

True Confession *by Mary Ann Inman*

As a beginner: I copied. Back then, it didn't matter because my painting skills were so bad that images weren't recognizable. I learned how to draw in high school. However, painting wasn't taught. I remember that I ruined many sketches with watercolor. They turned into mud.

As a young mother, I sketched outdoors. After I ruined my third sketch of the Shopiere Dam, I burst into tears. My husband consoled me by telling me, "It is only a piece of paper."

Later, I painted with a group in the basement of a local church. I learned how to trace images to practice and enrolled in a few affordable watercolor classes. Eventually, my copies moved from a mess to recognizable. The church ladies encouraged me to enter my first WRAP. I received an honorable mention. I was thrilled!

However, my joy quickly turned into embarrassment. Somebody behind me whispered, "That is a copy. I think I saw those cows on a calendar." The woman next to her hushed her. The goal of WRAP has been to educate which motivated me to pen this article.

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"Lunar Light" mixed media by Mary Ann Inman

Maturing as an artist: Eventually, I enrolled in college classes in Janesville and learned how to paint photo realism. Students shot still life photos in class. The professor approved all compositions. Then students projected their original photos onto a full sheet of watercolor paper. We didn't deviate from the photo. Students spent the semester painting one piece. One of my paintings was accepted into a juried national watercolor society.

Feeling confident, I enrolled in classes at UW Whitewater and was disappointed when two professors reviewed my portfolio. One suggested that I pursue a career as a photographer because my camera could capture similar images. That was painful for me to hear! In hindsight, it was helpful. Today, my artwork is original. Working from my imagination has been a delightful experience.

"Art is about readiness to accept the truth." – UW Whitewater Professor Emerita John Wildenberg