



January 2017

Thank you so much to all of you who responded to the December Newsletter. We've now been doing the Newsletter for 4 years!
I'm so glad you are enjoying the new format!
We wish you all a very Happy New Year!

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Artists Profile this month: Patrice Dello-Russo!

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From the Studio

One of the nicest things about 2016 was meeting so many of my collectors who came by the studio or we met at shows. Or you emailed us with comments. I'm so grateful that you hang my work in your homes! I hope that the paintings bring you much enduring joy. We love to see installation photos of them in your homes!

There are several unfinished pieces in the works; I like to work on more than one in case I get "stuck" on a problem; I can think on it and come back to it later.

At that point it *may* be obvious as to what isn't working and why!
Of course I have all the hundreds of paintings in my head that I want to do too!

I know, it looks like I'm all over the map and I usually paint in Series! But I am "retired" and I am just enjoying painting what I want, when I want, where I want, etc. And as my eyesight fails, the only time is now!

I'm recovering from the worst head cold I've ever had so I haven't been very productive this past month. Starting to get the "itch" to paint again!

Abstract image.....still not resolved. Working on it!



“Canadian Figure Skater”



Finished?



Almost done!

“What I see”.....a very personal image....more on this one later!
This is the initial wash in.



This little lady is in the queue for a portrait! Can't wait to do this one!



If you want to bring your friends or a family member to the studio
we'd love to see you. Just call for an appointment!
303-752-2029

Best Framer in Town!

Will Mallett has been making my work look very professional for years.
Take a look at how this piece looks so great in this frame:



Photo by Lacie Nichole Arts at Mallett & Associates.

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Artist Profile

Patrice Walker Dello-Russo



This month we are featuring our friend and Plein air companion, Patrice Walker Dello-Russo. Patrice and I met through Plein Air Artists Colorado (PAAC), if I remember correctly, when we were painting on the Western slope. Since then, we have painted together many times and years ago we worked together on a PAAC Show which is how we really got to know each other. Patrice's family lives very near us and I came to know her Mom (a wonderful, intelligent woman who I miss.) and enjoyed her company on excursions to see Patrice's shows. Patrice is like her Mom! And we love to visit with her and Robert in Santa Fe and when they come to Denver.

- **It is obvious looking at your work that you have a connection to nature and animals. I love your story about your pony when you were young; can you tell us a little about your first animal?**

My very first animal was a dog which my parents got as a puppy when they lived in France. They moved back to the US to start a family and the dog became our family dog but he and I always had a special bond. He died while I was still young and my next animal was a goldfish. It was several years later when I got my horse, and this gave me mobility in the outdoors which stretched well beyond our neighborhood in a then semi-rural part of Englewood-Littleton, Colorado. I would often put a sketchbook in my pocket and pack a saddle bag full of fruit and peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and I would ride all day along the South Platte River and into the foothills west of Denver. My horse gave me the chance to observe wildlife without frightening them the way a human on foot does. I remember getting quite close to birds and sketching them while sitting horseback. I have a childhood drawing, which my mother had saved, of a red-shafted flicker which may have resulted from one of those days in the saddle. Growing up in Colorado gave me opportunities to be outside in a spectacular place where wild areas could be found with relative ease, and these wild areas were where I preferred to spend my time.



FALL HARMONIES - BULL ELK Oil on Linen Panel 12 x 16

- You have travelled into the mountains and the wilderness, *sometimes* alone, to paint en Plein Air and on one occasion to photographwas it a bear or a mountain lion? You've been known to do that alone!

I do love being alone in the mountains and in the wilderness, and it seems that much of my time outdoors is and has been spent in solitary fashion. When you live in any of the Rocky Mountain States, you have easy access to nature. I grew up spending huge blocks of time camping and hiking throughout Colorado and especially in the Colorado mountains. I once backpacked alone in the Rockies for 15 days, and several years ago I drove on a 2-month solo winter painting trip through Colorado, Wyoming and Montana. Plein air painting is a natural extension of my spending time outdoors. I like getting to know the landscape intimately and the act of painting necessitates careful observation of a chosen scene, and I find that very satisfying. I always keep my camera handy, both for secondary reference back in the studio, and just in case a wild animal wanders into view. I have thousands of sketches and photos of birds and wildlife and getting them has taken hours of time out in nature along with lot of patience. I guess that is part of the reason I do spend so much time outside alone – most folks don't have the inclination to wait for hours for something to happen but I love being outdoors, being still and quiet, and simply observing my surroundings. As for photographing bears and mountain lions, I recently spent two weeks with a friend camping in Yellowstone with the specific purpose of photographing grizzlies. We didn't see any grizzlies but we did get great reference photos (and some not-so-great photos) of just about every other species in the Park.



Sprague Lake Inlet, Rocky Mountain National Park - Plein air sketch, oil on linen panel, 12x16

- Tell us something that we don't know about you.

Many of my painting friends don't know that I had a career in archaeology, both as a field archaeologist and scientific illustrator. I had a dual major in college of art and archaeology and graduated with the archaeology degree. I loved the archaeology field work as it kept me outside and often in remote areas. The scientific illustration kept my artistic skills honed as careful observation was a key part of the illustration work. Several years ago, my husband, who is also an archaeologist, accepted a research position in Santa Fe so we left the Colorado Mountains and headed to the high desert country of New Mexico. When I am not there, I miss Colorado- mostly because I am a mountain girl at heart and love the snow - in fact, something else many don't know about me was that I had a "career" as a professional skier and worked in the Colorado ski industry for about 10 years. I travel back to Colorado regularly to paint, to spend time in the back country and to be with family. I feel fortunate that I can still spend most of my year in my home state of Colorado, where my family still lives and where I still have a residence, so for me, New Mexico seems like a brief stop along the road. I am happy for the stop, though, because the Santa Fe art scene has been a great experience and an important one for furthering my art.

- What percentage of time do you paint in the studio...Plein air? Do you have a daily studio practice?

I do have a rather strict daily studio practice and try to dedicate 40 hours a week to my art. If I have deadlines looming, time in the studio can be all-consuming. Generally, I try to reserve weekends for time spent with my husband, so my week days are pretty intense with painting, drawing, or something art-related. I try to squeeze in time in the evenings for reading art books or art magazines and I try to give an hour a day to marketing. For a number of years, I was very dedicated to Plein air painting and would spend about 75-80% of my time out Plein air painting, but now I probably spend that much time in the studio. I still try to get out at least one day a week to paint Plein air since that helps keep my studio work a tad bit fresher. The exception is when I go out on my painting forays, usually into the Colorado Mountains, and then it is a

focused, multi-day commitment to Plein air painting and seeking reference material. Since my preferred painting subjects are birds and wildlife, and they are extremely difficult to paint in the wild, I make quick on-site drawings, take lots of photos and study animal anatomy. I do a lot of animal sketching at zoos and, since living in Santa Fe, I regularly participate in weekly figure drawing of live models. This has proved extremely beneficial for visual accuracy in my drawing, of both humans and animals.

- Recently, you decided to change your professional name from Walker to Dello-Russo. Why did you decide to do it now and how's it going? Are people finding you OK?



Robert and Patrice Dello-Russo
FIRST RAYS OF WINTER – AVOCETS Oil on Panel 24 x 36

Changing my last name mid-career has been quite interesting. It has also been a bit disconcerting since it feels as if I am starting over and mid-career is not really the time to do that. I decided to take my husband's last name, which is Italian. I procrastinated for many years but decided I should do it, primarily for clerical reasons, and also because I love the uniqueness of the name. I have been signing my name professionally as an artist since I sold my first painting when I was 12 years old. Since I just made the name change a month ago, it is still very new for me and still feels a bit awkward. I am not quite sure how it will ultimately affect my career, but I am ready for the challenge and the new adventure! There is definitely a time-line of demarcation with the signature on my paintings going from one name to the other. I thought about hyphenating my names during this transition, but since the Italian name is already hyphenated, that would have been too confusing, so I am just jumping right into the new name. For friends, acquaintances or collectors who don't know I have made the name change, it may be problematic, but hopefully with time it will iron itself out. As for people finding me, I fortunately have Fine Art Studio Online as my website provider and they have linked between my old website and my new one (PatriceDelloRusso.com). And, in order to facilitate people finding me under my new name, I just opened a Facebook page and business account under [Patrice Dello Russo Fine Art](#). One fun benefit of changing my name is that I have always been near the end of the alphabet and I will now be near the front!

- You have affiliations with six major art organizations; how do you manage this? Do you show in all their annual/regional shows? How has this helped or hindered your career?

I am always thrilled to be invited into an exhibition and regularly apply to the shows offered by the organizations where I hold memberships. I do occasionally miss deadlines. I feel that participating in these exhibits definitely helps my career because it puts my art in front of an audience who might not otherwise have the opportunity to see it. Plus, anytime the work is selected for an award, it brings a smile because it means someone else appreciates my artwork.



BEAUTY IN WINTER - TRUMPETER SWANS Oil on Linen 18x24 "Outstanding Oil" 2016 WAOW Show

- What are your plans for the future? Where do you want to take your work in the future? What shows are coming up for you? Any solo shows?

The future always has a way of sneaking up on us and it is tough to keep goals at hand, but my hope for the future of my art is to continually improve and to continually expand my knowledge of art and natural ecosystems. January is always the time when I begin planning for upcoming shows, make sure my galleries are stocked with new work, review my past year, and focus on studio painting. I still spend time outdoors, as I particularly love painting in the snow, but during the heart of winter I spend long hours in my studio. I like to think my art is ever evolving. I intellectualize much of the painting process and like to work on specific challenges when I paint such as edges, temperature, composition, or the more ephemeral/elusive arenas such as atmosphere or mood. The first show I have for 2017 is the American Miniatures Invitational show at Settlers West Gallery in Tucson, where I will have two paintings on display. It will also be my first formal show with paintings signed under my new name!



DAPPLED LIGHT OF EARLY FALL Oil on Linen 9 x 12 Plein Air

- What advice would you have for artists just starting their careers?

For artists just starting out, I would say: paint what you love and do it with a passion, with the skill and draftsmanship derived from careful observation and long hours with a pencil or brush in hand. Drawing is paramount – practice the craft! Paint both indoors and outdoors, and practice enthusiastically and continually. Know that improvement will follow hard work, and learning will be a lifelong pursuit.

- Any final thoughts?

We are living during an interesting time. I feel that artists have the power to be influential by sharing our creative passions and, hopefully, by bringing an enhanced appreciation of beauty to the world. Each us can make the world a better place, we just need to find our talent and share it. I sincerely thank you Leslie for thinking of me for your newsletter!

Contact the artist about all artwork.

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Thanks!