

CHRISTINE CROZIER



It was a revelation for Christine Crozier growing up just blocks from San Francisco Bay, that not everyone had beautiful murals painted on the walls of their homes. Her father converted white walls into flights of fancy and imaginative scenery.

The warmth and influence of that environment had a lasting impact. Family activities were always outside: hiking, backpacking, lake and river swimming, and Crozier recalls carrying a sketchbook at every family hike and outing, drawing

and painting at every opportunity, and eventually following her father's lead, if not his advice.

"My parents always told me I could be anything I wanted to be. But I remember when I told them I wanted to be an artist, their response was, 'well...maybe not *that*.'"

Thinking she might still be able to spend most of her day outside, Crozier decided to study marine biology. But art kept calling. She enrolled at the Day Studio of Decorative Arts in San

Francisco, where she soon became a part-time instructor.

When the owner of the school started a decorative art and design company, she hired Crozier and six of her classmates to paint murals and other art for restaurants, hotels, and private homes.

"I love the decorative arts and continue to create and repair murals in some of America's most beautiful homes. But in 1989 I decided I wanted to learn to paint oils on canvas." Crozier found a teacher who became a mentor, an



inspiration, and a friend—Carmel artist and gallery owner, Martin Weekly.

“Marty taught me an important lesson; to look for art in the simplest of scenes. His philosophy was that you don’t have to fly to Europe or hike for miles into the mountains to find interesting things to paint. Some of the most beautiful scenes are right there along side the road.”

That said, Crozier has painted throughout the Americas, in Europe, and the Fiji Islands. “I guess you can find wonderful things along just about any old road,” she says.

Her metamorphosis as a fine artist began with plein-air oils

because that’s what Weekly painted and she loved his work, and loved being able to work outside.

For years she painted pure, plein-air landscapes until on a painting trip in Mexico she began focusing on figures in the landscape. It started with ten to fifteen minute oil sketches of the people in the town going about their business or simply relaxing. At the end of the trip Crozier found herself with a wealth of reference material and new inspiration.

The concept of just sitting, relaxing, not trying to fill every second was the inspiration that resonated with her. She realized that is something fairly foreign to

people in the United States. “As an artist much of my job is to spend a lot of time just looking and observing. Many people equate that with indolence and are uneasy with the perceived idleness. I’ve always loved Mary Cassatt’s work. For me it’s less about ‘mother and child’ themes than it is about people just looking, looking out of windows, looking out into gardens, looking at children. Simply being still and contemplating one’s situation. I think that is something to be cherished and celebrated.”

Crozier has continued traveling to places that nurture contemplation and a slower lifestyle and compelling landscapes. That included eight years living in New Mexico and several months teaching workshops and kayaking in the Fiji Islands. As well as honoring a slowing of time, her art celebrates the humanity we all have in common. She believes we can enjoy our cultural differences and still celebrate our similarities.

When Crozier returned from the trip to Mexico she was concerned about where to find that kind of subject matter until she remembered she lives in a beach town, and beaches are one of the few places it is acceptable to be still and contemplate life. Her studio and

home are only a few blocks from the Pacific shore.

She lives in the Victorian cottage her grandparents bought the week she was born. Murals and decorative elements spill off the walls and ceilings. A white wall is the same as a blank canvas she says, “It hasn’t always been a popular concept in art that beauty is important, but I believe it is important to live our lives in beauty, whether it is a painting, the way my house looks and feels, or the way I think about things as I go about my day. I want to approach life with grace and beauty.”



When Crozier isn’t painting or hiking she either works in her garden or cooks. She believes her art and life are completely integrated. Gardening and cooking are as creative as painting

and involve a similar of manipulation of materials and consideration of textures and colors, with the addition of fragrance and flavor. “And if I’m hiking I’m constantly analyzing color, value, textures and forms,” she adds.



While living in Santa Fe she began taking workshops from various artists such as Quang Ho, David Shevlino, and Robert Lemler. Crozier prefers a loose, impressionist style. When she paints she looks for the extraordinary in the seemingly ordinary. Her art invites us to look at everyday occurrences in our own lives with fresh eyes. She is a respected teacher who believes artists have a mission to foster the continual growth of the arts and an appreciation of beauty.

When she returned to Pacific Grove, Crozier was juried into the prestigious, ninety year-old Carmel Art Association joining a roster that has included many notable early California painters including William Ritschel, Armin Hansen, and E. Charlton Fortune. She has served on the board of the Association for almost a dozen years and has had the privilege of serving a term as Board President. She is also a founding member—and has twice served as Board President—of the Monterey Bay Plein-Air Painters Association.

“Making art, she says, is an intimate, ongoing conversation between the artist and the subject, be it a landscape, a figure, or both. And if I’ve done my job well, the conversation will continue between the viewer and the art.”