

Siegfried Schreck
Digital Painter

By: Laura Taylor

Siegfried Schreck, also known as Siggi, is a renowned and internationally acknowledged digital painter, poet, and songwriter that I discovered quite by accident. I was browsing an image web site to find various versions of coffee cups for another art project. One coffee cup, in particular, caught my eye. In order to save the coffee cup in the format that I needed, it was necessary for me to link to the web site where the original image was displayed. There is where I discovered the magic of Siggi's paintings. I immediately fell in love with all of his work. I began communicating with Siggi through e-mail, initially to get more information on his work and, then, to get his blessing on this paper being done about him. Siggi consented and even provided a personal profile to assist me. We actually have become what you might call pen pals. This is incredible to me, since Siggi lives in Germany and I have never even traveled far out of state, much less, out of the country. Yet, I have established camaraderie with someone halfway around the world. The Internet still amazes me!

Siggi was born in 1948 in Bottrop in Westfalia, Germany. He moved to Hamburg, Germany in 1948 and has worked in Hamburg's harbor since. He currently resides in Hamburg with his wife. In 1980, he became a songwriter and poet. He has published four books of poetry and has had many publications in magazines and newspapers. He has also been on radio and television. He has written the lyrics for three inspirational children's CDs for a publishing company. He also currently writes lyrics for a well-known rock singer, Achim Reichel, who, amazingly enough, played with the Beatles in the famous Star Club in Hamburg in the 1960's.

In 1998, Siggi's paintings developed when he discovered the Internet. There, he saw the possibility of a chance to work as a computer painter. He began experimenting with digital pictures that he took of the town and harbor of Hamburg by using Adobe Photoshop to "enhance" the photos. He has had no formal training, yet he has progressed to creating his own digital paintings, which have a very unique style. He still (digitally) paints pictures of the town and harbor in Hamburg, and the editorials state that you immediately sense the atmosphere of this beautiful setting from his paintings. His artwork is instantly recognizable and he is very proud of that. And although all of his paintings are very much done in his style, somehow, they are all also very different.

Obviously, Siggi's accomplishments are many. His work is displayed on numerous web sites and he also does live exhibits. He has had exhibits in China and Africa this year and has others scheduled in Japan, Essen, and Germany for the near future. Attaining these exhibits has achieved Siggi's goal of getting exhibits on all five continents. He also very recently published his first e-book, a collection of his poems and paintings. This is a milestone for the Internet. The book is currently posted to the ABS Gallery (Denver) web site and will later be released in hard copy form in German and English. (Also attached are examples of two of my favorite selections, Battlefield coupled with the poem Heroes, and Nothing Like Yesterday coupled with the poem The Forgotten Light, from this book.) Those in the art world follow him very closely and therefore, galleries, on-line and off-line frequently seek him out. He is by far one of the most sought after digital artists today. He has received hundreds of awards for his work, including many for his presentations on the web. His paintings are sold on paper, canvas, and the size and

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cost vary. A 75-centimeter by 50-centimeter canvas print on the Eyedia.com web site sells for \$900 American dollars.

Although Siggi would not reveal his secret for his splendid paintings, he did give me a basic process that he follows. He creates a row of shapes and then experiments “with the fantastic colors of Photoshop”. He also uses filters and other products to create results similar to a “classical painting”. Siggi states that a mouse could never replace a brush; however, his paintings tell a different story. It is apparent that he has overcome this potential obstacle. His splendid paintings are very abstract and the objects, shapes, and lines give them a geometrical look that makes them very attractive to the eye. The color in Siggi’s art is also a major attraction for me. I love the colors, how they contrast, flow, and bring the picture to life. None of Siggi’s paintings have been done on a plain white background. All of his pictures flourish with color. This makes his work even more eye catching to me. I have always loved color, as is evidenced by everything that I do, including the way that I dress.

Another feature of Siggi’s digital painting is the softness of the scenery, lines, shapes and colors. This results in a sense of serenity in many of his images. These two dimensional works of art convey ideas, thoughts and feelings to viewer at a glance. The atmosphere and mood are all communicated to the observer with Siggi’s pictures. Siggi says that all of his pictures have a soul and that all you can see in his images are his emotions. Once you view his art, you can understand why. You almost feel as if you are able to enter into the painter’s heart and mind through his work. The following quote demonstrates Siggi’s magical way with words in addition to illustrating how his paintings are brought to life and his creativity continuously flows. “It is the fascination to discover new possibilities in art through the symbiosis of man and machine, to walk through the universe of my soul in search of always new shapes and colors.”

Siggi states that his work is never planned, that his paintings develop mostly by accident. He says it is a lot like a lottery; he never knows what the end result will be. Following are several more of Siggi’s quotes concerning his work. (Please keep in mind, as he says, “his English is not so good”.) “A lot of people say that computer art has no human touch. I mean why can not live old and new arts together side by side?” “I understand the computer as a suitable medium to transform my feelings, thoughts and phantasies into visual poetry.” This provides another explanation as to why I find Siggi’s work so intriguing and fascinating. I, too am a poet and would love to be able to express my feelings, opinions and desires as effectively as Siggi does in his paintings. Maybe someday...

. Thanks for all of your help, Siggi. You are an amazing man!

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