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## As Real As It Gets

Life begins at forty! When I turned forty, our two sons were out of the house, and my career was going great guns. It was time for me to fly! Literally. As a girl, in Wisconsin after the war, I had watched in awe as wave after wave of high flying aircraft flew over my home. Sometimes they would refuel while in flight high over the hills and farms. I would watch until they disappeared out of sight. Thus began a life-long admiration and fascination for airplanes of all kinds.

One day, I realized that I was forty-eight years old and had never been on an airplane of any kind, anywhere. It was 1989. I had been painting kite flying scenes for a couple of years and was having good success at marketing the prints and cards of them. When the American Kite Association announced their annual convention on the island of Oahu, Hawaii, Ed and I signed up to go. As the plane rolled down the runway at SeaTac, I gripped Ed's hand so tight that his fingers turned white! I will never forget the surge of power that lifted us up and thrust us into the sunrise above the clouds. As we banked and headed west over the Pacific ocean, I relaxed my hold on Ed's hand and turned my attention to the scene below. Ocean. Nothing but ocean for hour upon hour. I could really appreciate the courageous spirit of the mariners that sailed across those immense expanses of liquid blue. Eventually, we descended and touched down at the airport in Honolulu as light as a feather. What a flight! It was incredible! We stayed for ten days on Oahu, and the return trip was just as exciting. I have flown many times since then, but each take-off and landing is like the first, awesome and thrilling. Truly, my life in the sky, that began in my forties is a continuing saga. Book me on the next flight to anywhere!

Next Issue: Entirely Different!

I am a realist. Not only in my personal life, but in my artwork as well. When I began painting in oil, I was very interested in all types of approaches to various subjects. I painted abstracts, I experimented with impressionism. It was all a very good learning experience.

In my 30 year career as an artist, I painted oil portraits in an impressionist style, still, they were accurate real likenesses of the sitter. I painted traditional landscapes, and wonderfully believable animals in them. I, too, went through the red-barn phase, and rendering mountains above curving streams. Real trees appeared in real forests from my paints and brushes. When I took up watercolor painting, my floral's were sharp and clear, although their backgrounds were muted and non-objective.

**"I painted traditional landscapes, and wonderfully believable animals in them."**

The time came, that I decided to focus on seascapes in oil. I wanted to convey the light and movement associated with the tumbling, breaking waves. I wanted my viewers to experience the awe and excitement that I felt when standing at the edge of the sea. To me this would best be accomplished by rendering the subject as realistically as possible. That meant a very thorough knowledge of the water; how it moved and why it moved the way it did. I needed to know the anatomy of the wave; from its depths to the breaking foam at the translucent top. I wanted to learn the reasons for the foam patterns to act the way they did. Then, I painted the scene so that it was as though the person looking at the painting was right there. That meant detail.

I studied the subject by using binoculars. This brought up the depth of field to put me in the action where the waves were breaking offshore. I would concentrate on the foam patterns that rose up on the face of the wave. Another time I watched, for hours, the way the breaker reached its apex, then tipped over into a spill. I memorized the activity. And, in my studio, I painted those details. The materials I chose were designed to give me the ultimate in fine detail.. I used (and still do), high quality

portrait linen for its smooth surface. That allowed me to achieve the details to convey realism. My paints, as always, were the best quality for ease of application and longevity. I used a palette knife to portray the rugged surface of the Pacific coastal volcanic rocks. When it came to the trickles of water running off the rocks, I chose brushes with a small tip to stroke the narrow rivulets across the texture of the rocks.

**"The materials I chose were designed to give me the ultimate in fine detail"**

My husband was my best critic and encouraged me to do the ocean scenes in accurate detail (He wears glasses and told me, if it looked "fuzzy", it seemed as though he needed to get his prescription changed!). So the challenge was, from the beginning, to paint the sea in as accurate and fine a detail as I could. The process was time consuming. That was o.k. with me! I enjoyed the challenge and spent the time totally absorbed in creating a seascape that could be perceived as "alive", full of motion, looking as though you were about to get wet! To convey such an impact, my canvases were generally larger sizes from 24 X 36 and up. I began to sell my paintings, and get great compliments from people who saw them at galleries and shows. My favorite story is the time a boy of about seven years stood before a large painting, drawn magically into the scene. Finally he turned to his mom and said, simply, "Wow!"

I have had many of those "wow" reactions to my seascapes over the years. The positive comments always please me. I am encouraged to do the next one better, more dramatically, larger, wetter, more realistically than ever before. Perhaps the results will be made manifest in the striking clouds of a coastal sunset. Maybe the intimate ripple of the close-up view of a swell rising in the glittering sun will be the theme I choose. As always, I will strive to make the seascape painting to be as real as it gets!



## Featured Artwork

**Turbulent Water**



"The wind and tide relentlessly push waves higher and higher until they roll and break into 'turbulent water' upon the shore."

**November Sea**



"The winter storms have arrived to pound the Pacific Coast with hard driven rain and crashing surf. Under grey tumbling clouds, the ocean presents a magnificent spectacle to brave observers of the 'November Sea'."

**Evening Glow**



"One of the many compelling attributes of the ocean is the glorious play of color from the sun on clouds and sea at the end of the day. As the last rays of sunlight strike the towering clouds, the ocean seems alive and shimmering in the 'evening glow'."