

Jill Vanstone

TELLING A STORY IN A PAINTING



Artworks by Jill Vanstone are different – they immediately catch the eye, have enormous charisma and beautiful colors. On the second glance, the spectator will discover numerous details, many of Jill's paintings tell a whole story. Jill Vanstone masterly captures the Arabian horse with its unique spirit and type. Furthermore, she has a special talent for decorative sceneries and backgrounds, which enhance the beauty of the horse.

■ *by Judith Wich-Wenning*

But who is this very able artist? Jill Vanstone is an Australian, living in Queensland on a small farm of just over 100 acres (around 40,4 ha). "We are in an area called the Scenic Rim", Jill relates, "it is known for farming and tourism – a very lovely place with mountains and fertile valleys. My husband and I are retired. He breeds Droughtmaster cattle, so there are no horses but cows in our paddocks", she adds with a smile. Jill Vanstone's art education began after high

school. "I studied art for four years", she recalls, "afterwards working as an illustrator for a publishing company and then in the Zoology Museum at Queensland University, before marrying and raising a family. At that time art took a backward step until our children left home. Although I did find time to paint animal portraits and several race horses. Now I have my own studio and a great space to work in and I hope to continue painting beautiful Arabians!"



“Royal Treasure”, oil on hardboard, it depicts a Qatari with his treasured possessions, using in part, some reference from a great photo by Khaled Al Mutairi.

When asked what fascinates her most about Arabian horses, Jill Vanstone responds quickly: "I love all desert creatures. I am impressed by the connection of Arabian horses with the desert. The physiological attributes developed to survive extremes. I love the quality of the skin and hair, the fineness and flexibility of the nostrils, the shape of the ears, the tail carriage. And I admire their history with tribal families, the hardships and their spirit and intelligence. I am an older person and have spent all my life drawing and painting.

Horses were always my very favorite subject, especially Arabians, which I believe I was destined to paint. They are very special to me, they not only inspire me, but uplift my spirit. They take my breath away, they bring me to tears."

Horse drawing has been a part of Jill's life from earliest childhood. Arabian horses first came to her attention when she saw an old print in her aunt's house. This picture showed the famous motive "Pharaoh's Horses" after a painting by



"History, Mystery and Magic", containing many soldiers on horseback, disappearing into the mists of time and two foreground horses of today's type, painted in acrylic on panel.

John Frederick Herring of 1854. The original is today in the collection of Ajmal Stud, Mr. Mohammed Al Marzouk, Kuwait. "This picture was a great inspiration for me", Jill Vanstone recalls. "I wanted to paint my own version of these horses. Eventually I painted "Out of Egypt", portraying Nazeer, Aswan and Morafic, especially for their far and wide influence on today's bloodlines. Moreover, my desire to paint Arabian horses, apart from my childhood memory of Herring's painting is inspired by the great artists Schreyer

and Vernet, but also from the great articles written in books and magazines about the hero horses and their owners, and stories of the great love and passion people from all walks of life have dedicated their time and efforts to furthering."

Her clients very often inspire Jill Vanstone, their ideas and dreams are very interesting. "I try really hard to share their vision and create a painting from that visualization. Often my clients have an idea in their mind's eye, so between us



"Desert Escape", oil on hardboard.



Pastel study from several photos of Morafic.

we compose a suitable image”, Jill points out. “But I also do portrait paintings if asked, sometimes many elements can be brought together that way.” Jill also works from photos. She generally requires several pictures from different aspects in order to get a feeling for the personality of her subjects. Moreover, she likes to have a written description of the character. “My aim is to capture expression and liveliness. It is most important to me that you can feel the life in the portrait”, Jill explains.

Like many artists, Jill Vanstone is an avid traveler. “I have been to the Middle East, USA and Europe because of my

art”, she remembers. “I feel especially fortunate to have several journeys to Arab countries. In 2006, I first went to Kuwait to deliver a painting. I spent two weeks in Al Wafra – what a very exciting first visit! I met really wonderful welcoming people there who happily shared their knowledge and ideas with each other. It left a lasting impression of goodwill. Since that time, I have travelled again to Kuwait twice, and many times to Qatar. Sometimes I went just to deliver a painting and fly straight back, but several times I stayed there to paint. Amongst all the superbly bred and very beautiful horses it would be very difficult to name a favorite, but there is an old black horse who I have loved since that



Oil painting of Dr. Nagel visiting Ezzain Stud in Kuwait, painted on canvas showing a scene outside the stallion barn.

very first visit to Kuwait. He had such a noble look about his head, I've never forgotten him, NK Oteyba (Salaa El Dine x Nahaman)."

Jill Vanstone's preferred medium is acrylics, but she works mostly in oil paint, and also in mixed media, pastels, pen and ink, charcoal. From time to time her paintings have very impressive sizes, some are as high as three meters. Her style regarding painting is realism, tending towards expressionism. In addition to this, Jill creates sculptures in clay and stone. Her animal portraits include horses, donkeys, cattle, dogs and cats, specializing however

in Arabian and Thoroughbred painting. Jill masterly captures the special characteristics and personality of her subjects.

Jill Vanstone's paintings are much sought-after. One of her originals was for example the high-selling piece at the 2015 Egyptian Event Gala in Kentucky. Her work hangs in homes of discerning collectors in numerous countries. Real highlights for Jill were to provide artwork for The Egyptian Event in Kentucky for many years, for the World Crabbet Convention in 2005 and to be involved in the Queensland Arabian Challenge Show. □



H.H. Sheikh Ammar and Escape Ibn Navarrone, painted in oil on canvas.

Regarding her plans for the future, Jill relates: "Recently I have been away from painting for many, many months due to the pre-occupation of building a new home. Finally, my husband and I have moved in. So now I am returning

to my studio. It has been a big break, but my enthusiasm is endless. I have a wonderful commission to work with, a great Mosque and many Arabian riders... The vision of a special client!" □



“Shadek”, a pastel sketch.



Charcoal sketch on canvas. Jill Vanstone loves to try and capture the interaction between animals.



"Desert Raiders", crop taken from a large oil painting on canvas.



"Big Red", a large-sized painting in acrylic on canvas.



One of Jill Vanstone's most detailed and difficult subjects, a painting over two meters wide showing a beautiful oasis scenery.



"Salah's Mares", an older painting in oil on canvas depicting some mares on a property in Kuwait, with the most wonderful date palms.



“Out of Egypt”, Jill Vanstone’s interpretation of the painting that started her passion for Arabians long time ago: “Pharaoh’s Horses”.