

PROFILE

Paula Waterman

Paula Waterman can scarcely remember a time in her life that she wasn't an artist. "I suppose crayon was my first medium, before even a writing pencil. I was drawing horses from the first time I recognized 'horse.' You know girls and horses!"

Dogs weren't far behind. "First dog of our household was a dachshund, typically untrained and managed badly by people who didn't know what you do with a hound. This was in grade school. My first 'real' dog was my GSD when I was in high school. German bred, handsome strapping fellow, smart, biddable, and I actually took the time to train him and make him a great companion." Throughout her childhood, she drew animals: "Constantly, continuously. Horses and dogs."

Paula thinks she sold her first piece of art maybe in junior high. She had a year and a half in art school (at American University) right out of high school, but "I wasn't ready to learn yet, so I went to nursing school instead. When that education was completed I was ready to learn art!"

Her first real sale after she declared herself a professional was in 1980, when she was 26. Says Paula, "Once I made that declaration to myself that I was serious and a professional, it took me 18 more years before I became self-supporting as I developed my skills, a gallery representation list, and a bit of real cred by virtue of inclusion in respected juried shows. It takes time to be recognized by collectors and galleries. Helps to make good art, but other factors matter as well. For those 18 years I worked as a nurse in a very busy coronary ICU in a big hospital in D.C. Over the course of my time there I was able to slowly cut my hours from full time to part time to low-hours, no-benefits part-time, to finally leaving the job in 1998ish."

Although animals are obviously her favorite subject, she also paints landscapes, and some still life on occasion. "My current little obsession is painting marbles! I like the way light refracts in glass. I'll get over marbles soon. I am sure."

What is her favorite medium? "Well, I became internationally known for my work in the black and white medium of scratchboard. Think 'big fish, small pond;' it is not a commonly used medium for 'fine art,' though used in commercial art a lot because of its crisp strong graphic qualities. But it is unparalleled for its ability to depict fine detail. Unfortunately,

detail is not the most appealing reason for using a medium, at least not for me. What I like about it is the strength of the black and white contrast between the ink and the white board that is revealed when the ink is scratched off. It is wonderful for texture, fur/hair, and feathers. But tedious!

"But though I started in scratchboard, and it is the medium for which I first became known in wildlife art, I found I wanted to also work in color for some artworks. I worked in watercolor for a number of years, but ultimately found that oil painting was the color medium I was looking for. Once I started to be able to get what I wanted in oil, it became my preferred medium due to its flexibility of expression and its vibrance. I have done only a very small number of scratchboards in the past two years."

Her talent and her dedication to it have not gone unnoticed. She is a signature member of the American Society of Marine

