CROQUET ART AND FORTUNATE CONNECTIONS

How a pair of nineteenth-century masterpieces led to three new paintings of club life in Orlando

By Rick Fender · Rick@RickFender.com

My journey into croquet art began in June 2025, when I discovered two remarkable paintings by the French artist Édouard Manet: The Croquet Party (1871) and A Game of Croquet (1873). Fascinated by seeing our sport depicted by one of the great painters of the nineteenth century, I began researching the history of croquet in art and wrote an article titled "A Croquet Player's Glimpse Into Manet's Art," which was published in Croquet Break, a publication provided as a benefit to members of the United States Croquet Association (USCA).

Shortly after the article appeared, fellow croquet player Dave Collins of Burbank, California, contacted me and suggested I look at the work of American artist Winslow Homer. That recommendation led me to Homer's Croquet Scene (1866), painted just after the end of the American Civil War. The painting captures a nation returning to leisure, community, and normalcy after years of conflict. Inspired by what I discovered, I wrote a second article, "A Croquet Player's Further Exploration of Croquet Art," which was also published in Croquet Break.

One of the readers of that article was artist and croquet enthusiast Judy Stach. Judy reached out to me by email to say how much she had enjoyed the piece on Winslow Homer. During our correspondence, I learned that she was not only a passionate croquet player but also an accomplished professional artist with a distinguished national reputation.

After learning about the Croquet Group at the Country Club of Orlando, Judy asked if she could see photographs of our players and courts. I sent her several images of fellow members engaged in play, and to my surprise and delight, she offered to create a series of paintings inspired by those scenes.

The result is a stunning collection of three original paintings that beautifully capture croquet life at the Country Club of Orlando. Two of the works portray members in traditional white attire competing on our lawns, while the third depicts younger players learning the game.

The Paintings

The three works stand on their own as finished paintings. Each caption below identifies the scene and is meant to describe the picture, not to continue the narrative of this article.

THE COUNTRY CLUB LANDSCAPE



CAPTION · *A familiar scene transformed into lasting art.*

Painting by Judy Stach

The first painting presents a scene from our courts with the club buildings and Florida landscape serving as a backdrop. The composition beautifully balances architecture, open green space, and player activity, creating a timeless view of life at the Country Club of Orlando.

COMPETITION ON THE LAWNS AT THE COUNTRY CLUB OF ORLANDO



CAPTION · *A moment of strategy preserved in paint.*

Painting by Judy Stach

The second painting portrays active play on the club lawns. The traditional white attire, strategic positioning around the wicket, and the familiar clubhouse setting instantly resonate with members of our croquet group. Judy captures not only the game itself but also the elegance that has long been associated with croquet.

THE NEXT GENERATION



CAPTION · *Every great croquet player was once a beginner.*

Painting by Judy Stach

The last painting depicts young players learning croquet. Bright colors, long Florida shadows, and youthful concentration create a scene that celebrates the future of the game. It reminds us that croquet is a sport that can be enjoyed by all ages and that its traditions continue through new generations.

Looking at Judy's paintings, I am reminded of the same qualities that attracted Manet and Homer to croquet more than 150 years ago. The game offers artists something unique: strategy, elegance, companionship, and beautiful outdoor settings. Through Judy's eyes, the croquet lawns of the Country Club of Orlando become part of that continuing artistic tradition. I look forward to sharing these paintings with fellow members when the season opens in October.

About Judy Stach

Judy Stach is an award-winning impressionist painter whose work is recognized throughout the United States. Known for her mastery of light, atmosphere, and color, she paints landscapes, coastal scenes, gardens, sporting activities, and people enjoying outdoor life.

She is a Signature Member of the American Impressionist Society and other prestigious organizations, and her paintings have appeared in major exhibitions and publications. Her work is held in private, corporate, institutional, and public collections across the country. In addition to her artistic achievements, Judy has dedicated herself to mentoring artists and supporting charitable causes through the arts.

What makes her work especially meaningful to our club is her ability to capture not only what a scene looks like, but also why it matters.

Continuing a Tradition

When I look at Judy's paintings, I cannot help but think of Manet and Homer. More than 150 years ago, those artists found inspiration in croquet because it represented leisure, community, competition, and beauty. Judy Stach has done the same for our generation.

Her three paintings preserve a small but important chapter in the history of croquet at the Country Club of Orlando. They celebrate our members, our club, and a game that continues to inspire artists around the world.

I look forward to exhibiting these paintings when the season opens in October and sharing them with fellow members who appreciate both the art of croquet and the croquet of art.

JUDY STACH

Award-Winning American Impressionist Artist

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