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STOCKART

THE ONLINE NEWSLETTER FROM YOUR FRIENDS AT STOCKART.COM

featured artist

Perry Brown

Don't Stare at the Sun

I seldom reflect back to the dark ages of the early '80s when I was a student at Colorado State University. I was fortunate enough to learn the arduous method of preparing comps by hand. Our medium(s) of choice were either toxic markers, the cumbersome cut-paper and rubber cement method, or the even easier Paasche airbrush that would spit an unexpected blob of ink at 2:00am just as I was putting the final touches on a 12 hour illustration! My professors, John Sorbie and Phil Risbeck were meticulous pros. Both very talented poster artists through the 60's and 70's genre, their mission was to turn us into creative, prolific crafts people. John Sorbie became my mentor and friend. I was mesmerized by his ability to take pieces of colored pantone paper and create dramatic propaganda posters with very clear and powerful messages. We quickly learned how to express a clever idea in our own handwriting.

I had a business foundation going into school thanks to my dad; the artist part came from my mom, a very gifted watercolor artist. Added to the creative curriculum at CSU was a no-nonsense approach to both the meaning and business of good design. Through role playing, we learned how to give the client what they wanted, and if it wasn't right we would rework the ideas until the point of mutual satisfaction. It wasn't real, so we didn't run the risk of coming home without bread on the table. Since that time I have always held on to these fundamentals of good design: do the research, give the recipient what they are looking for, add a few extra touches on the project to give it personality and drop it off a day early.

I am currently an art director for one of the most profitable clothing retailers in the country. Although I am beyond our high school/college age target market in years, I have dressed the part and stayed in touch with the ever changing, bright and fickle y-generation that represents a large portion of today's spending population. As this generation penetrates the job market in coming years,

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feature artist continued

I foresee a change in how we buy and create messages for the end user. As you look around in fashion, home furnishings and architecture you can't help but notice the evident trends shaping our visual environment. Business is becoming more casual, town malls and sporting arenas are taking on a character reminiscent of a time when life was simple. We have reality TV and modems. College kids are buying clothes from thrift stores and the new retailers are becoming purveyors of "vintage looking" merchandise. The lifestyle is fast-paced, but the imagery is yesteryear. The message here is that we must take notice of trends and adapt them to our personalities...don't stare at the sun too long...look around for the next opportunity.

We must also learn to accept how our artistic services will be marketed in the future. I believe the stock illustration market is going to explode as it coincides with the demands of the current and future art buyer. We live in the "I want it now" generation and this is not going to change. Stockart.com is one of the few agencies that have a passionate obligation to creating a long term business model that addresses the complex needs of the art buyer while equally maintaining a trust with its core illustrators. I am impressed with how Stockart has positioned itself as a responsible stock agency that offers artistic messages crafted by gifted visionaries rather than just another "commodity product at a price".

WHAT'S UP?

letter from the prez



Hello Team,

I hope everyone is weathering the storm out there. We at Stockart.com have been fighting tooth and nail to keep the boat afloat. I wanted to keep my part short and just let everyone know that we can all come together and help one another through these tough times. I certainly have this burning knowledge that down times are when you find out the character of a soul and the heart of a winner. You can rest assured that we will continue to push ahead and innovate, trusting that sunshine will come up tomorrow. Here is a piece I'm writing which will appear in our customer newsletter scheduled to go out next week. Let me know if you have any further thoughts on this issue of royalty-free illustration.

"Royalty-Free? Not For Me"

With the tough economic environment in the advertising industry, there has been an increased demand for cheap illustration. This is a perfect scenario for the publishers of royalty-free imagery as they have both the supply and demand knocking down their doors. The users have lowered their quality standards as they have been forced by penny-pinching marketers to squeeze the blood right out of the creative turnip. I have spoken with many designers who have lost pride in a craft they once had a passion for. Now, they are just going through the motions to get the man's paycheck on Friday. Stockart.com receives call after call wondering why we don't enter the clip art market. We try to be understanding of the needs of our customers but this will never happen at Stockart.com as long as these doors are open. Royalty-Free? Not for me. Here is why.

I'm sure most of you have noticed that even though the overall quality is not even near rights protected illustrations...the overall quality of clip art IS improving! These hard times play into that as the royalty-free's have talented young artists beating their doors down to get a chance at the perceived Golden Goose. These starry-eyed, art school Einstein's are looking for any opportunity to get anything published just to get their career rolling. Even more influential is they are being wooed by the promises of huge royalties and sold the concept of mass duplication.

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Dave's



Hello to All!

I hope everybody had an enjoyable summer. Fall is a beautiful time of year, especially here in Colorado.

We are plugging along. The market and the economy are tough, but have not got the best of Stockart.com! I am very pleased by the response and feedback we have received from the Summer of Love brochure. We have received numerous compliments. More importantly, I have been working on numerous custom projects. I believe this is a direct result of the brochure. I am looking forward to our next effort and heartily encourage those of you who did not participate to reconsider your decision. It is an investment in yourself. I can't imagine anything else I would rather invest in!

I am also beginning to work with the various reps selected to help promote and sell Stockart.com in various key markets. The project is slow getting started, but I am optimistic about its success.

Please feel free to call or e-mail me dbruning@stockart.com if you have something on your mind or would just like to chat. Enjoy the rest of the year!

Dave

Thanks!

-Dave Bruning (dbruning@stockart.com)

letter from the prez continued

Boy, oh boy, do they ever learn a lesson. I would estimate that 1 artist in 10 actually make enough money to continue producing collections of royalty-free imagery. I have observed the different companies over the past 10 years and rarely do I see any artist produce more than one series of royalty-free work. The only ones making consistent livings are the corporate manipulators at the artist's expense. They have the software executives mentality trying to parallel art with code. To them, content is content. The idea of esoteric life and visual energy skirts their mind. Most of them wouldn't even know the difference between the Mona Lisa and Lisa Simpson. They do however understand mass marketing.

Software, by design, is made to meet the masses needs. You write the code and then box it and sell it to everyone with that need! The brilliance of great software is that it does fit the homogenous needs of many. Art on the other hand, by design, is meant to meet unique needs of each specific purpose. This is called branding. What marketers fail to understand is that every word they use, every visual they use and even anybody they hire has an effect on how that company is perceived. When they choose royalty-free imagery to represent their company, they are doing nothing more than saying..."we are just like everyone else." In my opinion, if a communication is important enough to produce, it should be important enough to uniquely represent that company. Now, in both situations (code and art) it is true that expenses are similar whether you sell ten copies or a thousand. The fact remains when art sells a thousand times it dilutes the perceived value of that piece for everyone who uses it and everyone involved. Conversely, with software, the more copies sold the more the software is valued. It becomes easier to find someone who can train. It becomes more compatible with other applications and helps drive the synergy of the product to another level. Using the software industry as a business model for marketing

art is great if you are the all powerful corporation feeding off the ignorance of dreamers. But, for the illustrators who produce it and the designers and publishers who create with it, I see a long-term tragedy.

As I said before, as royalty-free art use increases it simply devalues illustration in general. Royalty-free houses are able to get better quality and market the art at the same rock-bottom prices. They make their money, so I guess you could say that they win. Unfortunately it is at the expense of both those who create art and those who create with it! Designers and publishers lose in many ways. First of all, I have never met a designer with talent who didn't want to create unique works or be unique for that matter. Being forced to use imagery which they see polluting the creative landscape over and over again simply is not rewarding and has a very ugly reflection on their work. They just do their work to grab their paychecks and wait patiently for that one job which allows them the creative liberties to strut their stuff. Those are the jobs which keep a designer from selling shoes or hammering nails. That is the time to put unique art into woven layouts in hopes of stirring emotions, setting the exact mood and popping eyes. Even this pleasure is being compromised as the number of prolific illustrators has fallen dramatically. Our creative community has lost many great illustrators as the prices being paid for their imagery couldn't feed a fish, let alone a family. So, instead of having 64 crayons to choose, the designer NOW only has 8. The ability for him to create a unique personality for the marketer has been greatly impaired. The marketer loses. The designer loses and the illustrator is lost. What a price to pay for corporate greed! Royalty-free? Not for me.

Kindly,

-Rich

WHAT'S UP?

Artist web stats located online! <http://artiststats.stocklogos.com>
You will be prompted to enter your user name and password.

User Name:

Please use your Stockart.com ID.

If you do not know your ID, it can be found on any of your illustrations online. Use the first 2 letters and 1 digit of the image number. This is your ID given to you by Stockart.com. (use capital letters!)

Password:

You have the option of changing your password to your desire while browsing inside your artist stats page. If you forget your password, simply have the web site send you an instant e-mail with your user name and password.



**This service is specially provided for you to view the activity on your illustrations (in real-time!) from the Stockart.com web site.
-account available for all active Stockart artists**

Page Details

Page 1: Yearly Stats

Quick Help = Great resource! Confused about what the information means? This page explains what information each heading represents and definitions to technical terms used within the stats page.

Change Password = Allows you to change your password to fit your desire!

Graph 1 'Usage Summary' = The graph represents the total number of requests made to the server during the given time period. Look at the difference between hits and files. This will give you a rough indication of repeat visitors (the greater the difference between the two, the more repeat visitors).

Table 2 'Summary by Month' = **CLICK ON THE MONTH LINK**
- this will lead to relevant information regarding your specific images for that month.

Page 2: Monthly Stats

Table 1 'Top Previews' = Previews represent clicks on your images that actually result in a specific image being selected by a user.

Table 2 'Top Thumbnails' = Thumbnails represent your images that are pulled up from conducting a search. **TIP:** By looking at the themes represented in your top thumbnails, you can get a good idea on what subject matters are popular.

****Look in 'Quick Help' for more information explaining the terms used in the tables.****

WHAT'S UP?

Fellow Artists,

Hello! Hope you all are doing well and have had a great summer!

We are constantly working on trying to improve the artist's stats page. I feel it is important to give you feedback on your illustrations and this is my way to do so. Some new additions include, 'real time' stats and an area to change your password/edit your profile. I welcome and encourage your thoughts and feedback, unless they are negative :) (just kidding!) Have a wonderful day!

-To the left I've included some details to help you navigate through the artist stats web site.

Best Wishes,

-Maile Fink



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