

## Pastels on Copper – An Experiment Refined

By 1995, artist Martino Hoss had established a reputation for his fine art serigraphs. As a printmaker, he had also worked with linocuts, stone lithography and intaglio, but he embraced serigraphy because it enabled him to work in bold flat color and to push the medium where few had gone before. As his own master printer, with complete control over this intricate printmaking process, he would hand print 20-115 colors one-by-one, on each of thirty sheets of paper, building his pieces like a puzzle, ultimately yielding very limited editions of 30 original prints. Although he loved the result, the medium required several weeks to complete each edition and the process was methodical and laborious. Martino began to look for a more direct and fluid medium to express his landscapes.



Inspired by a class called Media Experimentation, which he took while studying at Art Center College of Design, Martino experimented with materials he found in his studio, like charcoal, colored pencils, chalk pastels, inks and paint. He also varied his surfaces, using silkscreen mesh, canvas, wood, laminate, and copper. Ultimately, he chose the copper for its luminous, reflective warmth and the chalk pastels for their brilliant, chromatic radiance. How could he get these two seemingly incongruous materials to work together?

Through much experimentation, he found he could sand the copper, draw the initial image with chalk pastel and only his fingers – no brushes - then spray fix each of the layers of color to build his image. Using industrial copper sheets, precut to size, he works on multiple pieces simultaneously. As he layers his color pastel, he looks for opportunities to integrate the reflective copper into the composition – whether by letting it show through light layers of pastel or by scratching or scraping the copper to illuminate a key element of the piece. He mounts the flexible copper to a piece of thick archival paper or foam core.



The inspirations for Martino’s pastels on copper come from his personal experiences and impressions of the world around him. In the changing light and weather and landscapes, he finds moments or moods, which inspire a memory and ultimately evolves into a full-blown realization of a particular experience – in rich, vivid colors.

As far as he knows, no one else works in his “invented” method. After nearly 25 years and 750 images, he continues to refine and experiment to create his luminous one-of-a-kind pieces.