

A Unique Custom Puzzle Request

Jim Ayer gets many requests for custom puzzles featuring favorite photos or works of art, but never before has he gotten a request for a blank puzzle. That is, until Charlie Windsor of Cornwall, England, requested a plain, wooden jigsaw puzzle, and as large as possible, too!

By the time Jim Ayer cuts a jigsaw puzzle, the painting or photo is already on the wood. Caroline "Charlie" Windsor is turning the process on its head by adding her artwork to the pre-cut puzzle pieces.

Charlie is in her third and final year at Falmouth College of Arts in Cornwall studying photography. She has asked Jim's help in preparing for her graduation exhibition.

Charlie describes her style of photography as fine

art/abstract/expressionist. This style, evident in her project, involves photographing close-ups of dolls and toys from her childhood. She will affix these photos

Charlie sent Jim this email when she received the puzzle: "I love it, it will be absolutely perfect for my photography... once it was together I made sure to number the pieces, 1, 2, 3, 4, etc. Can't wait to start attaching my photos onto each piece."

to Jim's puzzle pieces to make a final puzzle size measuring four feet by five feet when assembled.

Through the close-ups of her toys, Charlie hopes to recreate for her audiences a familiarity with the photographed subjects. But there's a more personal

aspect of her project. As a child, Charlie endured a lengthy hospitalization during which her only companions were her toys. About her project, she says, "I hope to convey, with the fragmented nature of a jigsaw puzzle, what a traumatic, lonely, and sad experience it is for a child to be in hospital."

Charlie plans to pursue a career in fine art photography after she graduates from Falmouth College. She feels that the art school's exhibition at The Old Truman Brewery Gallery will give her work the exposure it needs to get her career off and running.

Good luck to Charlie on her final project. In the next issue of Fresh Ayer News, we'll see how she did, and include a photo from her exhibition.



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Dear Puzzle Lovers:

My newest puzzle features a painting by Jean Merwin. Her painting "December" caught my wife Liz's eye at an art show on St. Croix five years ago. The bright, exotic flowers set against the spare, white cottage drew her in. I'll admit my wife had to talk me into it but as the years have gone by, I have remarked many times how glad I am to have it. *(Continued on inside cover)*





Jean was a self-taught painter who moved from Pittsburgh to St. Croix in 1956, to start a new life with her husband, Robert, who was raised on the island. A young bride in her early twenties, Jean was able to thrive and leave a

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great legacy despite many challenges she encountered in adapting to island life.

The weekend of purchase, Liz and Jean met on a late afternoon walk. Liz wondered if Jean knew of the purchase, and when Jean found out that we had bought the painting, she was very pleased. She said she felt it was one of the best paintings she had ever done.

Last year, her husband Robert told us that Jean had been suffering with cancer for many years and used her painting as a wonderful distraction and a therapy. Despite her pains and suffering over the years, she produced hundreds of paintings. They sold as fast as she could paint them.

In her lifetime, Jean reached a level of commercial and critical success that few artists ever see. She lost her courageous battle with cancer last year and left her delightful paintings behind for us to marvel at and enjoy.

I am very pleased to offer “December” as one of my wooden jigsaw puzzles, and feel confident that it will be an Ayer favorite.

Jim Ayer

“December,”
Detail

Fourteen-Month-Old Orders Father’s Day Puzzle

Finding just the right gift to honor a special dad isn’t easy for any of us, but it was especially difficult for 14-month-old Benjamin Weber. However, when Ben heard about Ayer custom puzzles from his mom, Catherine, he decided that a wooden jigsaw puzzle would be a fun and memorable way to capture his early years.

How did he do it? First, Ben chose his favorite

photo – the one with his mom – for the center. Then, he picked six of his best headshots – three for each side – to frame the middle photo. The only thing left to do was to find a suitable background.

For this Ben chose the William Morris design “Chrysanthemum” from the wallpaper in the hallway of his nineteenth century Victorian farmhouse. The specially designed

wallpaper is based on period wall coverings, and, according to Ben, lends him an air of maturity.

This spring, if you’re struggling to come up with “just the right gift,” take a hint from Ben and design a custom puzzle to honor that special person!



Benjamin Weber,
16” x 20”