



When Art Comes Alive

The Afghan Hound as seen through the eye of the artist and the eye of the breeder.

*Femme au Chien (1962), Pablo Picasso
Cubism. Oil on Canvas.*

This presentation will feature...

- A brief overview of the history of Afghan Hound Art
- A look at various styles of Afghan Hound Art from the realistic to the fantastic
- A discussion of how real-life experiences with Afghan Hounds might influence the eye of the artist
- An important question for breeders...Can we let our “artistic eye” hold too much influence in the whelping box?

A Brief (Modern) History of the Afghan Hound in Art

- Exotic, Athletic, and Ethereal, the Afghan Hound has attracted and inspired artists for generations.
- From renowned artists like Pablo Picasso to the many talented artists creating masterpieces for our breed community today, there has been no shortage of captivating Afghan Hound Art to adorn our homes and the walls of museums.
- It can be argued that the Afghan Hound fancy boasts a higher percentage of accomplished artists than that of any other breed!
- There is as much variation in Afghan Hound art styles as there is in our living hounds. The diversity seen in the breed is likely part of its appeal to artists.
- Before we delve deeper, let's look at some important Afghan Hound imagery...

Four Influential Sires

George Finch
Oil on canvas

Reproduction of an original work by English
artist Frederick Thomas Daws

Back row L-R:

Westmill Omar of Prides Hill
Eng & Am CH Badshah of Ainsdart
Eng CH Sirdar of Ghazni (standing)

Foreground:
Eng. CH Asri Havid of Ghazni





AFGHAN HOUND: Champion *Sirdar of Ghazni*, the property of Mrs. Amps of 17 Somerset Place, Bath.



Eng. CH Sirdar of Ghazni, an early blueprint for the breed. Seen in the photo at left and as the only dog standing in the painting at left.

Shazada, an “Afghan Greyhound”



Left: An engraving from 1912 by R. H. Moore. Right: Reproduction by Terry Wilcox. Painting on Masonite board.

The Afghan in Mainstream Print Media

The Afghan Hound captured the imagination of many people, becoming a household name breed during the 1930s and 40s in the USA. The breed featured prominently in news articles and appeared on the cover of popular magazines such as *Time* and *Sports Illustrated*.

Rutherford Boyd created this iconic illustration for the March 18, 1944 issue of *The Saturday Evening Post*.

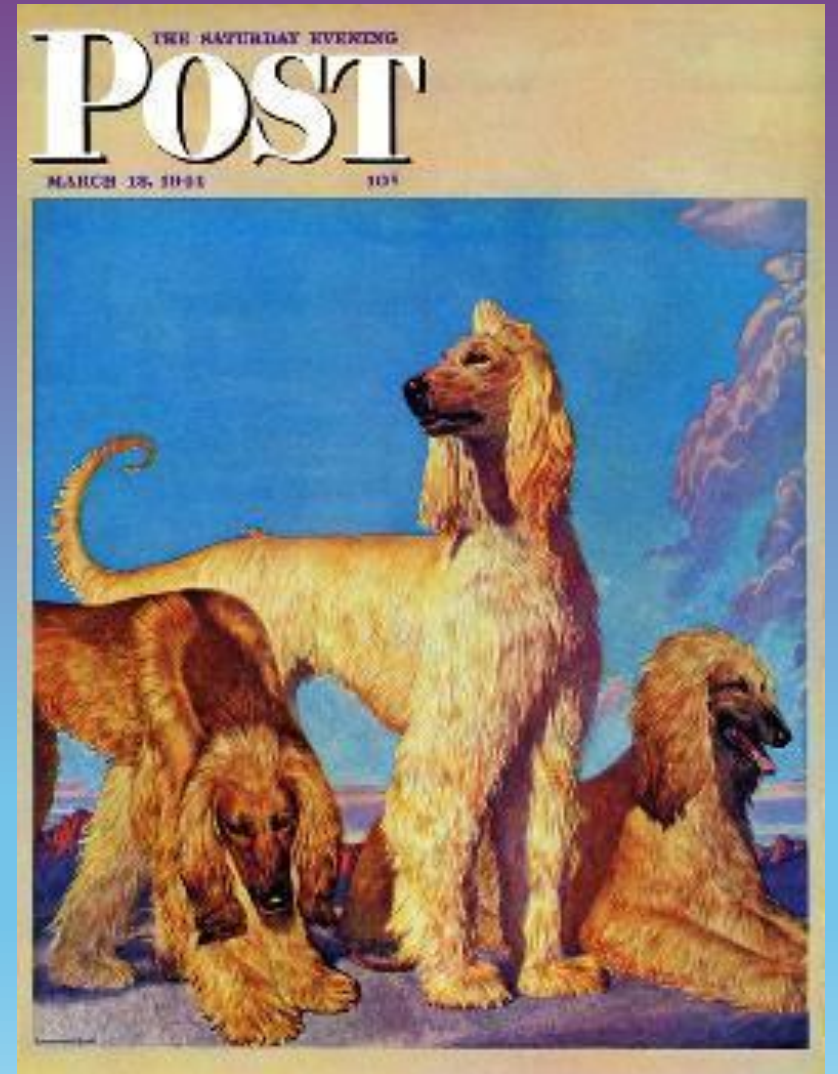
The dogs are:

CH Rukika of Blakeen

CH Rana of Chaman of Royal Irish

CH Rudiki of Prides Hill

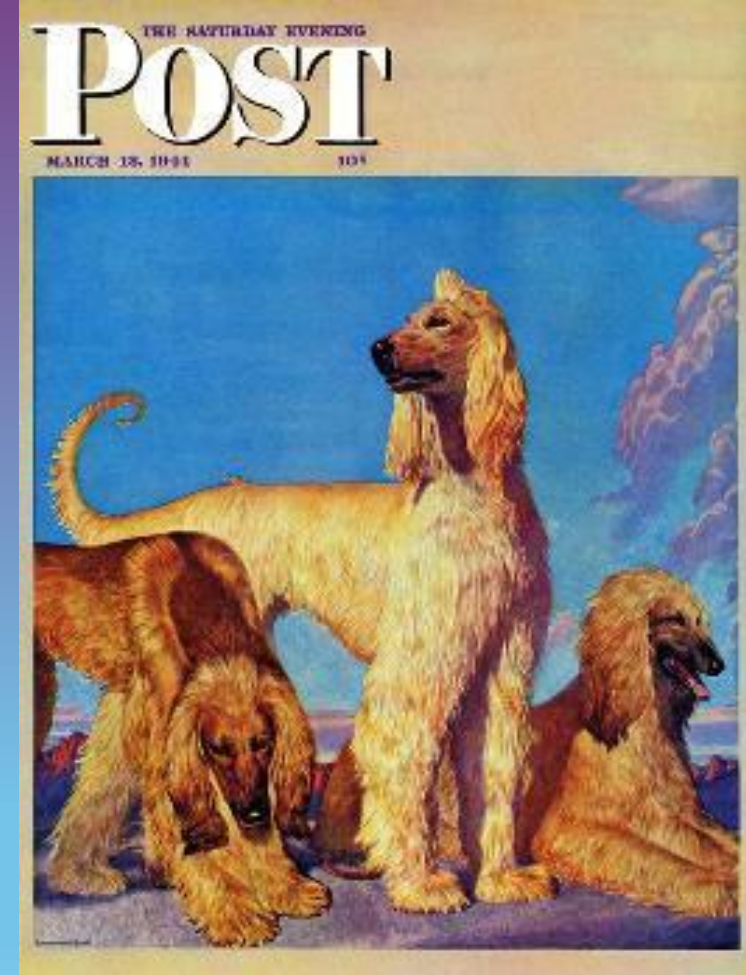
All owned by Marion Florsheim





Marion Foster Florsheim and CH Rudika of Blakeen meet with the editor of *The Saturday Evening Post*.

This was the first time that a cover of the *Post* was printed in color, and also the first time that the cover featured dogs.



Kay Finch

Kay Finch was hugely influential as the breeder of the famed Crown Crest Afghans. She was also a notable artist, famous for work in ceramics and bronze.

Left:
Head Study of CH Five Mile Banu of Rebel Hill & a ceramic figure of CH Rudiki of Prides Hill.



Rare bronze memorial plaque for Sunny Shay (founder of Afghans of Grandeur).

- Afghan Hound Art originally developed as a means to document the history of the breed and provide illustrations for people who may not have the opportunity to see the breed in person.
- Images of these rare and exotic hounds captured the imaginations of many who saw them in the western world and probably brought many people into the breed.
- Over the decades demand for breed themed artwork grew among fanciers. Graphic art, sculpture, glass, ceramic, and other mediums have been used to portray Afghan Hounds.
- In the following slides we will see how art ranges from depicting realistic images to more fanciful and even abstract interpretations.
- As we view the following slides, begin to ponder the question: Do we as breeders allow our love of fanciful artistic images to push the boundaries of the breed standard and influence our choices in the whelping box? What about judges in the show ring?

Realism:
When Art
Imitates Life

MBIS CH Khayam's Ares
C. L. Eudy
Oil on Canvas



Realism: When Art Imitates Life

- Realism began as an art movement in the 19th century
- This style features subject matter from everyday life depicted in a realistic, true to life manner.
- Realistic art depicting Afghan Hounds is most seen in portraits and sculpture depicting real life dogs.
- In addition to its aesthetic value, realistic Afghan Hound Art can act as an important element of the breed's historical record.

AM CAN MEX BIS CH Riptide Vodka of Holly Hill

B. 1969



C. Horn. Acrylic on Canvas.

Am CH Kasban The Wizard of Suncrest

B. 2001



Connie Nibarger. Acrylic on Canvas



MBIS MBISS GCHG Zaida Bint Muti Von Haussman

b. 2019



Yvonne Sovereign. Oil on canvas. 2024.

Afghan Hound, Greyhound, and Saluki

Marcia Van Woert

Print of a realistic study of three sighthounds.

With a career spanning several decades Marcia's output covered my different styles and mediums.

Many of her early works featured realism with careful detailing as seen here.

You could easily imagine living versions of these three subjects in show rings today, and in the past.



Realism in Sculpture

Kirby Moorhouse

Bronze Sculpture of a
stacked Afghan Hound
in Profile.



Realism in Sculpture

Trotting Afghan Hound
cold cast bronze
sculpture by Dannyquest
Designs.



Realism In Sculpture

One of the most iconic sculptures of an Afghan Hound is the Kay Finch head study of CH Five Mile Banu of Rebel Hill. While original bronze editions of this work are semi rare, it is more commonly found in a cold cast bronze reproduction by Dannyquest Designs.

Compare the detail and head planes of the sculpture to the photo of Banu at right.



Stylized Realism:
The Intersection
of Real Life and
Stylized
Interpretation

AM. & Kor. CH Wynsyr's Do-It-Again
Robin Punsalan. Oil on canvas.



Stylized-Realism: The intersection of real life and artistic interpretation

- A unique style of art combining elements of realism and artistic stylization.
- Artistic license and interpretation can create visually appealing and emotionally evocative images while maintaining the basic characteristics and integrity of the subject.
- This is one of the most common and popular styles among Afghan Hound art collectors.

Am. & Kor. CH Wynsyr's Do-It Again

b. 1998



Robin Punsalan. Oil on Canvas
Portrait in stylized-realism.



Zindajon Allah Kazam, b. 1981

Portrait by VicTor

Oil on Masonite board

Although this is a portrait of an actual dog, it cannot be considered Realism. The distinctive style of VicTor is immediately recognizable. While no huge departures from a live dog are taken, there are too many stylistic liberties taken to consider it realism.



Alice Blank

Headstudy of the Afghan
Hounds, 2002



George Finch

*Afghan Hounds and
Salukis in a Mountain
Pass*

Oil on Masonite board.
Date unknown

While the painting style is clearly that of George Finch, the subjects are reminiscent of some of the ceramic works of his mother, Kay Finch, of Crown Crest fame.



Three Afghan Hounds
by a Waterfall

Peggy Yeloushan
Oil on Canvas



Stylized Realism in Sculpture

Two figurines of Afghan Hounds in Motion
June Leitch



Mid Century Afghan Hound in Ceramic

Artist unknown



Stylization: Art that emphasizes style or decoration over depicting nature or tradition.



Marcia Van Woert. Watercolor. 2008.

Stylization in Art

- Visual depictions of a subject without full attempt to capture its realistic appearance or function.
- Sometimes this includes simplification of lines, shape, and surface details.
- Frequently in Afghan Hound art we see exaggeration of some elements of breed type, glamour, or movement.

**Marcia Van Woert
Watercolor. 2008.**

Notice how the artist uses posture, an exaggerated color palette and the fanciful element of the coat blowing in the wind to dramatic effect.

Important breed details such as the oriental expression, prominent hip bones, ringed tail, and the mandarin beard emphasize the overall beauty of the work.



Three Afghan Hounds

Charlotte Eldridge
(signed CharEl)
Watercolor. 1983

Outstanding elements of breed
type in a stylized manner
against a dramatic backdrop.



*Flag for the 1983 AHCA National Specialty,
Held in New Orleans, Louisiana.*

June Boone
Silk Screen

June Boone of Kassan Afghans was renowned for her artwork. Her silk screens are particularly well known and highly sought after by collectors.



Afghan Adorned

VicTor

Oil on Masonite Board

Ca. 1970s

Paintings by VicTor (Victor Berger) are among the most highly coveted by collectors of Afghan Hound Art. He loved to paint what he called “Afghans Adorned”, incorporating floral motifs, jewels, and highly decorated subjects. His signature painting style is unmistakable.





Compare these two VicTor oil paintings. The portrait of an actual dog at left, and the Afghan Adorned at right.

Even when painting portraiture, VicTor could not abandon his distinctive style and vision of the Afghan Hound. The brush strokes, backgrounds, and particularly his style of painting the head and expression of the breed is unique and unmistakable.





Stained Glass Panels

Jimmy
Prosapio

Stained glass is an excellent medium for capturing the stylistic beauty of the breed. Jimmy's stained glass creations were popular as trophies at specialty shows for many years.



Stylization in Sculpture

Gary Newton 6" Bronze Medallion

Celebrated sculptor Gary Newton Created this wonderful medallion for the Afghan Hound Club of America. Cast in bronze in limited numbers they are awarded annually to major award winners at the AHCA National Specialty Show, and used as gifts for judges and tokens of appreciation for outgoing club presidents and board members.





Above:
Julie Roche
Ceramic figurines.

Below:
Terry Chacon
Ceramic Figurines in bronze patina.
Trophies for the 2010 AHCA National Specialty





Leslie Hutto. Sculpture in Bronze. Deco style.

Judy Belcher
Ceramic urn.
Exact date unknown.
Created as a trophy in the
1980s, won by CH Fox Run's
Revolution.
Later re-donated by the late
Mary Henricks for Best of
Breed at the St Louis Afghan
Hound Club, and won by
BISS CH Wynsyr's Night on
the Serengetti.



**Abstract: A departure
from visual reality
using shapes, colors,
forms, and gestures
to stunning effect.**



Pablo Picasso. Untitled sculpture. 1967.

There is no denying that Afghans are creatures with an element of fantasy.

“The whole appearance of the Afghan Hound is one of great style and beauty.” ---AKC breed standard

The “great style” of the breed gives talented artists the opportunity to push the limits and depict the breed in a powerful way that uses imagery to convey the essence of the Afghan Hound without relying on natural details or the confines of the breed standard.

Pablo Picasso

One of the most famous and influential artists of the 20th Century, Picasso owned an Afghan Hound named Kabul, who featured in many of his artworks.



Picasso: Femme au Chien

The most valuable Afghan Hound painting in the world!

This oil on canvas from 1962 is a portrait of the artist's second wife, Jacqueline Roque and their Afghan Hound Kabul.

Jacqueline and Kabul were both subjects of deep affection for Picasso. This painting features the cubist style of which Picasso was a pioneer.

On May 14, 2019, *Femme au Chien* (woman with dog), sold at Sotheby's auction for nearly \$55 million USD, and is now housed at the Wynn Fine Art Collection in Florida.



“The Picasso” in Chicago

Standing 50 feet tall and weighing over 160 tons, this sculpture is one of Chicago’s cultural landmarks.

Commissioned in 1963 by the architects of the Richard J. Daley Center. It is built of Cor-Ten Steel, the same material as the exterior of the building. It was unveiled on August 15, 1967.

The work is untitled, and in his dedication letter, Picasso gave the sculpture as a gift to the people of Chicago, without ever giving an explanation as to what the work was to represent. Chicago residents simply call it “The Picasso”.

Many have pondered what the sculpture is meant to represent, with a popular theory being that it is a sculpture of Picasso’s wife. Those of us who know his love of the Afghan Hound know better!

This image is used in the logo for the Afghan Hound Club of Greater Chicago.



Other works push the limits of reality...



These two pieces are the work of Peter Belmont.

In addition to being a famed breeder of the Elmo Afghan Hounds, Peter was professional artist and art teacher.

His whimsical style of visual art is immediately recognizable with dramatic renditions of Afghan hounds. He often uses exaggerated features such as long necks and tails, short backs and long legs against impactful color palettes. The images are unmistakably Afghan hounds though not much detail is used.



Capturing the imagination...

Linda Korstad “Clay Menagerie”.
Raku clay sculpture.



The Afghan Hound as Living Art



As breeders, we aim to preserve the Afghan Hound of Antiquity, yet most of us also strive to leave our mark by creating a distinctively recognizable line of hounds that reflect our priorities and interpretation of the standard.

Artist and breeder alike deal with elements of shape, balance, symmetry, and size. However, the breeder has an additional responsibility because our “creations” are living, sentient beings.

We must always remember that the breed standards are our blueprint. We must remember the History and FUNCTION of the King of Dogs.

“True to tradition throughout the Ages” ---AKC Breed Standard

We must always work to maintain these elements in our breeding:

- A Square Outline
- Overall Balance and Symmetry.
- Proper Size
- Harmony Between Strength and Refinement
- Physical Soundness
- Athleticism
- Important elements of type (coat pattern, expression, hip bones, ringed tail, angulation, croup, etc) **WITHOUT EXAGGERATION OF ANY ELEMENT.**
- Traditionally accepted colors and patterns described in the standard

The Danger Zone: Caricature

Caricature is defined as:

A rendition in which certain striking characteristics are exaggerated to create comic or grotesque effect.

In dogs, we may refer to a specimen as a caricature if:

- *There is dramatic deviation from the breed standard
- *Elements of balance and symmetry become greatly compromised
- *Movement becomes exaggerated to the extent function becomes questionable

Some things work in art but not real life..

- Exaggerated angulation (usually straight and forward in front and extreme and overdone in rear).
- Overly steep croups
- Ewe necks
- Unbalanced movement (too much lift, too much kick behind, sickle hocks, over stepping, flying trots)
- Sloping toplines
- Excessive coat
- Overly fine boned (how many dogs today lack underjaw strength?)
- Improper balance of foreface and back skull
- An excessive Roman nose coupled with complete lack of stop “Downfaced”

In all things, balance is key

The best examples of correct Afghan Hounds are often those that are “in the middle of the road”.

On one hand, the king of dogs must NEVER be ordinary or plain.

On the other he must not have “too much of a good thing” in any feature.

We must learn from the great breeders that came before us. When we study and hold true to the breed standard we will have the Afghan Hound where all parts work in harmony. The Afghan Hound that is both fierce hunter and regal aristocrat.

In working with living dogs, when we prioritize flash and purely ornamental beauty over function and the breed standard, we risk losing the hound of antiquity, and we are no longer upholding the call to “stay true to tradition throughout the ages.”

