

Artist's Statement --- John Pfeiffer

Not long before I retired six years ago, I began thinking of what I might do with all my time. I was leaving a long career with the federal government young and healthy enough to throw myself into something new that would give me a sense of accomplishment and fulfillment. I did not want to work in another bureaucratic setting; I did not want another boss; I did not need to make money; and I wanted freedom to be independent and creative.

Encouraged by my wife, I had taken a couple watercolor painting classes at a local arts organization and enjoyed them. Then, I saw a German Expressionist print exhibition at the National Gallery of Art and became excited about the possibility of learning to make similar works of art. In addition, I discovered that senior citizens were able to take classes at our local community college very inexpensively.

I began taking drawing, painting, and printmaking courses at Montgomery College and have been doing so pretty much full-time since. I supplement my classes with frequent museum visits; I look at lots of other artists' work on the Internet; and I buy and pore over lots of used art books from Amazon.

I still feel like a kid in a candy store. I am experimenting with a variety of image-making techniques, utilizing the wonderful printmaking resources at the college, and I am greatly enjoying new friendships with faculty and students of all ages and backgrounds in my classes.

To date, my work is largely representational, focusing often on scenes from family vacations that have provided many happy memories (and photographs) to inspire me. As I develop more skill and confidence, I hope to incorporate more figures in my art, especially children and people in motion. I also expect I will become more comfortable with more abstract images --- and maybe even larger ones. It takes much effort, frequent trial-and-error, and regular practice to become proficient in any of the several image-making methods I have been studying. Over time, I likely will narrow my focus to a few, but for now, I am enjoying the luxury of experimenting with many. In addition, my efforts in any one area seem to enrich my thinking about how to approach others.

Making art has become a tremendously fulfilling pursuit for me, and I look forward to doing so for many more years. Some of the most talented artists I have been privileged to work with are 10-15 years older than I, and my dad, who began painting in his retirement many years ago, is still painting almost daily at 97!