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“Berni’s expertise is on the marketing and commercial side. I can’t say how important this is in any project. The minutiae management of the research, commercial, sales marketing management and customer relations is crucial if you want to be successful. I think one of the biggest problems or hurdles artists face when they think they have a good idea and want to do something with it is de-emphasizing or avoiding the commercial side of the idea. A lot of people die with good ideas — very few ever act.”

Forsline continues to work tirelessly in the development of PanPastel and Sofft, spending many long days in their Kutztown, Penn., factory. He says there will always be challenges, but as an artist, he is prepared to face them. His mark on the art market is unmistakable, and as more artists begin to discover PanPastel and Sofft, it may mark a profound shift on the art of pastel and its relationship to drawing and painting.

For more information on Colorfin and their innovative PanPastel and Sofft products, visit www.colorfin.com, www.panpastel.com and www.sofftart.com.

Thomas O’Brien Inventor of New Wave® Artist Palettes



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Almost 40 years ago, classical realist painter Thomas O’Brien had a graveyard of old artist palettes in the corner of his Pennsylvania studio. Each palette had failed him for various reasons. Either they were too heavy, or they were awkward to hold, or their shapes ultimately inflicted physical pain on the artist during the painting process. No matter what the reason, each had become a distraction rather than a tool for painting. One day, O’Brien decided enough was enough. He headed to the lumberyard and began crafting his first palette. Two years ago, his four-decade journey was launched as a business, New Wave Fine Art Products, with his sons, Kyle and Keith, at the helm of the operation.

A 1972 graduate of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts and a 1985 graduate of the Art Institute of Philadelphia, Thomas paints



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portraiture, landscape and still life, and has had his work recognized by many local and national organizations, including the Portrait Society of America. Since 2000, he has also continued his studies at Studio Rilievo, a private studio in Kennett Square, Penn. Throughout the years, his sons were heavily influenced by their artist father, and they recognized that there was something special about his innovative approach to palette design.

“A traditional palette has two points — the hand and the rear of the forearm,” Keith said. “My father added a third point, allowing the palette to rest naturally against his body, and he made sure the thumb hole kept the wrist straight. The hand-held palette had not changed significantly in centuries. He was the first to invent a truly ergonomic palette. They say ‘necessity is the mother of invention,’ and in this case, they couldn’t be more correct.”

Both Keith and Kyle also had an affinity for the arts — with Keith entering college as a fine-art major and Kyle having an interest in ceramics and sculpture. Both sons also had enterprising minds and thought their father’s invention could serve a real purpose in the fine-art community.

“The three of us discussed the idea of creating a company around the new palette design so all artists could enjoy the same benefits our father had experienced with the three-point design, namely, improved color gauging, enhanced mobility and strengthened focus,” Keith said. “It wasn’t until about two years ago that timing was perfect for all of us to begin building New Wave. This provided our father with the chance to bring the benefits of his new design to all his friends (which he is still energized about), and it gave Kyle and me the opportunity to blend our love of the arts with our interest in entrepreneurship.”

“Creating a palette is much more complicated than anyone can believe,” Kyle said. “We held a few focus groups with some amazing artists in the Philadelphia area that sat through hours and hours of questioning — we can’t thank them enough for their

1 Ball & Chain No. 21 by Ladd Forsline. Plywood and leather (balls), 7’ x 5’. Copyright © Ladd Forsline. Used by permission of the artist.

2 New Wave Expressionist Confidant Palette. 3 Kyle O’Brien, Thomas O’Brien and Keith O’Brien. Images courtesy of Thomas O’Brien.

IN MEMORY OF

Carl Plansky (1951-2009)

Founder of Williamsburg Handmade Oil Colors

Contributed by Mark Golden, CEO of Golden Artist Colors

Artist Carl Plansky did not start out making paint as a commercial enterprise, but as part of a centuries-old tradition of the artist-craftsman. He got his first paint mill in 1985 from the great abstract expressionist painter Milton Resnick, who had used the mill for making the voluminous amounts of oil paint used in his work. The arduous task of making his own paint, however, took its toll in time and energy, so he eventually gave the mill to Carl in return for having paint made for him.

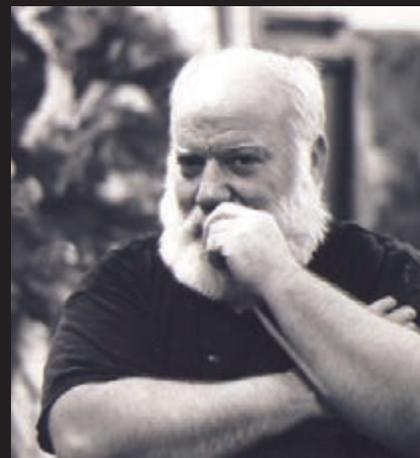
The mill gave Carl freedom to play with materials on a larger scale than is usually available to studio artists. Like medieval alchemists, he moved about machinery and mixtures in his Brooklyn studio with his beloved dog, Bessie, trailing behind and grand opera music blaring from his stereo. He mixed oils, resins and waxes to make mediums of different consistencies and glosses. He created a paint that was dense and richly pigmented. He liked it, as did friends, who found (to their delight) that they knew not only someone who made paint, but someone who made it incredibly well.

In 1986, after selling or trading pint- and quart-size cans of paint to artists such as Susanna Coffey, Bill Jensen and Michael Goldberg, as well as Resnick,

Carl realized that he had created a groundswell of interest in what he dubbed Williamsburg Oil Paints. Having studied at the New York Studio School and worked at David Davis Fine Art Materials and Torch Art Supply, Carl had cultivated a huge number of friends in the New York artist community. The groundswell eventually became legend, and color after color appeared in the line.

Carl had always been interested in pigments, oils, mediums and Old-World recipes, and he enjoyed experimenting with traditional materials. Wherever he traveled, he would research the history of painting and the relationship between painters and paint makers. In France, he bought colors from the houses that had made paints for Monet, Matisse and Cezanne, and then analyzed their paint to see how fine or coarse the grind was and to determine where they found their pigments and oils. With this same passion, he continued to search for the most beautiful raw materials in the world, importing pigments from dozens of countries so he could offer them to his fellow artists as paint and dry pigment.

What set Williamsburg apart from many other oil paints on the market was Carl himself. Complex mixes with surprise undertones, such as Courbet Green, came out of his studio — out of the plan or accident of painting. Carl never



stopped painting and, as the business grew beyond a one-person operation, he trained his paint makers to make paint like artists.

The legacy and integrity of Carl's paint business survived his death in October of 2009. The team he built at Williamsburg Handmade Oil Colors has preserved the passion and creativity that Carl imparted under the leadership of Beverly Plansky, Carl's sister and business partner.

In the spring of 2010, Golden Artist Colors offered to assume responsibility for realizing Carl's dream for truly unique paints and mediums that reflect not only the traditions of painting in Europe and North America, but the artist's passion that drives them forward. Golden and Williamsburg continue to develop their paints out of dialogue with artists, constantly focused on responding to artists' needs.

For more information about Williamsburg Handmade Oil Colors, visit www.williamsburgoilcolors.com.

support and patience in those early days of cardboard patterns and rough ideas. Their feedback allowed us to trim our designs from a couple dozen down to seven core designs, and to further refine the shapes. After 18 months of research, testing, a multitude of mistakes and lessons learned, New Wave launched in September of 2011."

New Wave palettes are unique in the

marketplace, not just due to their innovative shapes, but also to their fine craftsmanship. Amish living in the countryside of Pennsylvania, just 10 minutes from where the O'Brien family grew up, handcraft each one.

"Working with the Amish provides a refreshing pause from the bustle of building a business," Kyle continues. "They are an amazing partner."

For more information about New Wave Artist Palettes, visit www.newwaveart.com. PA

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