

Julie Wear

With a Sense of Class and Style



The Artist Julie Wear

■ by *Judith Wenning*

Julie Wear is an internationally renowned artist who is regarded as the world's premiere painter of Thoroughbred Racehorses. Furthermore, she is a highly acclaimed Arabian horse artist. Her famed equestrian portraits are priced possessions of prestigious breeders and art collectors. Even HRH the late Queen Elisabeth II commissioned Julie Wear a painting. Art by Julie Wear hangs in important private collections throughout the United States, Canada, the Middle East, Europe, South America and Japan. Julie Wear's style is easily recognizable: Her paintings are classics. They look timeless and classy, almost like painted in another century. It is always important for Julie Wear that they do not appear like photographs or like they were copied from photos. Julie Wear also puts special emphasis on the scenery of the paintings, often depicting cozy stables or a typical desert background. She loves to paint eye-catching accessories like for example striking Arabian halters and saddles. Julie Wear just has a great eye for fine details.



“Bandos & Fantasia”, oil painting, collection of Ventura Farms, David Murdock, USA

Julie Wear grew up in Northern Indiana, an area which is known as “corn country” as it has very good, flat farm land. She has been besotted with horses from her earliest childhood. Although many of her ancestors were creative people – her father’s side traces back to the noted German composer Richard Wagner – Julie Wear does not really know where her love for horses comes from. Nobody in her family has a horse background. “I cannot remember a time when I was not drawing horses all day every day and my school grades reflected this!”, she remembers with a smile. Julie Wear drew horses all over her school books and papers, a fact that was not approved by her teachers. When looking back today, she cannot recall any time in her life when she was not totally obsessed with horses.

Julie Wear is completely self-taught, in her opinion there is no school to learn how to paint horses. She remarks that she would have been anyway far too impatient to sit in an art classroom and take instructions. But how

did she turn a childhood hobby into a widely respected career? Julie Wear’s immense success did not come over night and she never took anything for granted. She loves being extremely busy and having an overwhelming to-do list.

As a young adult, Julie Wear exhibited her paintings at a large regional Arabian Horse show and sold everything she had, plus received so many commissions she hardly knew where to begin. From there, she exhibited at the U.S. National Arabian Horse show for a few years and at the Scottsdale show. By then her work was established well enough that she did not need to have any more exhibitions of Arabian horses.

Arabians certainly played a huge role in her life. Julie Wear met her husband at the U.S. National Arabian Horse Show in 1982, and also at the Scottsdale Show in Scottsdale Arizona. The love of Arabian horses was just one of the many common elements for the young couple.



“The National Champion Mares of Ventura”, oil painting, collection of Ventura Farms, David Murdock, USA



“The Comet Daughters of Ventura”, collection of Ventura Farm, David Murdock, USA



“Egyptian Mare & Filly”, oil painting, owned by Jamie Zissis, Rosehaven Ranch, USA

They married and got one son. For a number of years, the family bred also Arabian horses.

The Scottsdale Show stayed always their favorite. There would be yearlings from new stallions and Julie and her husband always wanted to see and evaluate the new yearlings. As breeders, they wanted to judge the new stallions’ progeny to find out how prepotent they might be in reproducing their type. Today Julie Wear and her family do not own horses anymore. However, they live in Versailles, Kentucky, just outside of Lexington Ky. Versailles is located in the Bluegrass region and is the epicenter of Thoroughbred racehorses. Julie Wear and her family chose this area because there are horses everywhere. Versailles impresses with its quaint, small-town beauty and striking horse farms. Egyptian Arabian horse breeders certainly remember that The Egyptian Event took place in nearby Lexington for decades.

Asked about her favorite painting technique, Julie Wear explains that she loves to work in oil. She has worked in pastel and watercolor but oil paint is far more satisfying for her. She explains that oil is a very sensuous medium, you have to learn what the paint will allow you to do

with it. “You cannot force it, there has to be a constant communication back and forth between myself, the brush and the paint”, she remarks. “It is a delicate balance between what you want the paint to do so you can create on canvas what your mind’s image is and what the paint will give. That is the beauty of the give and take of painting. It is what I love most.”

When questioned about her favorite master painters, Julie Wear relates that she very much admires “the two Alfreds”: the 19th century Alfred is the French painter Alfred De Dreux and the 20th century Alfred is the English painter Alfred Munnings. Julie Wear has also created striking bronzes.

One of Julie Wear’s most beautiful artwork is an oil painting of an Egyptian mare and her young foal. It shows the dream and ideal of any Arabian horse breeder. The splendid pure white mother stands protectively and proud next to her baby. The now chestnut foal is alert, showing the same harmony of proportions and great tail carriage as the mother. The pose of the two horses reminds of the famous 19th century sculpture “L’Accolade” by Pierre Jules Mène. While the mare



“Morning Ride with Chloe and Teddy”



“Natalie TO”, collection of the Will Davis Family USA



Quick Stallion sketch/study

seems to calmly check her surroundings and rests in herself, the baby curiously looks back at the spectator and is slightly excited. The excellent legs of both horses are clearly visible.

The Arabian surrounding in this painting is a true eye catcher as well. The eye wanders from an Oriental archway to palm trees in the background to a mixture of scattered grass and sand on the ground. A splendid pink bougainvillea is in full bloom on the right side of the painting - a beautiful splash of colour. Pottery in vibrant blue and Oriental tiles forming mosaic patterns on the walls add to the Middle Eastern atmosphere.

The style of the painting is timeless – typical for Julie Wear. It was executed in 2017 but could have been also painted in the 19th century.

Julie Wear has visited various horse farms in the U.S., England and Ireland. Most of the reason for visiting horse farms was due to the fact that the owners wanted her to see their horses to paint them. Although she has been invited many times to travel to various Middle Eastern countries and would love to go, her immense flight fear hindered her from travelling to the Middle

East so far.

What fascinates her most about Arabian horses is their beauty. She explains that sometimes when you least expect it, there will be a flash of perfection as a horse is lunged at a show, or the way it is walking and holding itself, the perfect balance between how the neck is held out and arched and a correctly carried tail, the balance and symmetry. Even though it may only last for a few seconds it is fired into her mind and she strives to capture it in paint. Personally, she does not like the way horses are shown in halter. She prefers to see the natural nobility rather than the horse being stressed into something that is really unflattering to the conformation of the horse. In her opinion the natural nobility and dignity of the Arabian horse is subordinated to an unnatural unpleasantness. She likes to see some haughtiness especially in an Arab stallion. And she loves to see masculinity in a stallion.

Although the original paintings are privately commissioned and are therefore rarely seen in public, Wear's work has been seen in numerous important publications such as Scientific American, Ciga Weekend Longchamp Magazine published by Europe's largest



“Arabian Mare in a Stable”, oil painting, private collection



“Arabian Stallion in a Courtyard”, oil painting, private collection



“Arabian Stallion Among Temple Ruins”, private collection in the Middle East

luxury hotel group, Ciga, in celebration of the running of The Arc D Triumph at Longchamp, as well as Spur magazine, The Bloodhorse magazine, Arabian Horse World, Arabian Horse Times, Thoroughbred Times, Equine Images, as well as in a scholarly publication in Ireland’s Trinity University of the genetic origins of the Thoroughbred.

Her master’s eye for color and design, and the same devotion to skilled artistry, seen in her original paintings helps her here for creating these extraordinary items.

I was commissioned by many top American breeders to paint their horses, including a number of famous U.S. champion Arabian stallions and mares.

Julie Wear’s day starts around 5:30 am. She drinks coffee, catches up on the news, then she needs to answer business emails and mentally prepare for the day. When she is working on a painting she is very strict. But as she is always in the mood to paint, it is really no effort to get into it. It is like easing into your favorite saddle. When she is working on a painting she paints most every day. “I have always said that the paint will tell me when it is time to quit for the day...but then I cannot wait until the

next day comes so I can get back to the painting.” Julie Wear adds with a smile.

When painting for many Arabian owners, we would talk about the horse that I was going to paint so I could assess the aspects they loved about the particular horse, that way I knew what to focus on. From there, they would say,

“just paint me one of your beautiful paintings with my horse in it”.

A few years ago Julie Wear started a design business. She designed and introduced into the US market a line of fine porcelain dinnerware, etched crystal glasses and Legacy Pewter. The product line is available in over 200 retail stores throughout the US. This year she will also release silk twill scarves and wool/silk wraps. All equestrian, of course.

To be honest, this business has grown faster than I ever would have thought possible.

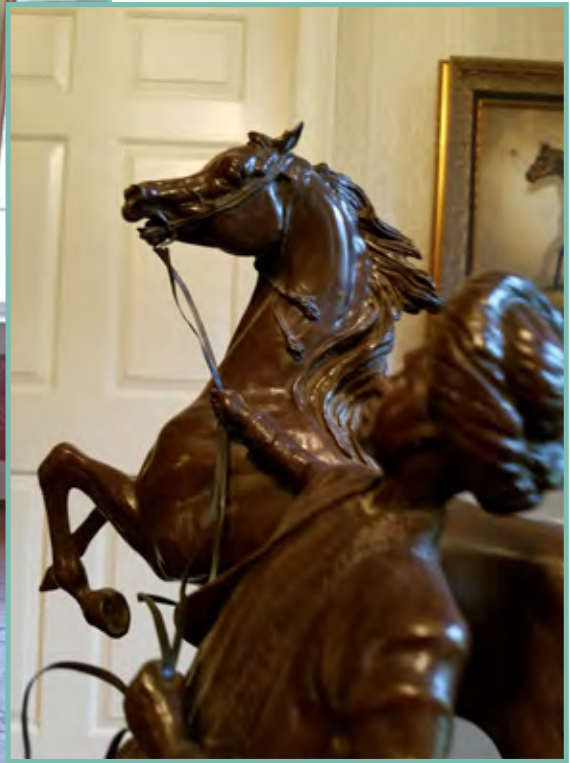
HRH Queen Elizabeth II owned one of the scarves Julie Wear designed as well as an original painting that she commissioned her to paint. The painting remains in her private quarters in Buckingham Palace.



“Desert Stallions”, oil painting, private collection



“Arabian Stallion with Groom”, oil painting, private collection



Bronze sculpture "Sultan's Stallion"

"Night Watch", bronze

In the past, Julie Wear had one-person exhibitions at the Hyatt Hotel lobby and The Marriott Resort Hotel lobby in Lexington Kentucky twice a year for several years during the Keeneland Thoroughbred bloodstock and yearling sales. However, she stopped exhibiting because many of the paintings were bought and she could not replace them. Julie Wear had a two year backlog of commissioned artwork to do! For many years, she was booked out for at least two years in advance. People would happily wait...

She also had exhibitions at the U.S. National Arabian Horse show for several years as well as the Scottsdale show.

Asked after her plans for the future, Julie Wear smiles and ponders: "I envision myself painting horses until my last day on earth." □

"Bridled Horses", silk scarf designed by Julie Wear

