



Life on the Coast

Terri Myer

By Chelsea Koressel

Many artists are influenced by life experiences, which serve as material and inspiration later in life. Oil painter, Terri Myer spent many of her young years in a boat, playing in the water, and enjoying time in the sun. Though she didn't imagine it at the time, this background provided Myer with direction and the subject matter she is best known for today; boats and coastal life. Her colorful and vivid body of work invites the viewer to play along on her sun filled adventures while she continues to traverse her artistic path.

Myer was born in Laurel, Maryland, and was raised in Missouri, where her parents introduced her to the world she remains so passionate about. When she was young, Myer's family purchased a boat and spent a lot of time fishing and exploring the lakes near their home. When Terri was seven, her parents bought an even bigger boat, allowing for water skiing and other boating adventures.

"I loved to trick ski and could jump up off the wake behind the boat and spin 360 degrees in the air," Myer says with a sparkle in her eye. "I could also ski backwards on one

ski. This took lots of practice and studying a water skiing magazine as I knew no one who could do this. Once a year my family would go camping for nine days at the Lake of the Ozarks State Park. I would get up every morning early and practice skiing while the water was nice and smooth.”

Myer went on to paint her first oil painting in junior high and continued painting through high school after the inspiration of a family trip to Florida. Terri saw a beach with palm trees and crashing waves for the first time. The movement, sparkle, energy, and colorful shine of the ocean stayed with her. She saw



Beach Huts at Curacao | 20” x 24” | Oil

Myer also loved to swim and was a part of her hometown swim team, winning many blue ribbons for the breast stroke. In addition, she played shortstop in softball for different summer leagues. Besides her many athletic interests, Myer was infatuated with the challenge and allure of art. In grade school, she created her own board games to play, designing both board and game pieces. She also wrote and illustrated little story books. In 5th grade, her teacher took notice of her passion for art. He singled her out and let her have whole afternoons drawing murals on butcher paper mounted around the classroom.

the fishing boats, especially the shrimp boats, with their tall masts, booms, sea-worn look, and color, as majestic. Compared to the cabin cruisers and ski boats in the lakes back home, their unique character and life were intriguing.

In high school, the art of music became another strong focus for Myer. “I had hours of music and was expected to major in it,” she explains. “I was first chair clarinet, played in the Jackson Municipal Band, and was the first woman ever to play in the all-male city band in Cape Girardeau, Missouri. I accompanied almost every student on piano for state contests and had to practice hours a day.”



Under the Bridge to Paradise | 48" x 48" | Oil

In 1973, Myer chose to attend the University of Missouri after receiving a Curator's Scholarship, and where she could focus on cultivating her artistic self by majoring in art and music. During the fall semester of Myer's second year, something happened that drastically changed her direction. She was nearing completion of a 4' x 4' surrealistic oil painting of swarming bugs on a red bubbling flying planet. She dedicated all of her time to its completion but tragedy struck when the painting was stolen the day it was due. Luckily, there was no problem with the grade in class. Her teacher had seen the painting, but Myer was left completely devastated. This experience led her to quit college after that year.

Despite this unfortunate event, Myer remained motivated to create. She married not too long after her departure from school and moved to Cherry Point, North Carolina. The coast of North Carolina brought back all the passion she had for the beautiful water, and thus, began to paint the many boats and beach life using ink and watercolor. After four years of inspirational paintings, Myer moved with her husband to Springfield, Oregon.

They spent seven years in Oregon from 1979 to 1986, and while there, Myer re-entered school and graduated cum laude from the University of Oregon with a BS in Fine Art and Art Education. During this time, she exhibited and participated in many art shows and was even commissioned by a retirement community known as the Lutheran Home, to showcase her work. She also became a member of the Emerald Empire Art Association and won a year of free membership by designing the brochure for the association.



Dry Dock | 16" x 20" | Oil

In the midst of growing recognition and involvement in the art community, Myer went through a number of difficult changes, including a divorce. She and her three sons left their home in Oregon and moved back to Missouri. Myer began teaching art to schoolchildren in Kindergarten through twelfth grade and worked through the challenges of single motherhood. During these difficult times, she maintained inspiration by remaining focused on her students and gained knowledge for her own artistic pursuits.

“Besides my formal art education,” Myer elaborates, “I would say that teaching art taught me the most about my work. As I watched my students work on various projects, I would realize many things. And as I drilled them year after year on stuff like composition, colors, history, and drawing, I deepened my understanding of these fundamental basics.”

After getting back on her feet, Myer returned to school at Lindenwood University, St. Charles, Missouri. In 2005, she earned an MFA in drawing and painting. Much of her subject matter at this time incorporated influences from trips to North Carolina, Florida, and the rivers and lakes of Missouri.

When Myer remarried in 2006, she did so in Jamaica among the white sand beaches. Myer and her new husband enjoyed traveling, and have journeyed to Italy, Costa Rica, Mexico, and the Florida Keys over the years. Myer took advantage of the trips, snapping thousands of photos and gathering inspiration for future paintings. Between family life and teaching, Myer couldn't find much time

for her own art. So in 2011, she retired from teaching to focus on her art full time.

Myer's vibrant, rich, and highly detailed style have been developed through years of experimentation and study. Her time with her students allowed her to dabble in many different media; watercolor, collage, acrylic painting, and oil. Initially, Myer's primary medium had been watercolor. “I liked watercolor partly because it was challenging,” she says,



Beach Vendor of Antigua | 20" x 24" | Oil

“and partly because I thought it was safer to have around with my young sons. When I went back to oils, I wanted to keep some of the aspects of watercolor that I really liked, which was blending and layering colors.”

Myer has also drawn on many inspirations to aid in the development of her vibrant works of art. Her many educators over the years pushed her towards deeper vision and greater success in her work. Myer admires and has been inspired by the works of masters; Van Gogh for his color and Wassily Kandinsky for his abstract work.



Pineapples | 30" x 40" | Oil

Many years of establishing style and technique has earned Myer some much deserved acknowledgement. In 2009, she won 4th place in the St. Louis Watercolor Society, “Big Splash” exhibit. She has been juried into many local and regional art shows and won several awards over the years, such as the “Jacksonville Art Show,” Jacksonville, IL, where she won 2nd place. In addition, she won a merit award at the Midsummer Arts Faire in Quincy, IL, for her piece, *Under the Bridge to Paradise*.

Myer and her husband now live on a small lake in Fenton, Missouri where they have a small paddle boat and enjoy daily outdoor experiences. She remains focused on her cur-

rent creations with color as her number one concern. She chooses her coastal subjects based on their colorful possibilities and believes color can evoke joy and happiness by those who view and collect her art. Her recent work has been inspired by trips to such places as the island of Curaçao in the Caribbean, Antigua, and the Bahamas.

“I am currently exploring island cultures,” she furthers. “My recent paintings have to do with beach vendors in some way with each piece telling a story. So, in a way, one thing I do is portray lifestyles, but I want people to smile when they look at my paintings. I want to bring pleasure to people by expressing myself in a colorful, creative, happy way.”