2005. Born near Montreal in 1965, Sylvie majored in Education with a Minor in Special Education and set off on a career as a teacher. Her husband's work, and perhaps a touch of fate, landed her in Cupertino, California in 2002.

On her arrival in California, Sylvie decided to take up something completely different from her teaching career. She went to work in a picture framing shop, framing people's art work. She learned from scratch how to matt and frame pictures. "People came to see me to frame their work and they trusted me to mount and frame their art. I would give them tips on how to protect and preserve their artwork for generations," she says. "It opened a door for me. I was seeing art every day. One day I thought, 'I am doing that for everybody else, I should do it for myself,' so I decided to start out doing my own art."

From one day to the next she quit the framing job and started painting professionally. She had been painting on the side but work and family commitments didn't leave her much time to do what she really wanted to do: PAINT.

The first painting Sylvie sold, when she showed her art at the Silicon Valley Open Studio, was one of the first she ever painted. Since then she has concentrated on the sale of her prints.



Sylvie Levesque in her studio

"What I paint depends on the feeling I have," she says. Some of her paintings are of women, some are of still life, some landscapes, animals and so on, each seen through her own, unique eye. "The fun begins when I start applying the paint." She paints mostly in acrylic and oil but her preference is for the oil. "Except for 'La proposition bleue' rarely finished a painting with acrylic. I like oil more because the finish is more natural and an oil painting always looks like it's been freshly painted." Sometimes she paints in two or three media, such as oil over acrylics or even watercolor, then acrylics and then oil. There is a lot of variety and experimentation in Sylvie's paintings and lots of surprises. She likes to paint fast and her best paintings are started and finished in an afternoon. "You capture the moment and the spontaneity," she explains. Recently she has put away her brushes and taken to the palette knife. More experimentation.

Sylvie and FAR

Sylvie came across the Fine Art Registry when she was just browsing one day, but it was one of the better discoveries she has made, certainly from point of view of the business side of her art and the future security of her work. "I thought it doesn't cost too much to try so I tried. After that I thought, 'Oh this is cool, I can do this. Wow!' Then I went to the website again and saw all the art and realized I should have ordered more tags. Then I ordered more and more



tags and then I realized I had to pay for the shipping each time and that I should have ordered more to begin with. Last time I ordered 100. I've got some left."

"For me tagging is a reward," she says. "When I tag a painting and register it, it means I'm done with it and now I can go on to something else. When I register my work on line it doesn't cost anything and I can see it up there on the website right away which is great. It's very easy to do and doesn't take very long."

Sylvie has her own web site as well, but the Fine Art Registry set-up works better. "I don't have all my paintings on my web site because it takes longer to do it than at FAR. It's a lot of work and requires more skill. I have to pay someone to do it. It costs much more money. So FAR is great for that."



Les cerises
inspirantes

Of course with her experience in a frame shop, she is in an ideal position to see the value of the Fine Art Registry™ tag and registration process. She explains what it means to her art, to her clients and to the whole field:

"There are a lot of advantages to tagging. When people come to see my paintings I have four key words that I use to explain to them. The first key word is the **provenance**. You know where it comes from, where it goes, you know I am the artist. If this person buys the art and another person wants to buy it we know the history of the piece and that's the provenance of the art. It's important to know where it came from.

"The next thing is the **authenticity** of the art. It's an original. I made it and I know it's original when I tag it and the registration and the tag plus the certificate are proof.



"La fee des bois"

"The other word is the **security** of your art. It prevents the fakery, people who want to steal it. It's got a tag on the back with a number and that number corresponds to a full record with photos on line. You go on line and see which one it should be. If that had been for all paintings it would have prevented some major thefts.

"**Proof of ownership** is the last point and that goes along with online transfer of ownership.

"When you sell a car you want to give as much information as possible to sell your car. The same when you are buying. You want to get as much information about the car when you buy it to make sure you have right car. That's what FAR does for art.

"The last print I sold, I asked the customer if he wanted it tagged and he said 'Oh, that's a good idea.' It was \$12 additional to do that and he was really happy that I suggested it to him. So it's not just the originals that I tag. I tag the prints as well. He was happy that I could give him the support of tagging and registering his print." Sylvie was amazed at the personal help and support she got from the Fine Art Registry. "Sometimes I had a technical question and I wrote to them and they called me right back and maybe spent an hour with me on the phone, helping me through. If they're doing that for everybody... They take care of their customers. I feel very lucky to have FAR with me. It's a very great thing. I tell all my friends about it."



"Pretesse"

The future

Sylvie's dream is to combine her art with her teaching. How? By teaching art but not in a school or

college set-up. "I would like to fuse together my degree in education with my passion for art," she says. "I would like to have a studio of my art and welcome students to paint with me and teach art and painting. Doing art with different kinds of people – adults, kids, people with disabilities, anyone."

But first she wants to become better known as an artist, and then combine that with her teaching skills. And she's on her way.

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