



# Cathy Sirianni, Master

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Kane High School, PA.

## Why I Chose John Bell

John is one of my Studio Art students. Studio Art is an independent study course. Since I am teaching another course while he works, I have limited time for intensive instruction. I may spend a few minutes discussing the medium, demonstrating a process, or introducing him to a technique, but he must figure out where the information is best applied. John has surprised me with his willingness to experiment, to embrace techniques that are not easily controlled, and to allow the image to develop rather than imposing the desire for perfection seen in his earlier work. John is thoughtful in his process and able to discuss his decisions. He asks articulate questions and can synthesize information into action. He is confident in his choices and willing to struggle toward an uncertain outcome.

## Why I Chose Max Smith

Max possesses the rare combination of raw artistic talent and dedication to the improvement of his craft. I have never had a student who so quickly masters each medium or technique presented and yet who continues to strive to improve after he has. He can take the demonstration of a basic technique and adapt or build on it. In the submitted painting, he went from a demo on using a credit card as a straight edge or modified palette knife to cutting it into specifically sized and shaped pieces to create the desired “strokes” needed. Max is immersed in art. He is taking two Studio Art courses and several online courses as well. He is intuitive about his process but also highly analytical. He introduces me to artists he’s inspired by and willingly researches artists I suggest. I see myself as a facilitator for his work. I don’t assign projects as much as draw his interests together to allow him to find a direction. It is always exciting to see where each painting takes him.

## Artist Statement

As the only art teacher in a rural high school, I must be a jack of all trades since I teach everything from stained glass and ceramics to drawing and painting. When students ask which, I like the best, it is easy to answer painting. However, I always go on to tell them that it’s not because it was the easiest of my studios, but rather that it was the most challenging. Each painting is a puzzle, the integration of composition, color and value, technique and style, and content. It is the challenge of that process that fuels my passion. I never tire of exploring the complexities and variations that arise with each new project. I’m never happy unless I’m trying something new. While I am not always sure the outcome is exactly what I may have wanted, I am always sure that the process brought me joy. Embracing the struggle is both the source of my passion and the reward I find in the paintings I create from it.