

# IW World



The Official Publication of the Federation of Irish Wolfhound Clubs





### *Drawing doesn't let me go*

#### **Irina, when did you start drawing?**

Drawing attracted me already in childhood. Of all our relatives, only my grandpa had an artist's talent and he drew landscapes for himself, for the soul. From childhood, there were animals around me. Grandma lived in a country house, and of course, she had pets and poultry. I spent all my free time in the country house. I loved taking care of the animals, feeding them, looking after them. But the main purpose was the desire to paint all of my four-legged friends. I remember how dad collected stamps specifically for me, and they were about animals too. At that time I was trying to redraw them from the postmarks.

#### **Did you attend drawing hobby groups, or, also an appropriate school?**

When I got older, I signed up for a drawing hobby group at the House of Culture. I still remember the name of my first drawing teacher - teacher Mirdza. She taught us this subject in first grade. But despite my passion for visual art, my parents put me in ballet school. I also learned to play the accordion. But the desire to draw, to paint did not leave me all this time. And I continued to attend drawing hobby groups and went to different teachers.

#### **Did you stay true to your hobby later? Did you continue to develop your skills?**

Unfortunately, after a carefree childhood, the 1990s began like thunder in the clear sky. People, who had lived in the USSR, were going through difficult times. You had to earn money, and it was not easy. Then I started to help «establish» restaurants, recreation complexes - places where the business elite could relax, not only here in Latvia, but also abroad. It was also a kind of art. I selected and trained the staff, who then harmoniously arranged the room complex for the guests. This work also gave me satisfaction.

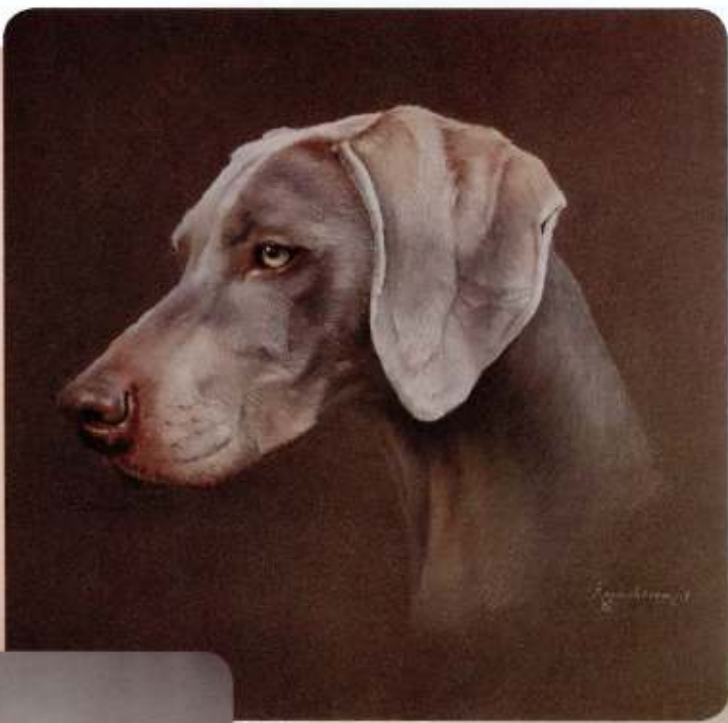
I do not like to do just one thing, monotonous, I need to create something where the end result will be visible. Even paintings - you paint, paint, depict .. And in the end, the painting comes together!

You see and feel the emotions of people who look at a painting. For me, people's emotions are very important. Someone, for example, starts crying when he sees his long-dead dog, who, at that moment, looks as if he is looking at his owner with live eyes. For others, you can read great happiness from their faces.

## **Irina Kryuchkova:** *«I let eyes shine lively»*

Quit work in the city and move outside of it? Sometimes it is our soul that demands such strange action. Irina Kryuchkova began to experience the world through drawing in her early childhood. Later, life changed directions, but you can't force your heart. Irina once again turned back to creative work and, in addition, bought her dream dog ...

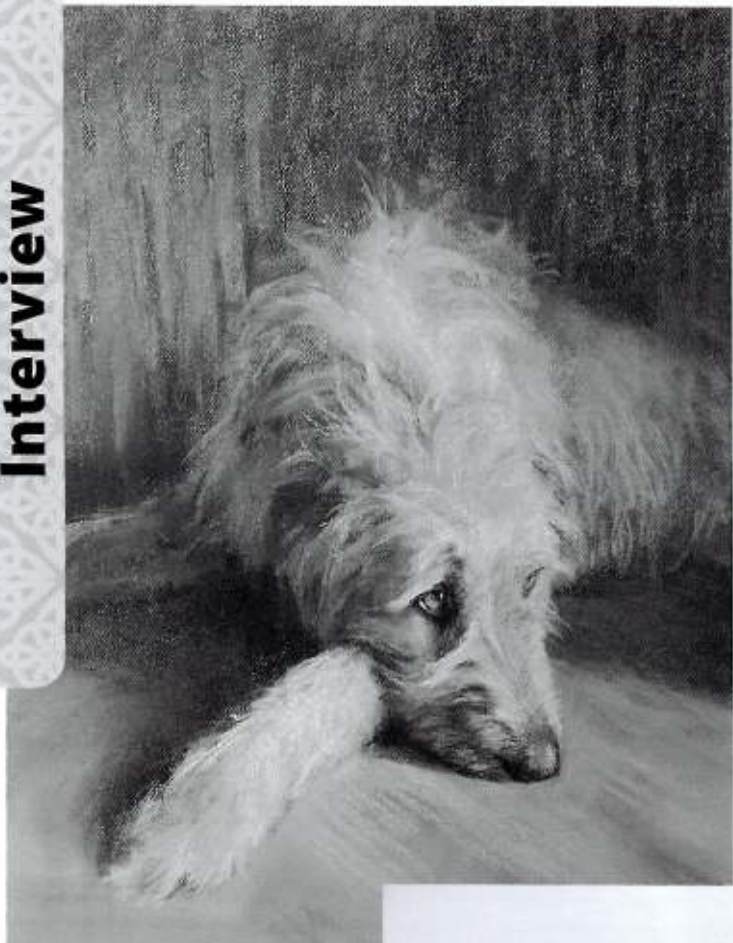




**It must be very difficult to portray the emotions of animals, humans ... How did you learn that?**

To learn how to draw animals, to see them, to feel them, I traveled to Africa several times: Kenya, Tanzania, Zanzibar. I went to a safari specifically to feel the natural beauty of the animals. I watched the great migration, I even witnessed a giraffe birth. When I asked, I was even allowed to go near a rhino. No one is usually allowed to even go near them, but together with the rangers, I could get closer.

Warthogs raced across the hotel grounds. Although, you can't call that place a hotel, in our understanding, - just tents on foundations. But what a beauty! Get up at 5 in the morning and you have 20 or 30 kinds of birds in front of you that start singing in different voices. I even wanted to go to Africa as a volunteer to take care of the animals. There, I took photographs of animals and, of course, drew them.



However, the dog's gaze, still, is the most accessible. Of course, Irish Wolfhounds generally have 105 mimics. Not without a reason, legends about them tell that they are enchanted princes and princesses...

This breed permeated my soul. I think people who keep Wolfhounds are special. This breed simply defines compassion, kindness. Wolfhounds behave like humans - they get embarrassed, happy, and angry.

### *Time of cardinal change*

**When you came back, did you keep up with education and develop your talents further?**

Yes, despite my profession, I continued to take private lessons in visual arts. But afterward, one of my acquaintances suggested I join The Summer School of The Repin Art Institute in St. Petersburg. It was quite difficult to get there, there was a competition, I had to submit my artworks. Without existing artworks, you're not even accepted at that school. I was very happy when I passed the competition. But when I got back, I thought - oh God, where am I going to go now, in the field of



study? Because schools as powerful as The Repin Institute do not exist. People from all over the world learn there. There is even a Chinese flow, where the studies are taught only in Chinese. Not for nothing are the Chinese famous for their better copies of masterpieces, which are difficult to distinguish.

This is how Ludmilla Perec was recommended to me. She is a well-known Latvian painter. She has had solo exhibitions in New York and other cities and countries around the world. She teaches drawing at the Christian Academy and runs an academic drawing course for artists. The training with her lasts for three years. I was convinced that in order to create a painting, one had to know the basics of academic drawing. Her school was one of a kind! If anyone wants to learn how to draw, be sure to go to her to position your hands, eyes, and head properly. As a strict teacher, she fought to keep the drawing from being completely accurately redrawn. Maybe someone does it, but for me, the main point is to feel the animal, his mood, his gaze, his character. It was interesting, saturated, instructive. And then I seriously started thinking that something had to be changed in my life.



## **Best Puppy and Best Veteran special awards!**

*The IW World magazine  
has very kindly offered  
special awards for the  
Best Puppy and Best  
Veteran of the FIWC  
2020 show. Both winners  
will get a subscription for  
the IW World magazine  
and a painting by Irina  
Kryuchkova.*





**And what did you start with?**

It was the first time I thought about buying my own dog. In childhood, I only saw sheepdogs, collies, poodles. All the breeds were common in the country at that time. And then one day, I saw a Rhodesian Ridgeback. That dog lived in the house where I learned academic drawing. Then I realized how many different breeds there still are. I considered everything and decided I could keep a dog: to live with him, train him, devote enough time. By chance, I saw a puppy Weimaraner bird dog and thought it was a stellar dog. I fell in love with this breed, she is the universe for me! I was warned that I would have to do a lot with my Weimaraner - intensive hiking, hunting, training. I was not perplexed by anything. And I started to be interested in puppies. I found out that there are puppies and I was extremely happy. My puppy was picked by three people - one from Canada, who once came there from Riga with his Weimaraner. The second was from Liepāja, the third - from Malta. Three people from different parts of the world chose a puppy for me. If they chose after posture and the most important thing was the exterior, for me, the main thing was ... to see «face» of my puppy. So I asked for a lot of portrait pictures.

**What were you looking for, what did you want to see in «face»?**

Of course, the eyes. I am looking for some special expression. And so I chose Forrest (Forrest Gump). But when I first saw an Irish Wolfhound, it was during a training session that I attended with a friend. At that time, I was just in shock. This is the other breed that fascinates me. It seems I'm still under the impression ... Some people love sports dogs, some - hunting. Some admire the dog's shape, but I admire the eyes. I think all hunting dogs are very sensitive, sophisticated animals. In their lives, everything happens on the «nerve», elevated. At the moment I'm training a Hungarian Vizsla and an Irish Setter. They are very responsive to people, literally catching my facial expressions, always waiting for action.



**Wasn't it difficult to deal with a temperamental hunting dog?**

I had never thought that after 20 years in the field of business, I would suddenly leave the city and go live near nature, next to the woods and meadows. But that's how it happened. Because of dogs, or to be more precise - a dog; Forrest is the one «guilty» for it. In a week he had more classes than me. We had to walk a lot in the woods and meadows. That's what I promised his breeder. By then, I was freer at work and could spend more time with my dog. During classes, I met my «love» and Riga became a bit narrow for us. Right now, I feel absolutely happy because I do my favorite activity: I'm doing what I want to do, how I want to, and when I want to.

***Everything will turn into oil***

**You're not just drawing animal portraits, right?**

Yes, not only. In animals, I'm attracted by, I'll repeat myself, - the gaze, emotions. For example, a wild male boar (looks at a painting - ed.). He is so brutal, self-confident ... He is called Ferdinand by the way, (that's what local hunters call experienced wild boar males). I really wanted to draw him. Wild boars generally have a very rich mimics.

**Please, tell us how the process of drawing portraits works. People themselves give you a photo, or do you choose?**

I like it better and the artworks turn out better when I have found and selected the pictures myself. I get commissions, and of course, I draw them. Afterward, I look at Facebook and see so many interesting portraits. But, the owner chooses what is more important to him, where his pet is more interesting in some way to him than to me. Sometimes I just draw portraits for myself, after a photo. People don't order them at first, but when they see them, they often purchase them. I draw what I would like to see in that dog for them, what exactly I found interesting in him. After that, I show it to the owners and they agree with my view.

**I saw some of your artworks and the original photos. Sometimes your artworks seems to be more emotional, with some kind of a story ...**

When I get a picture of an animal, I look at it for a long time. Several days. I look at it, put it aside, then I look again. I try to ques-

tion the owner about this animal, this especially applies to dogs. About their character, the features that make them so special to their owner. Later, I try to get into the character. Pictures with, specifically, a gaze are important to me. The one where the animal looks at its owner the way the owner sees him. It is important to me that the customer sees the lively look in my drawings.

**How do you choose the technique for each artwork?**

The same portrait can turn out in different ways, depending on how it is drawn. With watercolor, you can depict something airy. When painting in the watercolor technique, the painting becomes more picturesque, everything flows out, gently, lightly, colors overlap, blend. But it does not tolerate mistakes.

With a pencil, the drawing turns out more concise - the dog's head and nothing extra around it. Pastel allows you to render more plasticity - underline something somewhere, smear it someplace, or cover it completely. This is supported by the colorful background that sets the overall ambiance of the portrait. With pastels, you can paint both realistic and artistic.

My dream is to paint it all with oil paint. Working with oil paints is always more artistic, more everlasting. For inspiration I look at the works of classics, I have a whole library. You always can and should learn from them. My favorite artists are V.Serov, K.Korovin, M.Vrubel, Z.Serebriakova.

**Have you had any exhibitions, if you had, are you expecting more?**

Recently there was an exhibition of my work. I'm planning another one soon. You know, I kind of already have enough paintings. But there still seems to be not enough art pieces that are really worthy of public display. I try to raise my bar all the time. As an artist, I am very self-critical, and as a Virgo, according to the horoscope, I am very hard on myself. It is, of course, very good that I see my shortcomings. Sometimes, of course, it bothers me. Some people think, "Alright, alright, it could be worse, nobody will see this. If I didn't point it out, nobody would notice." But I always want to be as honest as possible with myself. And I keep improving. That is why I try not to stand still, researching watercolor and pastel techniques online by contemporary famous artists.