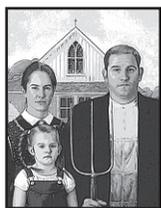


ART ADVENTURE I SAM DALKILIC-MIESTOWSKI



Flying high with love of art

You are never too old to create art. Crown Point artist and resident Al Horvat, a young 82, proves that. Here is his journey into art in his own words:

I was born and raised in Gary, Ind. I went to Froebel High School where I had art classes. I won many contests and received encouragement to further my talent. While in high school, I took the Draw Me art instruction school.

Later I became a representative for the school and enrolled students in the northern part of Indiana.

I graduated from the American Academy of Art in 1950 where my main study was advertising art.

In January of 1951 I was drafted and entered the 7th Calvary for service in Germany. My main job was an S-3, where I did all the drafting for our field maneuvers.

After my return to civilian life, I did some freelance work but when my family became enlarged with four children I entered the real estate business and stayed for 21 years.

In 2001, I suffered a stroke. Luckily, by telling my wife that she should call 911 immediately, the medics arrived within 10 minutes and I was in the hospital within 30 minutes.

While I was in the hospital my blood pressure was uncontrollable and my heart beat was irregular. After a period of time, my heartbeat finally stabilized. Concerned about keeping my heartbeat steady, the doctors asked me if I had any hobbies.

When I told them that I used to be an artist, I was advised to give art a try again.

The stroke affected the right side of my body; fortunately I am left handed. I am able to use my left hand for painting. Amazingly, I found out that when I consistently painted my blood pressure went down to 130/60.

Amazingly, not only was I doing something I enjoyed,

but it was also lowering my blood pressure.

My interest in aviation painting started when I was in high school. After World War II, I tried to enlist in the Air Corps but was told I would have to wait until the next war for this to happen.

However, my aviation interest gave me a chance to acquire a collection of aviation books and periodicals published in the 1940s.

After my stroke, I studied with the well-known artist Mark Polomchak doing watercolors.

I ignited my appetite to learn more about painting since I considered myself a photo realistic artist. It was at this time that Fred Holly came into the picture with his acrylic painting classes.

I started with still life as the subject matter, but aviation was still always in the back of my mind.

In 1984 to 1987, my son Mark and I went to Oshkosh, Wisc. with a portable airplane cover that we invented with two other gentlemen. We were eventually able to get a patent on it.

During this time aviation



Horvat

art as a subject matter was increasing, and artists were able to create prints based upon new types of printing methods. This inspired me to keep painting my favorite subject matter.

My first aviation painting was of balloons. My wife, daughter and I took photographs of balloons taking off in the early morning at the Popcorn Festival in Valparaiso. I loved one photograph so much I decided to paint the scene in acrylics. I titled it "Early Morning Rise." To my surprise it won first place at the Ohio Acrylic Show in Cleveland.

My next painting that won first place in Cincinnati was "Down Time is Still Show Time." I took a photograph of a Constellation having a motor repaired at the Gary airport.

After developing the photograph, I saw some possibilities so I had my granddaughter, Lexi Sopher, stand with her bicycle looking up at the sky.

I've been fortunate to exhibit my paintings at the Carnegie Library in Rensselaer, at the Vogt Visual Arts Center in Tinley Park and the Hammond library. This September, my paintings will be in an exhibit sponsored by The Lilly Art Foundation



"DOWNTIME IS STILL SHOW TIME," ACRYLIC, AL HORVAT

in Carmel, Ind. entitled "Planes Trains, and Cars."

My advice to budding artists is to follow your dream until it blossoms! For me, I had to wait 30 years before returning to my dream. At the age of 82, I'm enjoying every moment of it.

To find out more about Al Horvat paintings and to see them in person, call Al's daughter Tina Soher at 662-7118 or speak to the artist himself.

Sam Dalkilic-Miestowski owns and operates The Steeple Gallery, 111107 Thiel St., St. John. Email your comments to samowner@sbcglobal.net or call 365-1014.



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