

# Russell uses many mediums in artwork

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DANVILLE — Local artist Marsha Russell is an accomplished oil and acrylic painter who, for a long time, did not know that she possessed the talent that she does.

As Russell puts it, “I always liked art, but didn’t find my real niche until 1993.”

Being a member of the Danville Art League, she had free access to the many books available to artists who really want to learn basically anything.

“I did what came naturally,” Russell said, “and began to read until I learned much of what I wanted to know. I read many books on pastels, watercolors, drawing, acrylics, oil painting, etc.”

She watched PBS art shows and absorbed as much as she could. She took instruction from Francine Sinsibaugh, a local artist and retired art teacher. She also took classes on color theory taught by Bev Ward, another local artist who makes her own paper and teaches classes on how to do it.

Russell’s landscapes aren’t of pretty houses with little gardens.

“Landscapes are a favorite of mine and I love Utah, the Badlands in South Dakota and New Mexico,” she said. “I love the Southwest in general. High plains deserts are my most favorite areas. Imagine the openness of them and the spirituality you can find there. I tend to worship God in these untouched and unspoiled areas.

“Right now I am working on a type of art that I call ‘organic abstract.’ I go online and find pictures that catch my eye. These are pictures that alone would stand as a painting, but I play with the

picture a little bit on the computer.

“It helps me with problem solving on how to complete an artwork. I’ve even gone to the NASA Web site with photos from the Hubble Telescope of gorgeous colors and swirling gas clouds. There are some amazing photos that inspire me.”

Like other artists, Russell likes to try something new and has recently begun to use egg tempura. This medium offers the true vividness of the colors.

“They are the purest colors,” Russell said. “This technique is a very old one going as far back as when some of the masters were painted.”

One of Russell’s paintings is called “Into the Woods.”

“I used a composite of four different pictures of specific areas of the Northwest and an owl that had landed in our yard,” she said. “I called animal control about it and they said that it was probably a young owl that would sit where it was for a long time then take off.”

They were right, but Russell included him in her painting as he sat for quite awhile. A lot of her art is from what she sees in the area around her home and some is taken from vacation shots.

Russell’s paintings have been viewed several places, and she also donates pieces of art to charities with which the Danville Art League is affiliated.

Being creative led Russell to writing. The truth was that she always wanted to write something like “Aesop’s Fables,” which would



**Marsha Russell**

endure for centuries. After enduring a handful of rejection slips, she realized that being able to paint was her gift, and one that she should stick with.

“Besides,” Russell said, “I can actually see my art hanging up somewhere ... no rejection slips!”

The Rhine region in Germany is one place that draws Russell’s attention artistically.

“The old castles were something I studied when I was beginning an art piece. Once and an old castle with a moat completely surrounding it was my favorite,” she said. “I like being isolated and such a castle would certainly work for me. If I had all the money in the world I would buy the moat castle. My husband, John, offered to take me to see ‘my’ castle but I don’t fly!”

As a painter, her medium is paint and she must have brushes.

“I would buy brushes as often as possible thinking, ‘Oh, I know I will need this brush for something I’m going to paint.’ Before long my husband John was calling me the ‘Brush Lady’ because I had accumulated so many.

“The funny part is that when we’re somewhere brushes are being sold John will say, ‘Do you need this brush or that brush?’ We’re a good team, as John supports me in my art endeavors.”

*Marsha Russell is president of the Danville Art League.*

*Eileen Dunavan is a Danville Art League member who teaches children’s art classes in the summer at the Art League studio.*