

Nancy Medina: Bringing Color to the Page

Although Nancy Medina spends most of her days in the black-and-white world of editing, her evenings are spent in a world of vibrant color. Medina, editorial director of *Annals of Emergency Medicine*, says that in the hustle and bustle of everyday life, painting is what makes her feel complete. "It's been something that's always been with me my whole life," Medina says. "I don't know how other artists describe this feeling, but . . . if I haven't been working on something artistic [during a] week, I feel incomplete. So it's almost like it's a part of me."

Medina says she has loved doing artwork since first grade. She did only pencil drawings until 14 years ago. At that time, when Medina was 30 years old, her New Year's resolution was to pursue painting seriously and finally put some color on the page. Since then, her paintings have been displayed in many local galleries and collections.

Medina paints mainly floral scenes and landscapes and uses bright colors of oil paints or watercolor to bring them to life. Some of her paintings can be viewed at www.nancymedina.com. She says the inspiration for her paintings has always been color. "Color really inspires me," Medina says. "I love color—I even dream about color. I can see color in a flower, or I'll see color in a picture in a magazine and I just feel I need to paint that—I need to paint that color. I need to make that color happen somewhere on a white canvas."

Medina took art classes in college in the early 1990s and has had private lessons since. She has studied many art forms and is drawn especially to impressionism and abstract expressionism. She says that she has tried to move away from the "Da Vinci perspective" that art should be a rigid representation of reality. Although her paintings are realistic, she also tries to make them expressionistic.

The Painting Process

Medina, who has also been a photographer for about 20 years, usually uses her photographs as a starting point for her paintings but goes beyond the actual colors in the



**Nancy Medina and her pug
Winnifred Wigglepants.**

photograph. "In my paintings, if I see a mountain, I look for the orange or for the blue that might not be in a photograph but really is there in the atmosphere. I really like to push colors to their extremes," she says.

Judy Mackey, one of Medina's fellow artists, says the colors in Medina's paintings are what make them unique. "I think it's her choice of colors," Mackey says. "That would be her signature." Mackey says Medina's personality shows through in her paintings. "She's a sweet person, and I think that translates with her paintings because her paintings have that soft sweetness to them," Mackey says. "If I had to use just one word to describe her paintings, I would say they have a 'dreamy' quality."

Mackey also says Medina is passionate about her painting and very dedicated to her work. "She might be sweet, but she's tough as nails, too," Mackey says. "If she needs something to get done, she'll get it done. She puts her head down and just goes right for it."

For some of her oil paintings, Medina uses paintbrushes; for others, she uses a palette knife. Although palette-knife painting is less common than brushwork, Medina likes the textures that the knife creates on the canvas. "I like bright color, and the knife in particular sort of makes the paintings vibrate," Medina says. When light hits the textures in a palette-knife painting, the painting "almost looks like stained glass because as you move, the colors change", she says.

Medina says the person who inspired her

Other Than Editing

continued

art the most was Ivana Spalatin, one of her art teachers at Texas A&M University in Commerce, where she attended college. Spalatin taught her art history and modern art. “She taught us to face art in an uninhibited way by educating us on the periods, the historical perspectives, the cultural climate, and the personal encounters of the artists and their artwork,” Medina says. She says Spalatin is very emotional about her art, and that passion inspired her to pursue her own artwork. “She’s one of those rare gems of a teacher whose passion for what she teaches is contagious and genuine,” Medina says.

Medina starts her paintings by first laying down the dark colors and the grays. She says that although the painting may look dark and boring at first, applying the colors on top of the grays brings the painting to life. “At the end, when you start laying in the light and the color and the reflections, they really jump,” Medina says. “It causes the color to be much richer and juicier because it is lying on a gray.”

Medina says she usually spends about 6 hours working on a 16- by 20-inch painting, but a painting can take longer, depending on its size and intricacy. Although Medina is busy with work during the day, she often paints for hours in the evening. “When you start going when you get inspired, it’s really hard to stop,” Medina says. “You get this energy, and then you collapse when it’s over.” Medina says her husband, Carlos, is her biggest critic, and although he’s not an artist, he has a good eye for color and design. “I always know I’ve succeeded when he says, ‘Oh honey, you’re not really going to sell that one, are you?’” Medina says.

Artist and Editor

Medina says her job as an editor parallels her work as an artist because both writing and art involve a creative process and an ability to stretch one’s imagination. “There’s always a creative process in being a director for the journal,” Medina says. “One of my tasks is to be a visionary—someone who looks past the day-to-day nuts and bolts. . . . I really think that

applies in art, too. When you’re creating a concept for a piece of art, you have to look ahead. It’s almost like a chess game: you have to take one step at a time and know what steps to take to achieve a goal.”

Medina started college at Texas A&M University in Commerce wanting to pursue fashion design but took courses in everything she was curious about, including fashion, journalism, and accounting. She excelled in journalism and went on to earn a bachelor’s degree in journalism in May 1992. The summer after she graduated, she studied publishing at King’s College in Chelsea, England.

After graduating, she spent about 10 years in the newspaper business, working as a city-desk assistant at *The Dallas Times Herald*, the society editor at *The Terrell Tribune*, and the managing editor of *The Kaufman Herald*. Medina says she perceived a glass ceiling for women in the newspaper industry at the time and decided to pursue a career in magazine editing instead. She moved to California in 1993 to become the executive editor for Veterinary Practice Publishing, a subsidiary of Fancy Publications that publishes 12 peer-reviewed veterinary journals with national and international circulation. “The transition was really fun,” Medina says. “Not only to move to magazines, but to move from Texas to southern California. I was young and single, and it was a very exciting change.” While at Veterinary Practice Publishing, Medina coordinated the redesign of the company’s publications, worked as the key liaison with multiple veterinary associations, budgeted, managed staff, wrote and edited, and helped to coordinate roundtable discussions on products and treatments.

About 6 years later, in 1999, she started a new job as managing editor of two journals of the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses. After working there for about a year, she moved to the Dallas suburb of Flower Mound, Texas, to begin her present job as editorial director of *Annals of Emergency Medicine*, published by the American College of Emergency Physicians.

As editorial director, Medina is the key liaison between the association and the editorial board. She also strives to ensure that articles are reviewed and published promptly; that the number of research articles submitted to the journal is high; that the journal's impact factor, a measure of its citation rate, is high; and that "all the goals of the editor are met."

Michael Callaham, editor-in-chief of *Annals of Emergency Medicine*, says Medina is very organized and professional and always follows through on her projects. "She has the highest standards and just does everything well and is constantly thinking of new ways to improve the journal and raise our standards," Callaham says. "She makes my job at the journal easy and has a lot to do with its increasing quality."

Medina coordinated a comprehensive redesign of the journal and guided its transition to a Web-based system for submission and peer review. The journal started using the Editorial Manager Web-based submission and peer-review system in January 2002 "after a year of preparation that included about 6 months of using a preparatory e-mail peer-review system that helped reviewers and editors become comfortable with a digital workflow".

In recent years, Medina has provided information to help other journals convert to Web-based systems. In November 2002, she launched an online discussion group for editors throughout the world whose journals are starting to use Editorial Manager. There are now about 200 editors in the Editorial Manager User Group, and they help each other through "the pitfalls of transitioning". Editorial Manager users can join the discussion group by e-mailing Medina at nmedina@acep.org. Medina has also spoken at the 2005 Council of Science Editors annual meeting and other national meetings on how a journal should prepare its editorial board and staff for such transitions.

Helping the Critters

Between Medina's job and her artwork, she also makes time to volunteer in her community. She was active in the Flower

Mound Humane Society for 2 years and is now a foster parent for the Dallas Fort Worth Pug Rescue Club, which has rescued more than 2000 of these dogs since its founding in 1996, Medina says. She says DFW Pug Rescue is the second largest pug rescue organization in the nation, after Little Angels Pug Rescue in southern California.

DFW Pug Rescue, one of many breed-specific dog rescue groups, takes pugs from local shelters, where they would probably be euthanized, and finds people to adopt them. As one of the organization's foster parents, Medina takes care of rescued pugs until a permanent home is found.

Medina and her husband have three pugs of their own: Howard, who is "the bad one"; Winnie, who is "the little retired show queen"; and Java, who is "scared of everything even though he's the biggest one".

Medina says she fell in love with pugs when her boss, Callaham, kept showing her pictures of his pug, Tundelo. "Pugs have a lot of personality and are very sweet," Medina says. "I think most people who have pugs tend to become pug-crazy, which is easy to do." Callaham admits he's the one who led Medina to become "pug-crazy". He laughingly says, "She started with one, and the next thing I knew, it was out of control!" He adds, "but she does great things, especially with the rescued pugs. I think it's wonderful."

Medina also supports animal rescue through her artwork by donating part of the proceeds from the sale of her art to animal rescue. "It's cool to be able to help the critters with my art, and it gives me satisfaction," Medina says. "It's a good cause."

Medina says her plans for her artwork are to keep spending as much time as possible painting and to continue expanding into area galleries. "Painting makes my life feel more complete. And that's the number one reason I do it," Medina says.

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