



Water – elemental, essential, powerful. We need it to live, but too much can destroy. It's beautiful in its many natural forms, from gentle lapping ripples to crashing waves, lazy river, roaring waterfall or peaceful lake. We are drawn to it, to play by it, in it or on it, and to contemplate it, to appreciate its beauty. Constant, yet constantly changing, it is a source and symbol of renewal.

The place by the water that we call a beach is also a stage for human activity. When there, we observe countless little plays, fragments of dramas and comedies acted out by characters in colorful costumes, in lighting that might be dramatic, bright and cheerful, or soft and subtle. In my drawings, I aim to capture those myriad scenes, bits and pieces of dramatic activity to be filled in from our own experience, by our own interpretations. We observe, and in our memories we hear the steady rhythm of the waves, the laughter of children and screech of the gulls, we smell the sunscreen and salt air, we feel the hot roughness of the sand. We are back at the water's edge.

My beach drawings are based on photos. Casual human gestures and saltwater waves must be frozen in time and saved before I can draw them in loving detail. But when I set out to paint or draw on location, I still find myself pulled to the water. Every *plein air* (French for "outdoors") piece in this show was painted alongside water in some form. When I go looking for something beautiful in nature to inspire me, I seem to always find myself drawn to the water's edge.

Melissa Miller Nece is known internationally as a colored pencil artist. Her enthusiasm and humor have made her a favorite speaker for arts groups, and she has inspired many others to try colored pencils through her classes and workshops. She is a frequent prizewinner in state and international exhibitions and at art festivals. A featured artist in the book *Creative Colored Pencil Portraits* by Vera Curnow, she has also had work published in national magazines and multiple books on colored pencil and portraiture.

Melissa is a Signature Member of and Ways and Means Director for the Colored Pencil Society of America, and Past President of CPSA District Chapter 113. She is also a Signature Member of the Miniature Artists of America, member and past board member of both the Miniature Art Society of Florida and the Professional Association of Visual Artists, and a member of the Florida Artist Group.

Melissa has a BFA from Lake Erie College and has been teaching drawing, colored pencil, and oil and acrylic painting at the Dunedin Fine Art Center since 1990. She has taught college level graphic design and worked in commercial art. Her work is in many corporate and private collections, including commissions for the makers of Derwent pencils in England, and has been featured in advertising for Stonehenge paper by Legion Paper in the US.