

Horses & Art . . . by Iowa artist, Mona Majorowicz

It is a blustery cold Iowa morning, complete with a fresh dusting of snow. As I make my way to the barn my fingers are already starting to sting. I break the thick layer of ice on the water tank and head inside to give Chicory his hay and grain. He greets me with a nicker and a nuzzle, then regards me with his large liquid eyes while greedily eating his breakfast. My feet are beginning to get cold and my hands are now numb and yet I stand with him for awhile.

I am often asked why I paint so many horse paintings and it is at moments like this that I find my answer. It is a fascination which never seems to get completely fulfilled. I believe I create horse images for the same reason those early cave dwellers did; because I am in awe of their beauty and spirit. Painting is a way of knowing the horse just a little bit more.

Being with my horse reminds me of who I really am. I am a woman who lives close to the earth. I am rarely happier than when I am sweaty and muddy and smell pungently of horse. I work indoors under artificial lights

to create a life filled with animals, freedoms and the outdoors. We are not so different, my horse and I. Sunshine, fields of green, and a cool breeze are all bliss, especially on a cloudy day with the threat of snow.

"Power and Passion"

I quite enjoy watching draft horses. Living in the Midwest provides ample opportunities to do so, with shows, pulls, and threshing bees.

The models for this painting were taken at a draft horse pull many years ago. I spent the day watching the different teams having a go and slowly being eliminated until only the most powerful were left. I admired the courage and determination these horses possessed. Those final competitors clearly loved doing what they were born and bred for centuries to do – pull. Most could barely restrain themselves before lunging forward with everything they had.

I particularly liked the foreground Belgian. He was a stocky muscular animal

with great facial character. The far horse, though smaller, had spirit and competed hard. They did not win that day but they certainly tried. I liked the look of these working horses – the roached manes and worn tack – the rough coats and long whiskers. I lost some of these fine details due to the nature of my painting technique, but these were the important characteristics that attracted me to this team.

"Show Girls"

These Belgians are more at the other end of the spectrum. They are in the process of getting ready for a show. They will be immaculately groomed and bejeweled in shining tack. Their hooves will be polished and their hair braided. When hitched they are an awe-inspiring site as they thunder around the ring, heads up and ribbons flying.

This is the "behind the scenes" view from a draft show in Britt, Iowa. The actual motivation for this painting, aside from the fact that it amuses me, is the repeating patterns -- soft rounded curves of the horses

Power and Passion





Show Girls

set against the strong vertical and horizontal lines of the stalls. I also found the reds of the building with the various golds of the horses to be quite appealing. This painting always makes me smile. Anyone who has been around horses knows that this is the side of them you may see most often.

I am looking forward to a new season of horse shows. I really enjoy meeting people and the horses in their lives. It is a rejuvenating experience which leaves me anxious to return to the studio, where I can begin anew my attempts at capturing the horse with all its grit and glory, in paint.

- Mona

Mona Majorowicz is a professional working artist. She and her husband, Mike, own and operate Wild Faces Gallery in Rolfe, Iowa. If you would like to view her artistic journaling, and see work-in-progress photos, please visit the artist journal on their website at www.wildfacesgallery.com

Natural Grace

Oil pastel
by Mona Majorowicz

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