

Fine Doodles Review

from *Musings from Mom School*

by Krystal Johns

Source: <http://musingsfrommomschool.blogspot.com/2010/03/fine-doodles-review.html>

When we decided to have kids, I knew we'd have messes in our house. I knew there would be toys and other kid paraphernalia strewn about, but one thing I never thought about was artwork.

Since then, I've learned that preschoolers create a LOT of artwork. Logan brings stacks of it home from school every week, and spends a lot of his free time at home drawing as well. The result is a LOT of paper all over our kitchen.

So, what to do with all that artwork?

One can only keep so much. Most of it, I must admit, ends up in the recycling bin. I just CAN NOT store 617 pictures of monster trucks or 485 portraits of our family. We simply don't have the space.

Logan's artwork goes through a filtering process. Some of it, like the really generic stuff he does in preschool, goes straight to the recycling bin within a day or two of him bringing it home. Pieces he really likes might be displayed on his bedroom door for a while. Certain pieces I really like might spend some time on our refrigerator, and the occasional really special or meaningful project gets a place in the "To Keep" folder. Not many make it that far.

Occasionally, I'll send a piece to his grandparents, or capture it on the digital camera. I suppose if I got a digital photo frame, I could take pictures of all his art and have a slideshow on the frame. Big pieces from preschool are sometimes used as gift-wrapping paper. But, in the end, most of it is recycled.

This might sound harsh, but really, it adds up. All Logan's drawings are special to me because HE drew them. I love them. I think they're adorable. It's just not feasible to keep them all.

But sometimes, there's just something about a picture. Something that, when I look at it, makes me FEEL something. There was a drawing he did when he was three that I fell in love with the second I saw it. It was just done on a cruddy piece of newsprint, but he took markers and drew a bunch of the most precious little cats and dogs I had ever seen, along with some random markings that, to me, looked like clouds and lightning. I have always, in my mind, called that drawing "Raining Cats and Dogs." It immediately got a spot in the special folder, to be kept forever.

Well, the folder is just a folder and over the past year and a half or so, that drawing got a little wrinkled around the edges. I wanted to do something special with that drawing before it ended up ruined. Frame it or something. But I could never decide just how to do it.

Then, I stumbled upon [Fine Doodles](#) and it's the neatest thing. An artist, Summer Myers, takes your child's original drawings and turns them into real ART--An acrylic painting on canvas.

But oh, it's so much more than that. You have to see her work to believe it. She takes those precious scribbles and turns them into something truly fantastic.

Here's how she does it:

"I look at each drawing and discuss it with my husband first. He helps me interpret indecipherable scribbles as well as decide on appropriate colors and backgrounds. Then I paint the background, digitally resize the drawing, and transfer it onto the panel with graphite paper. At first I tried just re-drawing the picture by hand, but over-trained and over-analytical adults just can't recreate the composition and line quality of children. A graphite transfer is much more true to the drawing.

I then paint over the transfer, adding color, texture, dimension, pattern, and sometimes a few small, new elements - always trying to be faithful to the child's intent. There is artist interpretation involved, too, and that's why I leave space for both me and the child to sign. We work together to make a Fine Doodle."

I knew the instant I saw Summer Myers' work that I had to have her turn "Raining Cats and Dogs" into a Fine Doodle.

So, she did. And I ADORE it!

Here is the original drawing I sent her



And HERE is the Fine Doodle. (I feel like my photograph doesn't do it justice!)



Logan said "That is so, so cool! Look at them! They're flying!" He loves his painting. Sorry, buddy. It's mine!



Check out some of the detail, though. It's so awesome. Look at how she transformed these little critters.







Even the crazy one-eyed cat looks awesome!





In addition, each Fine Doodle comes with a certificate of authenticity that Summer has signed, and there's room for your child to sign it too. The certificate includes a scan of your child's original drawing.



Here's a little more about Summer:

"I took art in school just like everybody else, did A.P. Art in high school, and then went to Brigham Young University for the four years it took to get a Visual Arts degree. Art has always been a part of my life, though - my father has been a career sculptor for decades, and he works from home. My brother has taken the same path. I don't do the sculpture thing, though - I'm a painter. I love oils, but they're messy and a little toxic, so I haven't used them since we started our family. Acrylics are the next best thing, and watercolor is fun, too. I also do a lot of digital work, and I'm currently working on putting together a portfolio of my digital illustrations. I would love to illustrate for kids' books.

What is it about art that I love? How do I even answer that? I just can't stop making it.

I actually got the inspiration for Fine Doodles from my husband, who saw a series of works by BYU art professor Joe Ostraff based on kids' drawings. My husband poked around the internet looking for similar work and found Dave Devries' project TheMonsterEngine.com. At the time, Monster Engine was more about rendering children's fears to make them look silly. My husband encouraged me to do my own take, but it took until a figure drawing class in college to get around to it. We were assigned to do a self-structured "interpretive" project based around the human figure. I chose to take my nieces' drawings of people and render them in Rembrandt-like sepia pencil. They turned out a little creepy, but my family loved them. They urged me to sell them. I found that painting the drawings in colorful acrylics made them less creepy and more cute."

Summer has completed about 35 Fine Doodles so far, with more orders pending, and she's only been doing it since November. You can see a gallery of some of them on [the website](#). Right now, it's a part-time job as she raises her one-year-old son (she paints while he's napping) and prepares for the arrival of her second child in late summer. At that time, she'll have to take a break for a while, so if you want to order a Fine Doodle of your own, sooner is better!

Summer is also looking into offering greeting cards with the Fine Doodle printed on the front and plans to have a Fine Doodles blog up and running soon.

Before I forget, I should add that Summer did my Fine Doodle at a discounted rate because I was going to review it here. In NO WAY did that impact the way I feel about

my painting. I just can't wait until Jordan is big enough to do some drawings so I can have a Fine Doodle made out of his work, too!

If you're a parent with a little artist in your home, I urge you to head over to the [Fine Doodles website](#) and take a look around. Perhaps you, too, can have an original piece of art in your home!