

Special Anniversary Edition

10th Anniversary
1996-2006

The Pastel Journal

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The Year's Best
100 prizewinning pastels

from the 10th Annual Pastel 100

Meet Top Winners

Carolyn Robles	Peter Seltzer
Vilas Tonape	Georjean B. Hertzwig
Jerry Power	Javad Soleimanpour
Teresa DeSeve	Barbara Groff
Terry Donahue	Eileen R. Miller

Winning Pastels from the 10th Annual Pastel 100

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Animal & Wildlife Category

SECOND PLACE D. La Rue Mahlke



Welcome Spring
(11x13)

Texan D. LaRue Mahlke's inspiration for her winning painting, *Welcome Spring*, was the silvery, cool quality of the light on a foggy morning and the way the light hit the back of the horse. She painted it from reference photos in her studio, a spare bedroom that she's converted into a comfortable workspace. While working, she viewed the photos on her computer and referred to thumbnail sketches that dictated design, value range and color scheme. "I think design in a painting is key to its success," she says, "and so is the use of a dominant value and harmonious color."

After mounting a sheet of UART on Gatorboard, she sketched the large shapes with a Shorty drawing pencil and placed the horse. Next, selecting 1- to 1/2-inch pieces of Nupastel and Rembrandts, she blocked in the shapes with middle and dark values in both warm and cool colors. Once this stage was complete, the artist used a wash of mineral spirits to dissolve the pastel and firmly establish the underpainting.

Once the underpainting dried, she re-established her darks and mid-darks with some of the pastels from earlier. Next, the artist added other pastels to her arsenal, including Untison, which she likes for grays; Sennelier and Schmincke, for the softness; and Terry

Ludwig, for the colors. With these, she painted the background, sky and the edges of the trees in the middle ground. Finally, she worked all areas simultaneously and developed the painting as a whole before focusing on details. "I paid close attention to edges at this stage and constantly checked values, color temperature, aerial perspective and drawing."

Mahlke's outdoor painting approach is the same. If the weather is cloudy or damp, however, she'll skip the wash with mineral spirits. "I'll use Viva paper towels to push the pastel into the paper if I want an underpainting, or I'll just paint directly, layering the pastels and leaving much of it unblended." (She restricts blending to sky and clouds.) Often she'll finish a work she started on-location in the studio, which allows her to spend more time evaluating a piece. "Nothing in my painting

can be too precious. If something isn't working, I'm willing to do what it takes to make it work."

While growing up in south-central Texas, Mahlke showed an early interest in drawing. By age 10, she was taking art classes with Simon Michael (1905-2002). In high school, she was introduced to pastel, but didn't try them again until around 1990, when a friend recommended that she buy a full set of Rembrandts. She next attended life drawing and portrait classes, which helped her win commissions for portraits and other work. Workshops with artists such as Bob Rohm and T. Allen Lawson got her into painting the landscape outdoors, and she began to win awards. Today, she teaches *plein air* workshops in both pastel and oil.

Mahlke (www.dlaruemahlke.com) is past president of the Central Texas Pastel Society and a member of Plein Air Austin and Rocky Mountain Plein Air Painters. She has been an Invited Artist every year since 2003 in the prestigious Maynard Dixon County annual art show, and earned an Honorable Mention in the Animal & Wildlife Category of the ninth annual Pastel 100 Competition. She is represented by Whitsdepik Gallery (Fredericksburg, TX.)

See Mahlke's Honorable Mention on page 00.