

39 Plennert Road, Flemington, NJ 08822
908-788-2860 E-mail: jerilynweber@earthlink.net

Jerilyn Weber
Fine Art Animal Portraits

Jerilyn Weber is known primarily for her animal portraits and enjoys working on both commissioned and non-commissioned works. Jerilyn concentrates in pastels, finding the medium to be an excellent means of rendering the various textures and subtleties of animals' coats.

Ms. Weber exhibits regularly and has received numerous awards for her work. Most recently Ms. Weber was a first place winner in the New York Dog Fanciers 2002, 2003 and 2004 Contemporary Dog Art Competitions. She has been featured in several national publications including "Canine Images" magazine, "Equine Vision Magazine", and "Polo Player's Edition". She is a founding member of the New Jersey Equine Artists Association.

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Like most animal artists I've always loved animals. We had assorted pets when I was growing up and my best friend had horses, so every weekend was spent brushing up Dolly and Lightening and going for a ride. Now I enjoy the companionship of Cooper, my energetic Golden Retriever.

I find working on commissioned artwork to be very rewarding. I enjoy meeting people and their animals. There's always a fresh story to hear, and I have yet to meet anyone who is not enthusiastic about their dog or horse or other animal. I think people are at their best when talking about something they love and I have the good fortune to be able to share that joy. The animals are important to me too, and for short time, each animal I paint is mine to enjoy. Sometimes the animal whose portrait is being painted is deceased, and I share the owner's sorrow; somehow the portrait seems like a fitting tribute to a beloved animal and helps to ease the loss.

I work from photographs, and whenever possible I like to take my own photos. This enables me to meet the animal and spend an hour or so discussing the animal with its owner. If this is not possible, I rely on discussions with the owner and existing photographs. When I take my own pictures, I usually shoot two or three rolls of film, get double copies, and send one set to the owner and retain one for myself. After we've both had time to review the photos, we have a phone conference to discuss which photo will best represent the animal and at the same

time make a beautiful painting. Frequently this means using one photo as a basis, with reference to other photos for specifics. If more than one animal is to be included in the portrait, I usually take two or three rolls of film for each animal, with a few shots of the animals together to obtain a size reference. I then spend quite a bit of time in my studio working out a suitable composition for the portrait.

After the owner and I agree on a pose, I draw and then I paint. I make a drawing on tracing paper where I can make as many corrections as necessary. I then transfer the drawing to pastel paper. While the paintings may look like one layer of color, in fact many layers are applied before I get the effect I am looking for. I tend to use olive green in my underpainting, especially in the dark shadows, since I think this gives warmth to a dark area. I also use hints of lavender and sometimes teal for highlights in cooler areas. Usually after I've been painting for half an hour or so, I don't really think about what will "work"; I just paint. That's when painting becomes a real joy!

When I think the painting is nearly complete, I photograph it and send the photo to my client for comments. I try not to make any comments myself, leaving my client free to make suggestions for improvement. If any changes are needed, I do so, and send my client another photo.

Once the painting is complete, I frequently accompany my client to a framer where we discuss what type of framing will enhance the painting. This is a very enjoyable part of the process for me, since I like to see how the painting will look in its final form. I want both my clients and myself to be completely satisfied with the painting and I work hard at achieving that end.

When I am not working on commissioned portraits, I work on new pieces for my portfolio and for upcoming shows. I think this helps keep my work fresh and gives me the freedom to experiment with new techniques which in the end will benefit my clients.

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