

Trip Report – Orlova Voyage 12-20 to 12-29, Gregory Frux, Artist

Our trip was blessed with superb weather, a highly tuned crew and enthusiastic passengers. Our work* began on December 20th with the tour of Tierra del Fuego National Park. I introduced myself as the trip artist and did some field sketches during the bus tour, while Janet began photo documentation. This set a pattern of documenting the trip through ink drawings which I shared in progress and posted copies of later on the ship's bulletin board. An important aspect of our presence on the ship was ongoing dialogue with passengers about the work we were doing. Janet did nearly all the photography for our time throughout the voyage, ultimately downloading over 1000 images to the ship's computer, closely coordinate with Nigel's work.

*Artist Janet Morgan, my wife, collaborated on many aspects of the residence.

Another priority for me was to assist Quark staff wherever possible to assure smooth operations and communications, especially during landings. We participated in nearly all landings and helping with life jackets. We saw this as an opportunity, not only to help, but to maximize our time at landings. I also helped with communicating appropriate distances from wildlife and assisted on two hikes.

December 21 – Drake Passage, sketched varied conditions weather conditions on deck, including fog banks and “fog bow.” PowerPoint Lecture and two short videos to introduce my work and background as well as Theme's mission. Did pencil drawing of the bridge at dusk

December 22- First landing in snow storm at Barrientos Island, Aitcho Group. Assisted at landing, familiarize myself with protocols. Second landing at Half Moon Bay in evening, skip landing and paint on deck. Complete two oil 9”x 12” oil paintings, while Janet produced 3 watercolors.

December 23- Two landings at Deception Island, after ramming through ice Neptune's Bellows. Assist at both landings, hike with party to Neptune's Window and later to volcanic cones. Do five drawings. Provide guidance when passengers cut off retreat for leopard seal. Participate in Polar Plunge. Taught workshop in late afternoon on keeping a field sketchbook, emphasizing varieties of approaches possible, techniques, tools and materials. Provided examples and handouts.

December 24- Landing Cuverville Island, assist with landing and Phil's snow hike taking about 30 people to peak approximately 1000 ft. ASL. Draw Gentoo penguin rookery. Celebrate Christmas on deck at Paradise Bay, visited by Santa Claus. Later, instead of viewing “It's a Wonderful Life”, go on deck and paint two more 9” x 12” oil painting and made two ink drawings of Paradise Bay while Janet produced several more watercolors. Work challenging due to the ship swinging, but successful.

December 25- Whale sightings and narrow passage of Lemaire Channel in morning. Landing at Petermann Island, assist in landing. Drew at Adelie penguin rookery which featured young chicks, as well as skuas and blue eyed shags. Worked at north end of island and shared quiet, seated observations with more than 20 passengers-- very rewarding. We see variety of behaviors including spirited penguin defense of skua attacks. Christmas dinner.

December 26- Port Lockroy, assist at landings on both sites. Interview postmaster for future article on Antarctic Post Office. Draw penguins, Janet drew whale bones. Traverse Neumayer Channel additional whale sightings, Janet painted 4 watercolors. Russian dinner.

December 27- Start of Drake Passage. Second PowerPoint Lecture “Artist Heroes of 19th Century Exploration” Images of artists work who painted in wilderness in 1800s, especially Frederic Church's Iceberg series.

December 28- Drake Passage. Exhibition of all work Janet and I created during afternoon in forward lounge.

Summary: Created 5 oil paintings, dozens of sketches, presented 3 lectures, took approximately 1000 photographs and shared many hours of quality time with passengers.