

Art by Laurie Pace

Close your eyes and imagine yourself as a blade of grass. The sun has risen and the early dew of dawn bathes your surface in lightly scented moisture. A slight wind rises out of the east, cooling your skin and causing the dew to break into tiny bubbles across your waving blade. You can feel the warmth of the morning sun breaking across your back and, as you look out at the rest of the yard, you see thousands of glistening diamonds in the field of grass. This sweet reverie is suddenly broken by an explosive noise off to your side, and the earth begins to shake. It is Saturday morning and the lawnmower is on its way.

It is in this manner that Laurie Pace teaches her art students. It is through her own life experiences that she has learned to remove herself from "inside the box," climb out and view the world from a new perspective. Her journey in life has encompassed many careers, from runway model to graphic artist, from musician to singer, from teacher to artist. The greatest artist to influence her life is God. It is His handiwork that inspires the gift to paint.

Born in St. Louis, Missouri in 1952, Laurie was the middle child between two brothers. The family moved to Texas when Laurie was four years old. Early on, probably as a means of self-preservation, she began drawing. She had watched in awe the talent of her oldest cousin, Annette Hampe Callies. Six years her senior, Annette's love of creating served as a catalyst for Laurie to begin drawing. Her first efforts were simple chalk drawings on the neighborhood sidewalks or attempts to capture the images of horses, flowers and dogs from her perch in the backyard mimosa tree. Her mother and father encouraged her progress by providing the necessary tools and supplies to nurture artistic accomplishment. In addition to her self-taught art, she began piano lessons in the second grade, and a few years later taught herself to play guitar.

In junior high school, she met the man that would later become her second husband and the greatest encouragement to her painting career. In high school Laurie was fortunate enough to encounter an art teacher who actually knew which end of the paint brush to hold. She began to experiment with pen and ink, and from there to dabble in the field of fashion design. Professional study opened up new doors and experiences for the budding artist. She donated work to the local PBS to help raise funds for operation. Laurie maintained her focus in the field of art, but teenage years led to runway, television and print modeling in addition to her art, music and dance.

After graduating from Lake Highlands High School, Laurie studied at the University of Texas at Arlington and finished her undergraduate degree in Commercial Art at Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches, Texas. She married a man she met in college and settled into life, spending nineteen years in the piney woods of East Texas. She landed a position with the von Allmen Advertising Agency as head artist, and at the same time renewed her love for art and music by teaching children in the community and forming In Perspective Studio in 1982. Returning to Stephen F. Austin, she began working on her Masters Degree in history and obtained her teaching certificate for the state of Texas. She accomplished this while juggling three children, sports, Boy Scouts, Brownies (replete with cookie sales), and working as a commercial artist. It was her first husband's career that caused the family to move, first to Houston, Texas and shortly after that to Ft. Thomas, Kentucky. Laurie attempted to return to individual art and music instruction, but received very little encouragement or support.

Ready for a life change, in faith and prayer, she headed back to Texas to face a single life with her three children. At a twentieth high school reunion, she once again ran into her junior high sweetheart, Terry Pace. The spark that had failed to ignite so many years before now flamed, and the two were married some months later. They returned to Dallas and began life as newlyweds with three children.

While teaching elementary school helped put bread on the table, it did nothing to feed the creative urges that had been put to simmer on the back burner. Terry suggested Laurie pursue painting again and the family adjusted to a single income. After several months of frustration, she contacted an old friend, Carol Anne ("Ani") Caver, who was living and painting in Maine. Ani encouraged Laurie to "just pick up a brush and get on with it," so she did. A family friend, Julie Roberts, commissioned two pieces for her ranch in Santa Clarita, California. Up to this time, most of

Laurie's work had centered on florals or children. Julie's commissions were for horse paintings, and through them Laurie rediscovered her childhood love for horses and animals. This love has been strong enough that Laurie has continued to paint horses, and has donated several pieces to the Double HP Horse Rescue Mission in South Dakota.

In 2002, Laurie and Terry moved to Justin, Texas, where she continued her teaching studio for guitar, piano and art. Her emphasis with her students is on giving back to others with their art. Their gift is from God, she teaches, and it is through this gift that they can touch the lives of many. Some of her original students are art teachers today.

Laurie renewed her friendship with Debbie Grayson Lincoln, an old art buddy from high school, and was able to complete the circle begun by Ani Caver by serving as a mentor to Debbie. Over the past five years, Laurie has taken honors in the American Airlines On My Own Time Art Show, taking first place in professional works on canvas in 2001, 2003, and 2004. She took second place in professional works on canvas in 2002 and 2005, and second place in watercolors in 2004. She has exhibited with the Dallas Committee of the Fine Arts at Northpark in Dallas, Texas in 2001, 2003 and 2004. She continues to donate art to various charities and rescues throughout the United States. Laurie is a member of the American Watercolor Society, Professional Published Fine Artists, and her artwork is collected internationally.

Billie Bauman, owner of Earth Works Art Gallery, discovered Laurie's artwork and added it to her gallery in New York. She then introduced her to Conni Tögel. While Billie felt that the two women were kindred spirits, neither woman expected the instant rapport that came with their first phone conversation... nor the birth, five months later, of a group called the Five Graces.

Credentials

Education:

University of Texas at Arlington, Texas
Stephen F. Austin State University Nacogdoches, Texas.
BFA Double Major of Art and History

Commercial Art:

Art/Advertising Director von Allmen Agency
Television Production
Radio Production

Computer Related Art:

Web Design Graphics One Design

Educational Art:

1982 to Present Day In Perspective Studio Art, Guitar and Piano
Annual Juried Art Shows for Students
1991-1997 Art Teacher Texas Schools

Awards and Juried Shows:

American Airlines On My Own Time Art Show 2001-2005
2001, 2003, 2004 First Place Professional Works on Canvas
2002, 2004 Second Place Professional Works on Canvas, and Works on Paper
2003 Second Place Professional Photography
2002, 2003 Honorable Mention Professional Works of Art on Paper
2005 Second Place Professional Works on Canvas
Dallas Committee of the Fine Arts 2001-2005
2001, 2003, 2004 Exhibitions

Donations and Charities:

2002 Ft Worth Margarita Charity Ball

2003 Carrollton Christian Academy Carrollton, Texas
2004 CT Cruisers Cross Timbers Community Church Argyle, Texas
2005 Double HP Horse Rescue South Dakota

Memberships:

American Watercolor Society
PPFA Published Professional Fine Artists
EMOEA Electronic Museum of Established Artists
The Five Graces

Collectors and Galleries:

Her work has been collected from as far away as Korea, The United Kingdom, Germany, Switzerland, Australia, Canada, Mexico and across the entire United States. She is represented by Earthworks Art Gallery in Penn Yan, New York and the Roberts Gallery in San Canyon, California.

Websites:

<http://www.ellepace.com>
<http://www.earthworksartgallery.com>
<http://www.ellepace.artspan.com>

Artist Favorite Quote:

“Every artist dips his brush into his own soul and paints his own nature into his pictures.” Henry Ward Becher.