

Jewish Community Foundation
Arts Heritage Fund in Recognition of Janet Ann Tift

Kat Manton-Jones

Southern Arizona Watercolor Guild

Final Report

October 15, 2019

The purpose of the *Jewish Community Foundation Arts Heritage Fund in Recognition of Janet A. Tifft* grant is to remember, promote, and market Janet's creative vision and art. I am grateful to have been the first recipient of this generous grant. The greatest benefit I received as a recipient was having the privilege to explore, in depth, the intimate spaces of Janet's creative endeavors. Bill Tifft, Janet's husband, was extremely generous in permitting me access to Janet's paintings, sketchbooks, and studio. The following account describes the inventory of paintings exhibited in the Southern Arizona Watercolor Guild Gallery, the development of my paintings inspired by Janet, and advances in marketing my artwork.

Janet's sketchbooks contained various collaged word statements, one of which was "*I BELIEVE IN HAPPY ENDINGS.*" To close this grant, I wanted to exhibit some of Janet's inspirational pieces along with my own. It was my initial desire to do so in Douglas, Arizona or Cochise County where she spent her youth. However, my attempts to secure a venue in those locations did not come to fruition. As it stands, I decided to rent a wall at the Southern Arizona Watercolor Guild Gallery, an appropriate venue as we both were/are members. The show runs October 8-November 3, 2019.

Janet's paintings: Composite, Architectural Studies, and Desert Landscape



“Quaker City Machine Co.”



“Janet had a fantastic range of environments to source inspirations from. Her keen insight into color theory coalesced with her imagination to produce a physical still life, and then render it in watercolor and other media. The level of detail is achieved with attention to actual artifacts.”

Excerpt from: *Heritage Guide Related to Local Art*.

In *Quaker City Machine Co.*, I took inspiration in the shapes, colors, patterns, lines, and forms of nature from a visit to the Lincoln Park Conservatory in Chicago, Illinois. Janet created elaborate arrangements to create her vibrant floral still life paintings. I chose to focus on a specific detail at the Conservatory which showed the juxtaposition of organic plant growth patterns against the manufactured structural element of a water valve. I used Janet’s watercolors for this painting to create a muted palette.

“Sonoran Sarcophagus”



Janet’s painting *Sonoran Senior* was the inspiration for *Sonoran Sarcophagus*. Desert landscapes are a dominant theme of Janet’s collection of work. The sketch for *Sonoran Senior* depicts the Saguaro skeleton and the plant life at the foot of it. The painting includes a beautiful backdrop of a Palo Verde tree to contrast the living and the dead, warm colors against cool. The model for *Sonoran Sarcophagus* is a dead Saguaro on the Arizona National Scenic Trail north of Picketpost Mountain in Central Arizona. The ribs have fallen away from the top of the Saguaro and the pith has hardened into segmented cakes within the interior of the remaining ribs. This is the first time I’d seen the interior of a decaying Saguaro so well preserved. I painted with, new to me, Holbein artists’ watercolors: W151 Yellow Grey, W096 Compose Blue, W097 Prussian Blue, W130 Light Red, W133 Burnt Umber, and W134 Burnt Sienna.

“Heward House”



The category termed “Composites” was intriguing and the most difficult for me to fully incorporate. The word composite refers to synthesizing elements from multiple sources or contexts to create a coherent theme. Janet’s inspiration for her composite paintings came from countless hours of observation and the practice of merging the images and elements. Her composites have a hint of magical realism evidenced in *Desert Grotto* a work that includes many desert animals consorting around a fountain in her backyard.

Last October, I booked a room at the Heward House Bed and Breakfast while on a business trip to Holbrook, Arizona. What an amazing and wholly unexpected treat. I was the only guest that evening and it was as if I was a character in a sequel to the movie “Night at the Museum.” The Heward House is home to an abundance of beautiful art and objects including

crystal, a baby grand piano, cowboy, Mexican, and Native American art and artifacts. In addition, the 1934 house was designed by the American architect Frank Lloyd Wright. I found this magical experience a rich source of images to translate into my version of a composite painting.

The challenges for *Heward House* were many. Quilting was a facet of Janet's artistic expression and she used quilt-like patterns in the backgrounds of some of her paintings. I laid a quilt-like pattern of colors below the dominant objects in the painting. For the composition, I had to decide what to include and how to create a coherent whole. I don't feel like I accomplished that entirely. The elements are disparate and synthesis takes practice and experience. In my painting, the elements are more like vignettes rather than a synthesis. To tie together the elements, I painted the horizon three times. It is the view from the front windows of Holbrook at night, dawn, and mid-morning. Other challenges presented were using a brand of paper and paint that I'd never used before. The sheet of T. H. Saunders, Waterford #140 cold press came from Janet's studio. The Stephen Quiller watercolors developed by Jack Richeson & Co. Inc. that I used were: Richeson Blue (Phthalo), Vermillion, Transparent Yellow Medium, Ultramarine Violet, Richeson Green, and Quinacridone Rose.

“Who Doesn’t Love Dragons?”



The first time I met Bill, he was wearing a black cotton shirt with colorful dragons and stars. Eventually, I learned that Janet and their daughter sewed Bill’s shirts. His closet contains a large number of very colorful shirts. Dragons were a theme in Janet’s sketchbooks and a few dragon tchotchkes are tucked in places around their home. Janet also used her artistic skills to illustrate her understanding of Bill’s research. The painting uses the theme of dragons and graphs and charts from Bill’s research. It is dedicated to Janet and Bill’s marriage of 50 years, their ability to raise a large blended family, and their interest in each other’s passions.

Marketing the Arts Heritage Fund grant and my art work was also a focus of the grant. My website, Facebook page, and LinkedIn have references to The Arts Heritage Fund. My website and Facebook include links to JanetTifft.com.

Website: katlasjourney.com

Facebook: [KatlasJourney](https://www.facebook.com/KatlasJourney)

LinkedIn: [Kat Manton-Jones](https://www.linkedin.com/in/KatManton-Jones)

Instagram: [katmantonjones](https://www.instagram.com/katmantonjones)

Saatchi: [Kat Manton-Jones](https://www.saatchiart.com/KatManton-Jones)

Southern Arizona Watercolor Guild: [Kat Manton-Jones](https://www.sauwg.org/KatManton-Jones)

Thank you to the members of the Heritage Advisory Committee, Bill Tifft, Tony Pitucco, Jennifer Tifft, Tana J. von Isser, and Robyn Schwager of the Jewish Community Foundation for selecting me for this generous grant. I'd also like to thank Bill Tifft for the encouragement, support, and access to Janet's studio and artwork he lent during the grant period. Thank you to Tana J. von Isser for coordinating meetings and show entries. In conclusion, this grant is an outstanding opportunity for an artist who is interested in the personal history of an extraordinary artist, Janet Tifft, whose art is playful and energetic. She has left a legacy of courage, exploration of media and design, and beautiful works of art.