



lead with someone on him bareback. All the while total strangers are touching him (I'm sure often in places he'd prefer not to be touched) and he's the picture of tranquility, despite the chaos all around.

Since then, I have met many wonderful Friesians, most of them having that same relaxed manner. To be clear, there are many other breeds where the majority of stallions do as well in those circumstances. But also, plenty who don't.

Tall, Dark & Studly

My model for this painting was a young stallion that I photographed last fall at a farm in the Cedar Rapids area. He had come over to investigate me. And after finding me completely unremarkable (and treat free) he started ambling away when a breeze caught his mane and sent it swirling. The title, "Liberty," is in reference of him being "at liberty." Free to wander as he would, unhindered by the desires or devices of man.

Later when I entered the broodmare field they all gathered around to have a good snuffle at me. I scratched a few noses and whispered softly to each how beautiful they all were. After a few minutes, they began to wander off in ones and twos, their curiosity satisfied that I was not bearing gifts.

This works well for me because it is notoriously hard to get a good photo of a horse that is in my face and slurbering on my camera. So it was at this point, I was able to take the type of photos I like best. Which is of horses just being horses. I was hoping for some playful cavorting (to be clear, I was hoping for some cavorting from the horses. I haven't "cavorted" in decades.) but mostly I got peaceful grazing shots.

It is yet another testament to the breed that the barn manager had allowed me to go into the pastures alone. (I should mention she asked me a few questions and it was only after finding out that I have a horse and have worked with many over the years, that she did this.) It was a lovely afternoon and I was in my bliss to be able to spend it surrounded by a herd of these equine giants.

Liberty

Liberty is a watercolor pencil painting done on suede board. I have just started using the suede (this is my third) and I like the overall effect of softness I get from it. I am torn about using it though, since so far it has been a little moody to work with when it comes to color profiling it for prints.

My last couple of pieces didn't profile as easily as I would have liked. Sometimes that's just the way of things. I'll continue to play with it, until I decide one way or the other if it's a good substrate for my art. I already have plans for my next horse painting to be done on suede, which, with any luck, will be the focus of my next article in *Apples 'n Oats*.

skin. He is my connection to the earth and the horse. And as such, he is often my muse.

The Mane Attraction

I have often said that I am very fond of the common horse. The worker in the field or the pasture pony gone shaggy. I love the average everyday horse. But sometimes... just sometimes, I am attracted to do the over-the-top gorgeous horse. And no breed is more over-the-top gorgeous than the Friesian. They have fast become one of my favorite breeds.

They have all the attributes I admire in horses. They have size. (I'm a "the bigger the better" kind of gal.) In general they have great temperaments. They're black. (which has been the color of choice for me ever since I read Walter Farley's *The Black Stallion* as a young girl.) And they have unbelievable hair. Seriously, what's not to love?

I became officially hooked on the breed when I met my first Friesian stallion at the MN Horse Expo several years back. His handlers were so giving of their time to the public. The thing that instantly impressed me was how calm and dignified he was amidst all the mayhem that is the Expo.

I think people forget what an amazing thing that is. You are in a foreign place with hundreds of horses and thousands of people. And here stands this stallion completely calm. Often times wearing only a halter and

LIBERTY

by Mona Majorowicz

As I write this, it is a beautiful fall day outside. The sun is shining and it's warm and still. My horse Chicory stands dosing next to the barn, his lower lip hung loose, his ears swung sideways.

This is my favorite time of year. The crisp air, the smell of burning leaves, and the cooking of comfort foods like pumpkin pie and home-made stuffing. It's also Chicory's favorite season. Well, perhaps the first green grass of spring is his first love. But fall is a close second as it's the season of the apple harvest. His favorite treat.

Often when I work on a equestrian painting I spend more time with my horse. I breathe deeply the smell of all his horseness including his sweet grass scented breath. I place my hands on him, sliding my fingers into his thickening winter coat to feel his blood pulsing just below the surface of his

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