

“We should all try to accomplish what we love.”

Ellie Dwyer

I am meeting with Ellie Dwyer who has her art studio near Buena Vista, Colorado. Ellie, please share what motivated you to become an artist, along with how you’ve developed your skills and why you feel passionate about painting.



Ellie: My family is musical and I’ve had an interest in art since I was 4. It really didn’t come to fruition until I moved to Colorado. I had a couple of years of commercial and fine art classes at Colorado Mountain College in Glenwood Springs. I also took some workshops in 1999.

Marv: Do you have another career besides art?

Ellie: No, I devote my time to painting and am very happy when something turns out as I’d hoped.

Marv: Why did you choose to live in Buena Vista?

Ellie: My husband and I lived in Eagle County for over 20 years and I was getting tired of driving on the ice. The Buena Vista people, the mountains and new visual experiences daily have contributed greatly to the subject matter of western art that excites me.

Marv: I find that I often see things with a “new eye” even though I’ve lived here several years. Do you find this to be true for you?

Ellie: I am always searching for new scenes to paint. A certain look...certain characteristics that would lend them selves to be painted.

Marv: Your painting that I was taken by featured 3 mules and an Indian woman. It would appear that Native American subjects are something that interests you.

Ellie: My husband had an attachment to the Lakota’s at Pine Ridge since boyhood. We had been there several times including attending a Sun Dance. We were married in Crested Butte, Colorado, but also had a ceremony over buffalo, at Pine Ridge.

Marv: How was that experience different from your Colorado wedding?

Ellie: Well, we had to wait some time for the buffalo to be corralled by helicopter.

Marv: So this actually started with a modern day hunt.

Ellie: Yes, it was corralled, brought in a horse trailer to Edgar Red Cloud’s house and butchered there. The buffalo was then divided among the reservation people. That was memorable. I was happy to have one for our ceremony and it was in its winter coat. So I was very pleased.

Marv: Is Edgar Red Cloud that you talked about a “Holy Man” of the tribe?

Ellie: He was the hereditary chief at the time. He was a direct descendent of Red Cloud, the great Oglala Chief.

Marv: Before we go on to visit more about your art, are there any lasting impressions of the reservation that you remember and think about?

Ellie: The open spaces, the wind blowing over the tall grass, the freedom that the people there enjoyed in the past...and try to hold on to now but obviously is not there.

Marv: Ellie, let’s talk a little about the specifics of this creative passion you have.

What is your process from beginning concept to completed painting?

Ellie: I get a completed painting in mind and then I follow through. I keep a style that starts to be revealed rather than trying to change it during the process. Those tend to be my best paintings.

Marv: How quickly does time go by when you’re painting?

Ellie: There is no time.

Marv: Isn’t that amazing. I experience the same thing when I am writing a poem.

Do you sense any spiritual guidance while you’re painting?

Ellie: Not during the process because I am caught up in focusing, being sure that things come out correctly. Before hand there is always the hope that Jehovah will help me direct the process. Then I thank him afterwards.

Marv: Perhaps there are no easy steps in painting however, what is the most difficult for you?

Ellie: Finding the design...finding the best distance, closeness, perspective.

Marv: Is there a story that is part of every painting?

Ellie: I try not to do any of that until it is done. Then I can put a title on it that seems to fit.

Marv: How does that title come to you?

Ellie: Through the expression...the feeling that comes from it. During the process I may formulate some idea but it culminates when the painting is completed.

Marv: Are there indicators that suggest a painting will turn out well?

Ellie: When the paint flows off the brush and I feel good.

Marv: What moves you to begin a painting?

Ellie: Having the time...having the feel...having a certain idea.

Marv: Is there any posturing you do before you begin?

Ellie: I do have my favorite artists that inspire me. When I look at a specific model and have an idea that fits a certain scheme, then I will look at that artist’s book to

see how they accomplished my concept. Many times my painting will emulate that style.

Marv: Do you start with a sketch or a storyboard series?

Ellie: I do a rough drawing, to get everything in place. I wish I had a looser style rather than trying to make things look so exact.

Marv: I appreciate realism, however I would imagine that there is additional excitement in a more abstract form.

Marv: Who do you paint for?

Ellie: Myself. Otherwise the pressure can get in the way of creativity.

Marv: Have you had commissions?

Ellie: No I haven't and I am glad.

Marv: Do you think that is part of your future?

Ellie: There is always that possibility. I am not looking in that direction for satisfaction. I paint what I enjoy.

Marv: Do you think the commercial aspect of art detracts from the creative process?

Ellie: Definitely. You become an illustrator rather than a creative person.

Marv: The unfortunate thing is that often times that is necessary to sell in the market.

Ellie: I would like that to be a by-product of producing something that I enjoy doing.

Marv: What are your plans for your art skills?

Ellie: To get better...you never reach perfection.

Marv: What are some final thoughts you have that you would like to share?

Ellie: I think an artist...poet...musician, has a need to do what they love rather than do what someone might request. The request takes away from what the artist feels impelled to do. To have that creative process accepted by others, really is the goal.

Marv: You are trying to communicate through the senses.

Ellie: Art should bring happiness and joy, an appreciation for beauty.

My work is what life might have been like, could have been like, if I had lived it.

Marv: What final comments do you have? What would you like folks to remember about Ellie Dwyer?

Ellie: We should all strive to accomplish what we love. Emerson had some good words, "To appreciate beauty, to find the best in others, to leave the world a bit

**better.” Have appreciation of beauty that has resulted in a person being a better person. Hopefully they can fit me into a category like that.
Marv: Thank you so very much.**



Ellie Dwyer’s paintings will be available at “Fine Art In The Park,” July 10th, 2010, in Buena Vista, Colorado