



A PORTRAIT OF STACEY MAYER

■ by Judith Wich-Wenning

The American Arabian horse artist Stacey Mayer has a very modern approach to painting. Digital drawings and social media play an important role in her work. This article gives some background information about her personal life, her life-long love for the Arabian horse and her artwork.

"I was born and raised in Seattle, Washington, USA, a city surrounded by water, mountains, and evergreen forests", relates Stacey Mayer. "I grew up just a few miles from the remaining horse pastures and equestrian centers of the suburbs. Later, I kept my horse just north of the city, and spent the weekends riding with my dearest friends."

Asked about her art education, Stacey Mayer remembers: "I attended university for two years, before leaving to marry my husband, Phil. While attending Washington State University, I was introduced to dressage, and had a great instructor, Betty Tukey. My instructor emphasized the "form to function" of each animal. Conformation is certainly the study of a lifetime, and I am still learning."

As long as she can remember, Stacey Mayer was fascinated by Arabians: "Arabian horses seem to 'talk' to us; with their lively movements, and facial expressions, those equestrians



Dreamers Horse



Silver Stallion

with a long history around horses, find Arabians to be the most 'talkative' and intelligent of breeds. Their long history with us has created a wonderful riding companion. They are marvelous to ride!"

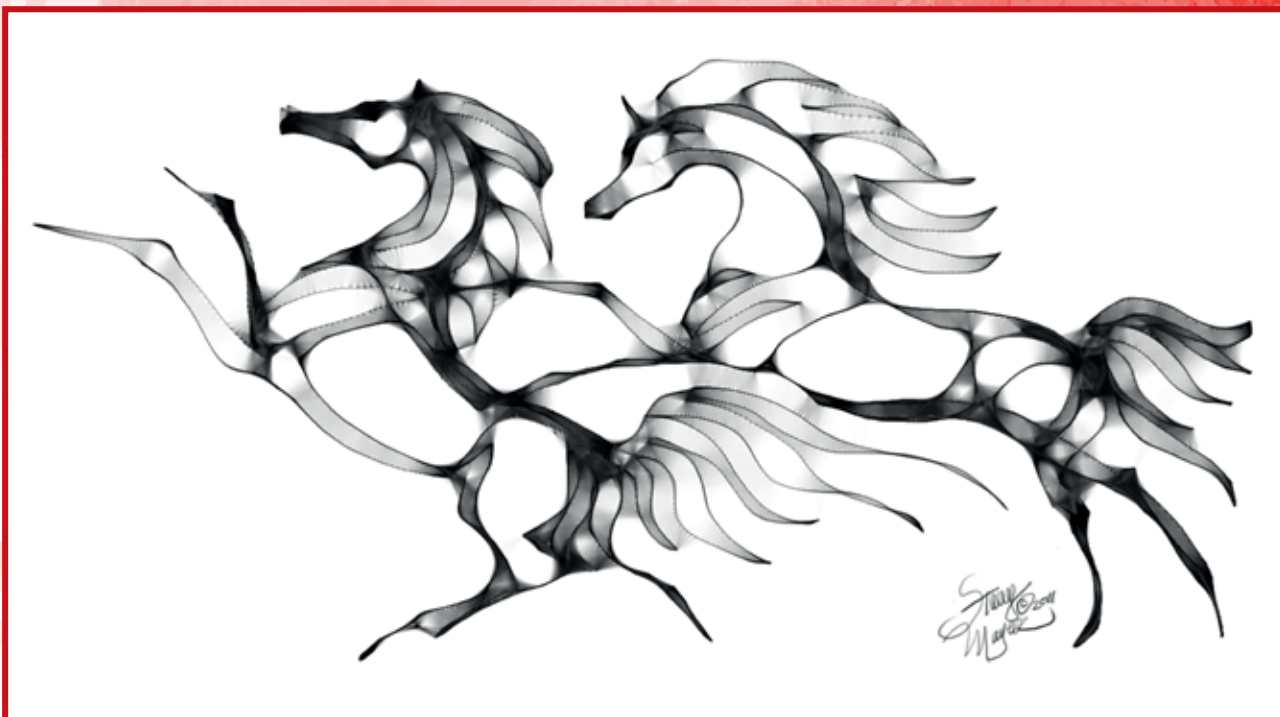
*When asked if she has a favorite Arabian, Stacey Mayer enthusiastically points out: "Oh, yes! The round, lofty motion, laid back shoulder, and beautiful carriage of the chestnut Ga'Zi (Abu Farwa x Ghazna) were impeccable. He was an important Champion stallion and great sire, born in 1949. That very look is captured by his three times descendant, Barzan Al Shahania, who also fortunately descended from *Barich De Washoe, another great Pacific Northwest progenitor. Yes; my eye looks for the roundness of *Muscat, with the desert beauty of the stallion The Egyptian Prince. I was fortunate to have my eye trained by seeing these great Northwest horses."*

Regarding the role Arabian horses and art play in her life, Stacey Mayer ponders: "Phil and I had four children, and we owned several Arabians while our children were young. Now our daughters are grown, I am drawing, painting, and sculpting Arabian horses whenever we're not spending time with family, and our horse loving friends. We share our home with our eldest daughter, her husband, and my grandson, Benjamin. He often sits on my lap while I'm painting. Sometimes, that means rescuing my latest painting from his 'additions' of fresh, black, acrylic paint!"

He is just three years old, which means his ability to get into messes increases daily. We really watch him, and work to stay ahead of his determination to paint. He also can sit at the table beside me, and use his own watercolors, brushes, and paper. But he insists on lap time, first. We certainly welcome his passion!"

But how did Stacey Mayer become interested in Arabian horses? "My lifetime passion for Arabian horses came from the ancient Greek coins at the Seattle Art Museum. My parents were both trained in classical music, and they frequently brought us to the museum. "SAM", as we call our museum, had a beautiful collection of Greek and Roman coins, many featuring images that look like Arabian horses. Later, when I was in my first year of junior high, a friend asked me, "why do all of your horses look like Arabians?" I thought, don't all of the best horses look like Arabians? I did finally learn another way to see the horses in my mind. But, I always come back to the curves, and natural collection of the Arabian horse."

My parents, who unfortunately died in a boating accident right before my last year of high school, bought a wonderful Ga'Zi grandson for me when I was eleven. He was an Anglo-Arabian gelding, a blend of a Thoroughbred mare, with an Arabian stallion, and his affection and conformation, were a great influence in my art, and life. I spent the rest of my public school and college years riding him over the hills."



Young Horses Playing



Digital painting



Arabian mare (digital drawing)

*Asked if she has visited Arabian horse stud farms and shows, Stacey Mayer replies: "I haven't been to many breeders lately, but I did sneak in a visit here and there, while we raised our family. However, I often visited Kale's Arabians while growing up, and Phil and I visited Patterson Arabians together, during the days of the great Polish sires *Cytrys, *Dar, Meridian, and Negatraz.*

*We went to Rafter G Arabians when we were first married, the home to Ansata El Salim, and the incredible *Bint El Bataa, the black daughter of Nazeer. Seeing this herd was a lesson in the true Bedouin horse of the desert, and have helped to shape the ideal in my mind's eye.*

*I have attended the Scottsdale show a couple of times, and I loved it. Seeing *El Shaklan was unforgettable. You can see every horse, meet every artist you've ever admired, and enjoy the most delicious blueberry and whipped cream covered waffles for breakfast! Meeting Edwin Bogucki, and experiencing his artwork in person, was worth the whole trip. U.S. Nationals has a tough time competing with the friendly, laid-back atmosphere of Scottsdale. National Champion First Cyte was more beautiful than his photos could ever convey, and he was also born and bred in the Pacific Northwest.*

*I've visited Ron and Lisabeth Robertson's at Royal Legend Egyptian Arabians of Bryan, Texas, over the years, and I love the kind of horses they're breeding. They satisfy my search for an Arabian with riding horse structure, combined with uncompromising beauty. Lisa blends the Imperial Imdal sire line, and Rancho San Ignacio lines, with the German, Straight Egyptian *Bakil sire line, to create a beautiful sport horse, and loving companion.*

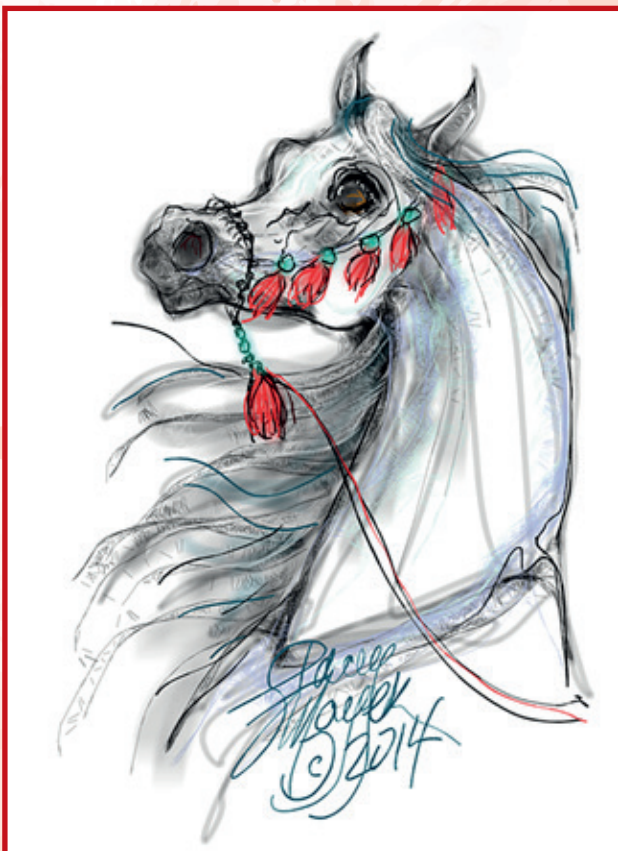
When I find breeders striving for a well-conformed riding horse, looking for the, "rounded" outline of horse I draw and paint, these are the Arabian horses I want to meet."

When talking about art techniques, Stacey Mayer explains: "I love acrylics. The bright colors available, and quick drying time of acrylics, have always been my favorites. Good, large sized watercolor paper is very dear now, so I create larger paintings more often with acrylics on canvas. My watercolors are usually on smaller papers.

The Daniel Smith Company, my art suppliers in Seattle, have recently developed a new line of water-based oils. Daniel Smith became known worldwide for the quality printing inks they developed; I'm looking forward to experimenting with PrimaTek original oils."



Zeinas Gift



Digital drawing



Calling the Wind (digital art)



Two Stallions

When asked about the inspiration for her work, Stacey Mayer replies: "I read about other women who are also entering the 'third age'; after the children are grown, and now they have time to seek after the horses they loved in their youth. I participate in several Facebook groups, and I actively follow several Arabian breeders, owners, and riders on Instagram. I am inspired by many young riders, too!"

"There are several old masters I admire", Stacey Mayer continues. "We had wonderful art books in our school library, and our neighborhood Seattle branch library, too. My favorite artist was always Eugene Delacroix. His dramatic use of colors, action, and beautiful Arabian horses captured my eye from the beginning. He was a true romantic, telling stories with his paintings, and depicting large eyed, arched neck Arabians with every opportunity. He is still a favorite."

Then Stacey Mayer reflects: "My artwork was filled with horses from the moment I began to draw, and like my grandson Benjamin, I was passionate about drawing with whatever was at hand. We had a horse over the fence in my backyard when I was a child, and I was always begging to be lifted up, to touch him. Thankfully, he was a sweet tempered horse, that carefully nibbled on apples proffered by small children. Now, I better understand my mother's focus on supplying me with plenty of drawing material, even when I was

little. It helps save the rest of the house! Large roll ends of newsprint were a wonderful source of paper, and my Dad too, made sure to bring home the 'recycling' computer paper, so I always had lots of drawing paper. It's fascinating to see this determination to draw, repeated in our grandson."

When asked if she has a dream connected to Arabian horse art, Stacey Mayer remembers: "Once, I attended an art seminar in Pioneer Square, the art district of Seattle, and was excited to finally show my artwork to the professor on the last day. I had given up several Saturdays, (while I was still nursing my first baby), to be able to learn from this highly esteemed art professional. He saw my original porcelain sculpture, and called it, 'commemorative work'. I cried so hard! He wasn't worth the agony of being parted from my new baby, and it took years for my artistic ego to recover."

Finding young artists before someone kicks their dreams apart is crucial to their eventual development. Encouraging young artists to keep drawing, keep learning about correct conformation, and to learn to ride, is my personal mission. Equine art has been a part of the human repertoire since the time of cave painting. My online coloring books, "<https://www.awhitehorse.com>" have been maintained since 1996 to help find young artists, and keep them going! Equine art is certainly fine art; and it's a part of our souls."



Sculpture (now in a private collection)

Regarding her plans and hopes for the future, Stacey Mayer explains: "My hope for the future is to plan for many future adventures. Our grandson Benjamin, just had his Aortic Septal Defect surgically repaired this past September. We're thankful for the time we've been able to spend with him after nearly losing him twice.

Now that his accompanying heart defect has been repaired, we're able to look forward with more confidence. It's like the clock has started again.

I have a couple of local Arabian horse owners who are already planning Ben's first visit to ride an Arabian horse. With his heart repair a success, we can begin to do the little things you take for granted, such as visiting friends and family, traveling, and taking Ben for a horseback ride. I'm getting back to painting and sculpting regularly, for the first time since he was born, in the summer of 2015."

Then she continues: "Recently, I started a YouTube channel to share what I'm currently painting, and we discuss Arabian horses, stallions and mares I have known over the years, and what the breed has taught me. Occasionally, I have, 'gone live' on Instagram, and it's an incredible experience to draw and paint, while talking live to other Arabian horse people from around the world. I'm quite new at this whole idea, but no one seems to mind.



Bronze Trophy for an Arabian horse club in California

Arabian horses naturally bring people together, as experienced by WAHO, and the yearly success of the Paris World Championships. Among my life goals are to meet some of my worldwide Arabian horse friends in person. I look forward to Paris, 2019!"

Stacey Mayer adds with a smile: "I think it takes a lifetime to learn about equine conformation, and the process of creating art is certainly endless. Exploring the history, and diverse cultures touched by the Arabian horse through time, will keep me busy for my lifetime.

The little gesture drawings that I draw with my finger on my cell phone, and then post to Instagram in the middle of the night, are the foundation for all my artwork. I love creating artwork that shares the energy of the Arabian horse. My little digital Arabian horses have proven to be among the most important drawings I create. They share the inner workings of how I draw."

Stacey Mayer ponders: "I'm so grateful my parents supported my precocious talent. My dad had a Masters degree in music, and my mother almost completed her degree, before their untimely passing. They both understood my artistic intensity, and their example has helped me raise our four daughters also born with this similar tendency, and now, allow us to recognize this talent in Ben. If God wills, he'll be joined by more grandchildren, as my other daughters start their families. We'll bring our grandchildren to see the SAM exhibits, and they'll press their noses to the glass near the ancient Greek coins, just like their grandmother. I'll happily show each one of them, how to draw and paint good horses, as the years go by.

I have a feeling their horses will look like Arabians, too." □