



## *Kindred Spirits*

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by Mona Majorowicz

### **"Oh . . . Those Horse-Crazy Girls!"**

We are currently deep into our art fair season. No matter how long the hours or how hot the weather, the one thing that always brings a smile to my face is watching the countless young girls flipping through my print bin looking for just the right image. That one painting that comes closest to their fantasy horse.

As they come over to me, clutching it like a treasure, their parent often says something like "she's completely horse crazy".

Sometimes I ask her if she has a horse and depending on her reply, I say, "You're a lucky girl..." or "I completely understand. It took me 30 years before I got a horse of my own." Their reaction is always the same, shock and perhaps a little horror. Either because they have a horse and can't quite grasp what it is like to be denied such a basic need. Or they are suddenly faced with the idea that sometimes you might not get that long-dreamt-of pony. At least, not right away.

For much of my life I was unhorsed. I had to rely on friends or work at equestrian jobs to get my horse fix. I have always loved horses. And it is a good bet that they were my subject matter the first time I picked up a crayon. When I was a child, I had no interest in dolls. However, my collection of model horses was quite large. My passion for them is so fundamental and deep, I have yet to completely understand where it comes from and why.

### **"Bringing Balance"**

My life seems very much to be a balancing act lately. I need to balance

my painting time against my art business. The day to day running of the gallery can completely rule my life unless I am careful. I also need to balance my artist life in general against my personal needs, my health, my husband and my horse.

When I am creating, I need to be sure to bring balance to the image. Much of my work is done in oil pastel. It is a relatively unforgiving medium. So I have to make all the compositional decisions in pencil before I begin to lay in color. On my most recent painting, "Kindred Spirits," the actual drawing part of the painting took around 30 minutes. Sometimes it can take me days to draw out an image, depending on its complexity.

With this many horses I need to balance the area of interest with the "not so important" stuff. It is beneficial to have a flow to the painting, so the eye can travel comfortably around the image. I liked the long sloping line of the partial horses on the foreground left. They help to avoid chaos by providing the eye a way out of the painting.

### **"Horse Troubles"**

My greatest grief came from the foremost bay horse on the right. Something just wasn't working with its face. I put it in and scraped it off several times. Finally I got something that I liked. After a day or so I realized, no wonder I like it. It is my horse! Different color, but unmistakably Chicory.

I have had my horse for around 10 years now. He has made a better person of me. Much of my work is about creating beauty and he is a part of that. My horse is my friend and my muse. I can honestly say that in some way every horse painting I do has some element of him in it. And I often draw upon my experiences with Chicory when I create.

### **"Plan B-Fill it with Horses"**

I am attracted to repeating patterns. The curves of the necks and the backs, as well as the monochromatic coloring of having all bays and grays, intrigues me. The models were once again my neighbor's herd. It was made up of about a dozen broodmares with foals and yearlings.

When I started this painting, I again toyed with the idea of horses as landscapes. I envisioned their arching necks and gently sloping backs as rolling hills. Initially, my plan was to have negative space or a background along the top third of the painting. It would provide the skyline, so to speak. However, the problem with this was that it made the horses look rather squatty. It didn't work at all. So on to plan B. Fill it with horses. From my experience, This is always a no-fail plan.

### **"The Key to Happiness"**

All in all, I am satisfied with the end result. There have been some significant changes from my original concept, but I like what I've got. It can be a struggle for me to deviate from my the idea of what a painting should be. It takes a certain fortitude to realize when something isn't working and strike out in a new direction. One of the art, and life lessons I have learned is to not be so rigid. Don't try to force my will onto whatever, be it horse, people or paper. Accept what is. Embrace it and move forward. Always keep moving forward.

*Mona Majorowicz is a professional working artist. She and her husband, Mike, own and operate Wild Faces Gallery in Rolfe, Iowa. Please visit their website at [www.wildfacesgallery.com](http://www.wildfacesgallery.com)*

