

Jan's Gems – April, 2018

Happy Mother's Day - Reflections on Paint-Outs . . .

Both my parents were artists. What can I say; it was inherently in my blood from the very start. My mother and father majored in art in college and that's where they met and fell in love. My dad worked as an art director with a large advertising firm in New York City, and through the years, my mom curated many gallery shows. Both painted on the side, Dad with portrait commissions, and both exhibiting their work.

Growing up, my brother and I were happily and richly surrounded in music and art.

In honor of Mother's Day, I'm writing about a family memory we called "Paint-Outs". Several times during our childhood, my parents would plan glorious excursions to the countryside to paint. Usually, we went with good family friends and their same-age children. Upon arrival, we kids were mostly interested in romping and playing in the beauty of the place, but there was one set condition. We all had to produce a painting. We were to observe the natural beauty around us and paint our impressions of it. Well, I never painted so fast in my life. All I wanted was to finish my painting with a couple of brush swooshes so I would have the time to go hiking and exploring, and just be a playful little girl. The adults, on the other hand, were quite content staying at their make-shift easels for their more serious plein air attempts.

Looking back, those were simple and fun adventures, and those memories bring much joy to me today. I now appreciate the ever-so-slight discipline we had to observe in the magic of our surroundings. We weren't expected to paint masterpieces, but I now appreciate the simple grandness of those times and what those impressed upon us. Maybe we only interpreted a blade of grass or a nearby tree, or just realized how blue the sky was that day. Some of us eventually became more skilled as painters, others not. Still, in whatever it is we do with our kids, we hopefully pass along appreciation for such special moments in time.

Happy Mother's Day!