

Artist of the Month

Rory Mattson



Defining art is like writing in the sand, it changes with every shift in the wind. My art is a reflection of the way I see the world. It is intensely personal. When I began this journey into “The Art World”, I was not prepared, just lucky. I had painted several pictures, and sold a few, as a hobby to pass the time. Then, about 1973, someone said I should do a show. OK, I thought, why not start at the top. “The Heritage Show” at the Dayton’s auditorium was recognized as one of the top three nature art shows in the USA. I applied, and surprise, I got in on the first try, but when I looked at the art all around me, I realized I was lucky to be there. The lessons I learned in those five days, defined my art. The real pros worked full time at every aspect of their art. I decided then, what I lacked in talent I would make up with hard work, discipline and study.

I am competitive. A sports and coaching background makes you that way. My work, I decided, needs to be unique. I didn’t want anyone to say, “He paints like so-and-so.” Five years, and five hundred throwaways later, I won an award at the same Dayton’s Show. Arrived? Hardly! Just beginning to find out who I am, and where I fit in the Art World.

I hope my work is unique, emotional and expressive. I don’t paint trends, I paint what pleases me. That being said, my wife, Jan is as responsible for what I do, as I am. She has allowed me the time to follow a hobby turned obsession. She has carried displays, answered questions, approved credit cards, marketed, and one hundred other things that allow me to paint. All this for free! I would be nowhere without her!

I have been lucky the last thirty-five years. Thirty best of show awards, and more than one hundred ribbons and plaques. The yearly shows I do are considered some of the best in the Midwest. I have good friends in the art community, some, with great reputations. Some have traded art with me, a high compliment. Most of all, people buy my art. They place it in their homes, and work places; they pass it on to their children; they treasure and respect what I create. I believe I would paint even if no one bought my work, but when people do buy, I have no higher compliment. For that moment, I am in the same league as some of the great American artists. OK, perhaps on the bench, but in the league. I have been lucky.