



Jo Myers-Walker

July 2015 newsletter

May the Spirit be present and active!

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Summer on two wheels

My granddaughter just turned 16 so is driving now and not so interested in her bike anymore, so she gave me her pink bike equipped with a bell, basket, mirror, and blinking lights. I have to go to yoga class to get on and off of it however. It is single-speed so is to be used for exercise and the freedom to go special places. Sometimes I have to walk it up the steep hills in Iowa City. We have many bike paths in town and I am not unique parking my bike at the Senior Center.

I can put my sketchbook in the back basket and off I go, getting ready for this month's Life Drawing workshop in Indianola and art fairs at Reiman Gardens and in Marshalltown. The workshop "Life Drawing (with a little Color)" is at Summerset Winery, July 20 – 22, where we'll draw and paint from live models and become more confident with the figures that inhabit our paintings. See the Classes and Events page of my website (theleftbankstudio.com) if you'd like to sign up.

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Note brushes and paints in basket; now I can sketch in amazing places without causing a traffic jam.



Here I am checking out subject matter to draw and paint.



My booth at the Iowa Arts Festival, with Old Capitol in the background



Art Supplies on the Go:
Storage area in my new office as AMP facilitator



Zumba! I rediscovered these 3' x 5' paintings in my former studio space, all rolled up but still lively.

(continued)

I have a new job as facilitator at AMP (Achieving Maximum Potential) in Iowa City where I'll teach a life skill twice a month using art projects. I'm so excited to work with the young people and will have a page on their website (AMPIowa.org). Franciscan activities are flourishing and that brings it all together for me.

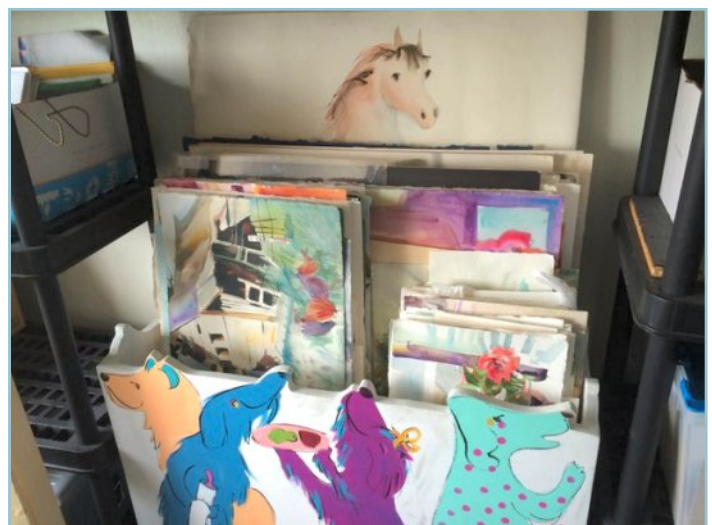
Moving supplies from my former studio space to the AMP office, I found works that had been in the bank vault and then the storage unit and now in my apartment. At the Iowa Arts Festival I got compliments on the birds and watercolors I updated from 30 years ago, matted and put out on the stand. Many were demos and never finished and tossed aside, then on to the next painting. It seems after painting and teaching for 40 years

I know what to do to bring those old watercolors back to life. I tell my students to not throw their work away, all will be revealed someday on what is needed to complete them!

Jo



"Growing"
(more revisited works
are on page 3)



The bassinet is holding paintings in my apartment.

Revisiting old friends



“Marissa”: I made this handmade-paper sculpture over 20 years ago. She returned to me recently and has found a home at Mount Saint Francis in Dubuque. She is a lovely strong-willed Victorian woman, made with various acid-free papers, on a black plex stand that has lighting from below. Marissa was created around the same time as the paintings above; all of the women wear large headdresses or hats, very romantic and fantasy-like.

Value studies

A value study uses different values of the same color to follow the lights and darks in search of form. It's a great way to plan composition in a painting so when we begin the watercolor we have a road map to follow. I try to emphasize at least three values from dark to light using the same color.



Cool value study of a figure in life painting class, and a full-color portrait



Warm-color value study



Cool-color value study

Journal making in Amana

In June I led a five-day artistic journal-making workshop in Amana, Iowa, offered through Amana Arts Guild and Grant Wood AEA. My class members were art teachers and graduate students. The workshop allowed us to explore what it was like to be a student again, and to examine what stops us from taking time to create and have fun, experiment, not be perfect, be vulnerable, and produce.

Artistic journal making can be a valuable way to reflect on insights, memories and dreams, deepening appreciation and embracing life's joys and challenges. We began with Gratitude – being thankful for what gifts we have and what others share with us. Then Sister Moon metaphorically guided us into the “Inward Journey” or what is on our minds, not so much the superficial but our deeper thoughts. These come through when we create, called “Daring the Dark.” Then we could be transformed by Brother Sun and sharing the light.

During the workshop we were exploring free writing, symbol making, papermaking, collage layering, watercolor and acrylic techniques of salt and tape resist, brushwork, color mixing on paper and fabric, calligraphy, and pop-up cards and environments. Teachers went home with lots of experimental lesson plans, and inspiration to keep the journal alive throughout the year.



Outside the workshop studio in Amana



Spirals of giving and receiving



We put our handmade paper on the window glass to dry in the sunlight (next to photo puppet of a class member)



Sewing watercolor paper and handmade paper



Foundation folding for a pop-up book



Pop-up environment of the countryside



Monet's garden – another pop-up page for teaching about Monet in the classroom



Working on journals (the extra heads here and there are photos enlarged to make puppets)

