

Inside the Artist's Studio: Maryfrances Gitto

Written by Arlene Chaplin



The day I visited Maryfrances Gitto's studio, the windows were open and there was a slight, quiet breeze trying its best to blow away the humidity. The view from her studio is the best at Holliston Mill. The trees provide shade and the soft greens of summer, rust and gold leaves in the fall, and always a view of the rail trail that runs through Holliston. Her studio is a quiet refuge where she can remove herself from the past intensity of her working life as a psychiatric nurse and wait for the accidental changes of her watercolors to morph into exciting abstract paintings.

Many of Maryfrances' paintings are abstract expressionist. She uses color and texture to bring paintings to life, working in watercolors, gouache and oil pastels to create landscapes, typical of what are seen around New England. Inspiration for her work comes from several sources. She might observe a subject through a variety of weather situations or through changes in the light from day to night. She also spends time looking at the work of other artists and learning about their processes. Images in books and magazines fuel her interest in design and patterns.

If she stumbles on a creative block, she walks away from her studio for a while, never forcing a creative thought. Sometimes a ride in the country or listening to music will be enough to put her back on the right path.

Her art education includes classes on perspective, drawing and still life. She studied with George Dergalis in his watercolor class at the Decordova Museum School, and continued private study with him for several years. She sees painting as a form of meditation.

Maryfrances is a retired psychiatric nurse with a Master's degree in Psychology and has worked in a variety of health care settings. Her professional experience includes working as a therapist/evaluator, counseling incarcerated mentally ill offenders, and teaching in a school of nursing.