



*This interview was conducted between Tim Thayer and Lynne Friedman, via email, during April, 2007.*

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*TT: Where did you grow up?*

LF: My earliest visual memories were of endless Atlantic horizon on Coney Island and the giant parachute jump with seats rising and suddenly falling with a huge parachute. I found it mesmerizing.

*TT: Was art something that was admired in your family?*

LF: My family was very visual with Toulouse Lautrec and Monet prints and watercolors which I looked at and pondered almost daily.

*TT: Did the prints and watercolors seem like something that you could do also? Or did you see these works as something that grownups do? Did you have any concept that these were done by "artists" or rather just visually interesting things around your house? Were you interested in the artists?*

LF: I have always been a visual person and always loved looking at artwork from an early age. At the age of 11 I won a brotherhood week contest for a painting and received an award from Jackie Robinson - it was around then I knew I wanted to be make art and I had a passion for it. I focused upon art and art history throughout my school years, majored in art as an undergraduate and graduate school student, became an art teacher and then a college professor at Manhattanville College in Purchase teaching others to see more acutely and developing their technical skills. The search for visual truth is unending and I believe it was Monet who said he wished he had another 20 years when he reached 80. There is never enough time for an artist.

One of my plans is to follow the steps of some of the 19th and early century French artists and paint at Giverny, the Forest of Fontainebleau where the Barbizon School of artists worked, Auvers sur Oise where Van Gogh stayed, the Normandy Coast where Monet and Courbet painted its wild beauty. Next summer I will be taking a group of watercolor students to southwest France near Rousillon to paint. This summer I will be teaching watercolor to 18 watercolorists in Marin County, California in a hiking and painting class for Sierra Club. In the Fall I teach painting at Bard College's Lifelong Learning Center for adults over 50.

I spend a lot of time in the great museums in New York and elsewhere and we are fortunate to have the Metropolitan Museum of Art at our doorstep - much of the world's art is on loan in various exhibits at the Met at one time or another. My favorite time is early in the day when there are few visitors and I have the paintings to myself and it is very quiet.

*TT: How has your art work changed over the years - I do not know any of your earlier work - would you say you have grown in slow measured steps, or have there been radical shifts in your paintings over the years?*

LF: I spent 15 years doing drawings, usually very large scale of figures and groups of figures. I found exhibiting such work problematic since they were so large. I decided in the mid to late 80s I had gone as far as I was interested in working with the human figure as my major work and began exploring landscape spaces and working more in oil. My earlier landscape paintings were more traditional in the sense that a

green field remained a green field. However, as the years progressed I became more interested in expressionist and fauve color which is much more interesting and exciting to me and I was less interested in anything that was very realistic. One problem I explored is how to do interesting landscapes with little to no green.

*TT: Did you continue to work figuratively, at least from time to time, after starting work on the landscapes? In your drawing work, did you work with color or black and white? In your early school years did you also work in oil?*

LF: I continued to work with the figure into the early 1990s, in charcoal, black and sanguine conte. This body of work evolved to work in pastel and color explorations using the figure as a subject. I previously did a lot of figurative work in oil in college where I studied with a number of gifted teachers, Elias Friedensohn, John Ferren, Rosemary Beck and Louis Finkelstein, all of whom are well known today.

*TT: Teachers are an interesting subject: how do you see the relationship between student and teacher?*

LF: As an art educator I view the teacher as a "facilitator" helping students find their own creative voice and encouraging their efforts. Many students need encouragement to strengthen their belief in themselves. It is important to establish a safe atmosphere that encourages fluency, flexibility and originality.

*TT: That sounds like a good philosophy for a teacher. Did you learn this from your teachers? In your student days (college) was the curriculum, in general, skill orientated or more creative/experimental?*

LF: I have a Doctorate in Education from Teachers College, Columbia University in Art Education and Analysis of Art Teaching. Most art programs are a combination of skills development and developing the creative skills through experimentation and nonlinear thinking.

*TT: Is it hard to separate yourself as a teacher and as an artist? Do you need time away from teaching? Or inversely, do you need to teach and have contact with others to fuel your own work and ideas?*

LF: Painting and teaching are complementary-each can stimulate the other.

*TT: How do you like to start a work? How do you select a subject?*

LF: My working process involves looking, looking and more looking. When I find see a shape, a color relationship, and/or a light/dark relationship in a landscape that interests me I begin by drawing and exploring the idea which may change as I go along. I often do a value drawing before I begin to paint. When I start to paint I work directly on the canvas, with little or no preparatory work because I want my response to be fresh and spontaneous as I begin to internalize the image, the concept, the feeling tone.

*TT: Do you draw on location and then take that drawing back to the studio to work from? Or do you paint "in the field" too...or some combination? Do you take reference photos - either for color or composition reference (or other reasons)?*

LF: I work a lot on location and then take the work back to the studio for refinement, synthesis and integration.

I don't work from photographs because I need the living, breathing contact with the air, light, smell, sound, colors of my subject to internalize my idea. Additionally, a photograph reduces the three dimensional world to two dimensional form and does not capture the nuances of feeling tone, light and color I require. My paintings interpret what I see not reproduce it.

*TT: Thanks, Lynne.*