



CARROLL SWAYZE

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I have been an independent artist my entire life. My mother was a writer who wrote the television show "Taxi" among other notable projects. She owned a coffeehouse in the 60's and my step-father was a gay theater director, so musicians, actors, writers and artists surrounded me from the moment of my birth. My sisters and I have been sung to sleep by famous musicians and we had lots of lessons in art by many well-known Native American artists of the day. My mother collected people, not knick-knacks so we had a very interesting early life.

I started painting when I was 8 years old and did my first outdoor art show, The Allentown Art Festival in Buffalo, NY, when I was 14. I worked my way through high school painting and selling my work at shows as well as starting my own commercial art business painting signs, logos, designing album covers for bands and backdrops for theaters in the area. After two years in the Fine Arts Department of York University in Toronto, Ontario, I decided to continue my artistic studies at a new school at the time, The Ringling School of Art & Design, in Sarasota, Florida, and moved south where I studied painting and printmaking.

I have always been a painter. I started working in oils, moved on to India inks, then watercolors and finally acrylics. Soon after moving to Florida I bought my first etching press and started working in Intaglio Etching Hand Painted with Acrylic washes. At that time the outdoor art fair circuit was young and thriving and the American economy was healthy. With a full show schedule and monthly gallery orders, being a real printmaker allowed me to maintain my artistic integrity and continue to offer original art to the public.

I believe in original art. As artists, our solitary natures find us spending a great deal of time alone in our studios working to create new and exciting artwork while striving to maintain our own individual styles. I believe that the independent artist who actually toils to create original art in their studio is special, unique and unusual and should be protected, nurtured and supported as treasures.

I believe in education. We need to work to reeducate the public as to the importance of original art in everyday life. Artists are thinkers and dreamers and I believe their work enriches the lives of everyone who comes in contact with them.

I have always lived by the beach, surfing, fishing, diving, and snorkeling. I got my first boat when I was seven years old and I was raised to understand that we are the caretakers of our fragile environment. I have always been passionate about the ocean. My subject matter reflects my love of the sea. I have maintained my studio here in Englewood/Boca Grande area for over 40 years now and have developed a good reputation as a fine artist being very involved in all aspects of art in my community.

I was on the steering committee, which saved, restored and created The Hermitage Artists Retreat, an international artist's retreat connected to the Greenfield Foundation, in what was my Mother's old house on the beach. I was on the board of directors of the Englewood Art Center when we raised the money to expand and build what has become one of the most vibrant community art centers in the area, now operated by the Ringling School of Art & Design.

I was chosen as one of ten North American artists to participate in the first ever outdoor art festival in Japan, the Yokohama International Open-Air Art Fair in Yokohama, Japan, in October of 2009 and experienced an amazing cultural exchange that enriched my life immensely.

I was granted an artist's residency on Seahorse Key (April 2016) sponsored by the Cedar Key Art Center and the University of Florida Marine Lab which culminated in a month long one man show at the Cedar Key Art Center.

I teach art to the home-schooled children of three counties. I teach an adult fun art class for beginners where we experiment with many different medias in the hope of finding one that feels good to my students, so they will continue to create art. I teach Kids Art Adventure Camp in my studio every summer to reach the children in my community. I sponsor many programs in the schools and in my studio to help keep original art alive and I am honored to have a scholarship named for me in our local high school, Lemon Bay High, sponsored by our Rotary Club.

I just retired as the Chairman of the Board of Directors and the Communications Director of the National Association of Independent Artists, a trade organization whose mission is to strengthen, improve and promote the artistic, professional and economic success of artists who exhibit in art shows. We are committed to integrity, creativity, and the pursuit of excellence and we advocate for the highest ideals and practices within all aspects of the art show environment. I remain on the advisory board of the NAIA.

I recently published two coloring books with my images in them. One has my poems in it and one is a cook book/coloring book and includes my great family recipes.

I am the director and producer of three small boutique style invitational art festivals in the Englewood/Boca Grande area where I hand pick a select group of original artists to come to Florida and exhibit and sell their work.

This past year I built a stage on my studio property and hosted music events throughout the season. I am a supporter of live music and the artists who create it (especially blues) and contribute to the musical arts as often as I can. The Swayze Studio is a 5 acre eclectic piece of Old Florida and I welcome visitors throughout the year to my property to relax, enjoy original art and live music.

I am 63 years old, I am well-traveled, and I've raised three sons and have four grandchildren. I have been a working artist my entire life and I have an enormous amount of life experience that I am proud to share. I am well-spoken, and I am not at all afraid to speak in public. I've seen the early years of the art show movement, and with 49 years of outdoor art shows under my belt, I'm pretty sure I could win Survivor if they'd just let me play because I know I can build a dry shelter with my eyes shut. I've experienced the ups and downs of the economy over the years and I have struggled to stay the course, maintaining good work ethics and standards along the way. I believe that art is important in everyday life and I strive to continue the adventure.

~Carroll Swayze