Instructors help May Nasca uncover artistic talents

By ED CULLEN
Advocate staff writer

The sheet of plywood over the pool table serves as both May Nasca's work surface and notice that the wife and grandmother has entered a third phase of her life, her fulltime art phase.

Years ago, a grammar school art teacher in Monroe saw talent in Nasca's grade school work. Nasca's work from high school, which she has carefully preserved, are the sketches and watercolors of a promising young artist. The teacher, who had followed Nasca's development as an artist, got her former pupil an art scholarship to Louisiana Tech in Ruston.

"But my parents wouldn't let me take it," Nasca says. "They wanted me to stay at home." Nasca's greenhouse in Monroe was into the whole guilt thing. "I didn't cook today. I've got to do something special tomorrow. Family first, the curse of the woman artist."

Painting with what one of her teachers calls "an educated recklessness with color," Nasca is an "exceptional student." "They thought I was a nut," Nasca says. "They wanted me to stay at home.""Nasca doesn't remember being interested in art when she was a small child. She was trying to figure herself out.

"Before, Nasca says she spent a lot of time trying to figure herself out. "All the smart kids get invited," Nasca laughs. "They didn't know what to make of me when I showed up. I had those girls sweating."

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"I laugh. He said, 'I just thought I'd ask.'"

"I went over it when her teacher put her drawings up for the rest of the class to see."

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"That's where I found myself," she says. "It's just you, bare walls and that canvas."

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Nasca has a 4.0 GPA, was invited to join Angel Flight, an honorary service organization sponsored by Air Force ROTC.

"I don't have peers saying, 'Oh, you're not going to do an oak tree or a cabin? You get in a rut. My friends said, 'Oh, May, you're painting wild,'" she said. "Thanks. I paint for me, now."