

Child's artwork will be treasured forever

TALES FROM THE 'HOOD

KRYSTAL JOHNS



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 an enormous amount 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 recycling 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 might spend some time on our refrigerator, and the occasional really special or meaningful project gets a place in the "To Keep" folder. To be honest, not many make it that far. In the end, though, 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.

There are a few ways to display your child's artwork. You can take digital photos and then have a slideshow of the art in a digital photo frame, you can create a gallery space in your home, you can use it as gift wrap and you can send some to family

members. Recently, I also discovered a cool way to preserve a special piece of your child's art.

Sometimes, there's just something about a picture your kid draws. Something that, when you look at it, makes you feel something. There is a drawing Logan 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 with it before it ended up ruined — frame it or something — but I could never decide just how to do it.

Then, I stumbled upon the Web site for something called Fine Doodles, and immediately knew I was going to give it a try. A Washington artist, Summer Myers, takes your child's original drawing and turns it into real art — a frameable acrylic painting on canvas. But oh, it's so much more than that. She scans those precious scribbles, digitally resizes the drawing and transfers it onto a panel. Then, she uses her artistic abilities to paint over the transfer and turn it into something truly magical.

I sent Logan's drawing to Myers and she turned "Raining Cats and Dogs" into a piece of art that I will treasure forever.

If you would like to see what Myers can do with one of your child's masterpieces, check out the Fine Doodles Web site at www.finedoodles.com.

Krystal Johns writes "Tales from the 'Hood (Motherhood)" for The County Press. She can be reached at krys13@msn.com