



May 2014

Art — An Expression of Emotion *A Demo by Artist Mikel Donahue*

Influenced by his grandfather's cowboy way of life, all Mikel Donahue ever wanted to do was draw, paint and raise horses. Today he is doing just that! He and his wife, Christie, breed running quarter horses on their place outside Broken Arrow.

Mikel was invited by the Oklahoma Arts Council to show a retrospective of his work this spring in the Governor's Gallery at the Oklahoma State Capitol. He was the 2011 recipient of the Academy of Western Artist Will Rogers Award for "Artist of the Year." In 2010 he was awarded the prestigious "Premier Platinum Award" and the "William E. Weiss Purchase Award" at the Buffalo Bill Art Show and Sale. In 2009 he won the "Artists Choice Award" at the Buffalo Bill Art Show. That same year he was the featured artist at the Americas Horse in Art Show and Sale at the American Quarter Horse Museum in Amarillo. He was recognized with a one-man show at Remington Park during the 2009 quarter horse race meet. He won "Best of Show" two out of three years at the WRCA Art Show & Sale. He has been featured in *Art of the West*, *American Art Collector*, *Southwest Art*, *Western Horseman*, *American Cowboy*, *America's Horse* and *The American Quarter Horse Racing Journal* magazines. He is an annual participant in the Prix de West at the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum.

Don't miss out on this amazing opportunity to hear from an artist of such stature! Mark your calendars now and plan to attend — 6:30 p.m., Monday, May 12, Will Rogers Garden Center, 36th & I-44, Oklahoma City.



Message from OPS President Donna Branson

Greeting OPS Members,

It looks like we missed spring and moved right into our Oklahoma summer, just a bit warm for all of our plein air enthusiasts. But May and June are particularly wonderful months for artists and collectors living near Oklahoma City. Don't miss the Paseo Arts Festival, May 24-26; the Ansel Adams exhibit at the Oklahoma City Museum of Art, March 15-June 1; the Red Earth Native American Cultural Festival at Remington Park Racing Casino, June 5-7; and the Prix de West, at the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum, June 13-Aug 4. How lucky can we be to have these events right here in OKC!



Becky Way broadened our sights and skills with her April demo and paint-along. We had a great evening creating abstract pastel paintings that took their inspiration from Edgar Payne's plein air compositions. I found myself so taken with the demo that the next morning I created three small abstracts instead of landscapes while painting en plein air in Jude Tolar's glorious backyard. It was great fun. So thank you again, Becky, for a truly unique, inspiring and unusual evening! Maybe we'll have some entries in the abstract category for our next OPS show.

This month, we will again have a very different art experience for our meeting. We are honored to have western artist Mikel Donahue as our guest artist. Mikel, who lives in Broken Arrow with his wife, Christie, combines his love of horses and ranching with a successful art career, creating amazing multi-media paintings depicting his western heritage. You will enjoy seeing these exceptional paintings! He has accumulated particularly noteworthy accolades in a short time including winning the William E. Weiss Purchase Award and the Premium Platinum Award at the annual Buffalo Bill Art Show in Cody, Wyoming, and showing his work in the Prix de West in Oklahoma City. Mikel will show us work-in-progress as well as finished paintings and discuss how he approaches his paintings. Trust me, you will not want to miss this opportunity!

Hope to see you Monday, May 12th for Mikel Donahue's presentation, our last meeting for the 2013-2014 season!!

Donna
Donna Branson, PhD
President, Oklahoma Pastel Society



Spotlight on OPS Member Sue Ann Rodgers

What drew you to the medium? Janie Schmitz and I were frustrated with colored pencils — you know how (in my inexperienced hands at least!) building up color with pencils can really start to look waxy. Anyway, Janie and I split the Rembrandt “landscape” and “portrait” sets. What a difference from pencils ... and that was the start of my love affair with pastels.

Why do I prefer working in pastels versus other mediums? Pastels are so fresh and immediate!

Have you always pursued painting? Short answer: No. Long answer (and yes it’s a rambler!): I’ve always loved art but until taking Gary Lennon’s Drawing I class at Francis Tuttle Vo-Tech, well, let’s simply say that “amateur level” was WAY above me. Gary’s classes, after the Drawing I class, were such that you could branch off into mediums other than graphite ... but I’d taken his class multiple times before I tried something other than graphite and colored pencils.

Do you work on only one painting at a time? Well, there are plenty of times when I’m not working on ANY paintings (terrible of me, isn’t it!) But when I’m working on a painting, it is usually just one at a time. But there are plenty of times when I’ve put a painting away for a bit, looked at it later and realize that it needs either just a “tweak” or (more often!) some major re-working.

What is your favorite subject matter? That’s a tough one — I like pretty much everything. After Becky Way’s “Abstract” demo and paint-a-long, I’ve figured out that I can add that to my “like” list of subject matters.

What kinds of experiences trigger ideas for paintings? Sunrises and sunsets. How differently a view looks depending on the season you’re seeing it



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in. An interesting grouping of similar — or diverse — objects. Sometimes the idea comes from what I'm working in — pencil, ink, pastel, oil, even watercolor — for me, some subjects work better in a particular medium.

What is your career path? Where have you worked and how long? When I started college (at East Central University in Ada, OK) I really planned on becoming a piano teacher. But to earn money for college (SO much less pricey than now!), I worked part-time at my Dad's business — cleaned the office, answered the phones and Mom taught me how to do double-entry bookkeeping. Well, the CPA that handled my Dad's business at the time suggested that I take his beginning accounting class at ECU and the rest, as they say, is history. I worked as an auditor at a major accounting firm, then in the financial reporting department of an oil and gas company and now I've come full circle ... working for my Dad's business.

But throughout all the years from being a freshman in college to now, I've always done SOMETHING related to the arts — whether it was taking one last college-level piano class to interior design classes at Central State (yep, before it became UCO!) to calligraphy, photography and watercolor classes — some with more success than others — to pastel and oil painting.

What is something that very few know about you? From starting 1st grade to starting my freshman year at ECU, I'd always attended SMALL schools ... and was actually quite shy. Yeah, hard to believe now, isn't it! Anyway, when I started college, I knew that I HAD to get over some of that shy-ness. Learning to talk to strangers — or simply to people who (in my mind at least) were a little or a lot intimidating — was one of the hardest, but ultimately, one of the best things I've learned to do.

Who is your favorite artist — who inspires you? Who is my favorite artist is ALMOST as hard to answer as picking my favorite chocolate! No wait, it's harder since I know that the Burgundy chocolate that Janie gets is my favorite! So, favorite artist? Nope, no way can I pick just one or even twenty. But who inspires me? The members of our group — we have such wonderful, giving members who are wonderful and giving artists. What could be better!

Reading pastel and art books? I like “looking” at Edgar Payne's book on painting outdoors and I'll read bits and pieces of it. “The Sketch” and “The Sketch in Color” are really good too. As far as sitting down and reading an art book — cover to cover — I don't do that much. But I do love looking through books, reading what catches my eye right then. Actually, that last line describes what I like so much about Harley Brown's books — you can read just a little but come away with a lot!

Family history? My parents live in the OKC area; my sister and her husband are in Houston as is their son; their two daughters are both at OU right now. My brother and his family are in the San Diego area. In total, have three nieces and two nephews — all of whom are absolutely, positively brilliant! (Unbiased I'm not!)

Relaxation? I enjoy reading — novels, biographies, magazines (art, interior design, photography, cooking ... particularly if the recipes involve chocolate!), travel and current event stuff. Cooking, especially desserts, and knitting — but I don't “do” the fancy stitches — for me it's all about mixing up the types of yarn and — no surprise here — the COLORS! Best of all, though, is relaxing with family and friends.

Favorite vacation spot? Far away — Italy, particularly Venice and Florence. Close by — lots of places in Oklahoma, Colorado, Kansas and even Texas!

Notes from April Demo

During April's painting demo, Becky Way shared some of her tips for creating an abstract painting. She suggests that painting abstracts improves your paintings because it forces you to think about strong composition. Study Edgar Payne's paintings — he is a master of composition. (Another way to create an abstract is to crop in tight on an old painting.)

Initially, use vine charcoal or black NuPastel to suggest an action line, based on one of Edgar Payne's compositional definitions.

Choose 2-3 cool colors and 2-3 warm colors and possibly a few neutrals. If using warm color paper, use predominantly cool pastels. If using cool color paper, use primarily warm pastels. Try using a variety of shapes, strokes and color/value contrasts. When your abstract painting begins to suggest a subject, emphasize that subject; i.e. flower, landscape, tree, fruit, etc. Edit — imagine a subject outside your comfort zone.

Use black NuPastel toward the end of your painting to strengthen the action line.



Upcoming Events

Ansel Adams: An American Perspective, March 15 – June 1, Oklahoma City Museum of Art

Paseo Arts Festival, May 24 – 26, Paseo Arts District, features original works of over 80 visual artists.

Red Earth Native American Cultural Festival, June 5 – 7, Remington Park, features works by some of the nation's most celebrated artists.

Prix de West, June 13 – August 3, National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum

First Friday Gallery Walk, June 6, Paseo Arts District, over 75 artists in more than 20 galleries participate.

LIVE on the Plaza, June 13, NW 16th between Classen & Penn Ave., an art walk featuring local artists, LIVE on the Plaza is known for promoting emerging artistic talent.

10th Annual Pastel Society of Colorado; July 14-Aug 30; juror: Albert Handell, who will also do a workshop July 10-13; prospectus at www.onlinejuriedshows.com. **Deadline: May 18, 2014.**

Pastel Society of Oregon 19th Biennial National Juried Show; Sept 2-27; juror/judge/workshop instructor: Barbara Courtney Jaenicke; workshop Sept 10-12; prospectus at www.pastelsocietyoforegon.com. **Deadline: June 16, 2014.**

The 42nd Annual Open Juried Exhibition: Enduring Brilliance, Nat'l Arts Club, NY City; Sept 2-27;

jurors: Elaine Augustine, Aline Ordman and Duane Wakeham; Judge of awards: Marjorie Shelly; prospectus at www.pastelsocietyofamerica.org; workshop instructor: Richard Mc Kinley; Sept 23-25. **Deadline: June 16, 2014.**

Connecticut Pastel Society 21st Annual National Exhibition: "Renaissance in Pastels"

Slater Museum in Norwich, CT. October 8th to November 9th, 2014. Over \$10,000 in awards. Jurors: Liz Haywood-Sullivan, PSA and Janet Cook, PSA. Soft pastels only, easy online submission opens June 1st. Download Prospectus from www.ctpastelsociety.org. **Deadline: August 6, 2014.**

Oklahoma Colors: Earth, Sky and Water

This solo exhibit is by OPS member Joey Frisillo, May 2-June 27, at the Performing Arts Studio, 200 S Jones, Norman. Opening reception is May 9th, 6:00-9:00 pm.

Steven Hill 3-Day Workshop

May 30-June 1, 2014 for \$275, in Springfield, MO. Contact Sherrie Davis (417-838-1385 or 417-742-3626) for more information.

Paint the Illinois River Competition

Entries must depict a scene in the Illinois River Watershed area. Entry deadline is Sept. 2, 2014. Juror is Manuella Well-Off-Man, assistant curator at the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Bentonville, AR. For show prospectus, see www.onlinejuriedshow.com, 2014 "Illinois River Salon" Art Exhibition.

*Thanks to Anita Tackett & Linda Probst
for providing snacks for our May meeting.
We need snack providers for our meetings after the summer break
so let Donna or Jimi know if you're interested.*

*See you on Monday, May 12th, 6:30 p.m.
at the Will Rogers Garden Center, 3400 NW 36th, Oklahoma City!*