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### Nancie Crowley

*"I am drawn to the purity of the sun and the stark shadows and colors that the sun creates."*

Staying close to the sun in her work is what figurative artist Nancie Crowley is all about. Even as a child in her native San Diego, Crowley was drawn to the intense colors of Southern California and the art of neighboring Mexico. Later on, while studying at the university level, the Bay Area figurative painters of the 1950s and 60s -- Elmer Bischoff, Richard Diebenkorn and David Park -- strongly influenced her. She was drawn to shapes and intrigued by the way things came together as pieces of a puzzle.



"Whether I am painting human figures, animals, landscapes or still lifes, my primary interest is to keep solving these puzzles and challenging myself with my composition," she says. "I use colors to define the shapes of my work. I juxtapose intense color values with contrasting colors to create a visual excitement to please me and, of course, the viewer."

### Always an artist

About being an artist, Crowley says she can't remember a time when art was not important in her life. She is slightly dyslexic and when she was in grade school no one knew the term let alone the symptoms of dyslexia. During math and reading classes, she turned to drawing in the margins of her notebook to ease her frustration with the learning process. But her passion and need to express herself in her art was far deeper than a compensation for her struggles in school. As she puts it, "As far as I can remember, I was infatuated with the smell of paint and the beauty of movement of paint from the brush to the paper."

In addition to her own art, Crowley taught art for 10 years at Pacific Art League of Palo Alto in the SF Bay Area where she has lived with her husband since 1963. In all her classes - Life Drawing, Experimental Watercolor and Painting/Drawing the Costumed Figure - it was paramount to teach her students the importance of a strong composition and also to enjoy the privilege of being an artist.

Not surprisingly, she never leaves her work for long. Even when she travels she takes gouaches, watercolor paper and brushes and paints on location. When at a jazz concert or sporting event she has her ever present drawing pad and draws the energy around her. "I seek and find inspiration everywhere," she emphasizes.

Crowley says she will never tire of learning how things come together. Nor will she ever tire of sharing her discovery with her audience in a way that makes them feel connected visually at the same time. Her goal is to open viewer's eyes to a new way of seeing and awakening them with color and composition. If her work can also elicit a smile, that's all the better.



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