

Mae Strelkov, Cordoba, Argentina.  
Figures by Sylvia Strelkov.

HECTO  
ALBUM.





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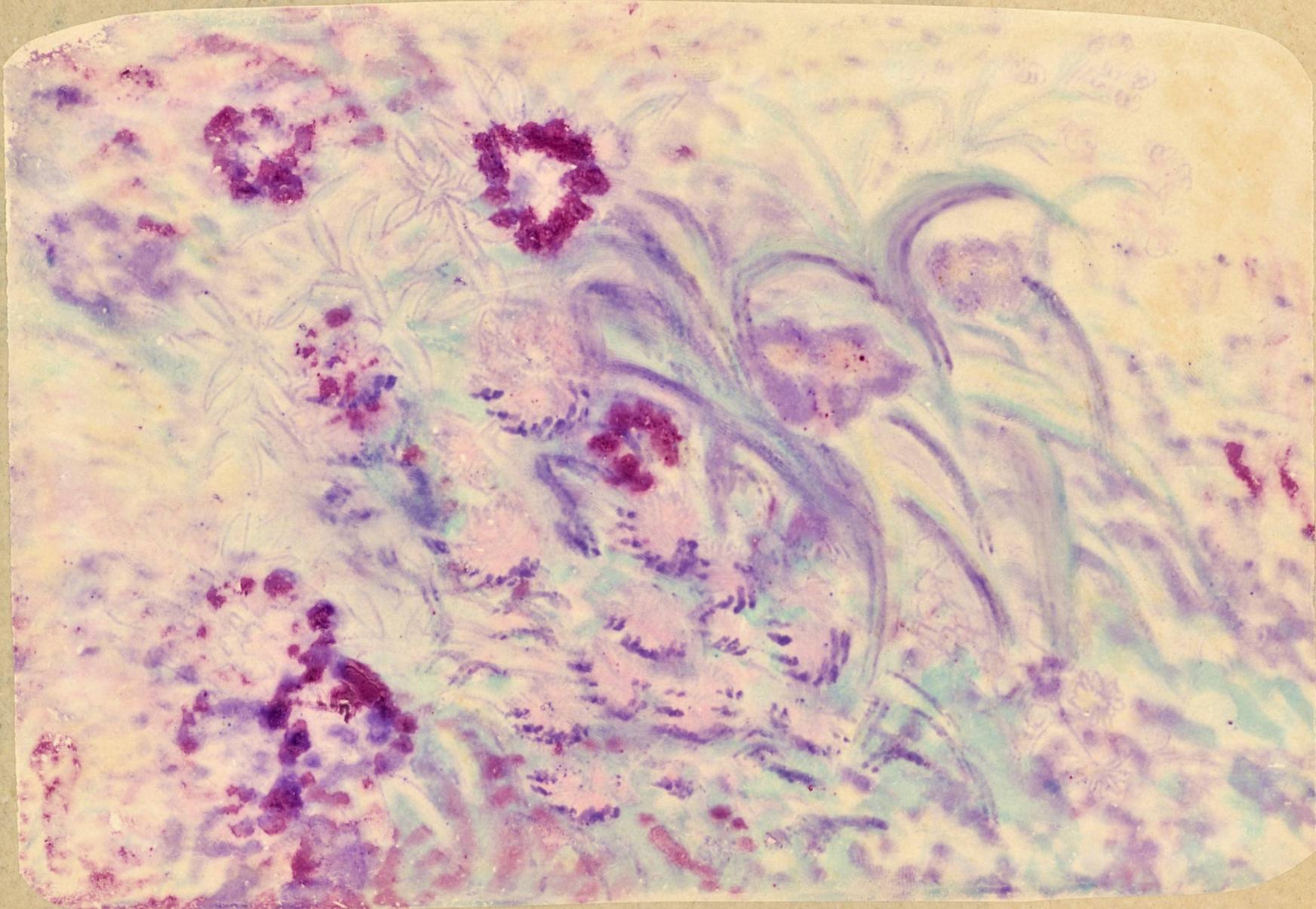


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MSB



THE STORY BEHIND THE PICTURES. Firstly, it's hectography, at times hand-retouched, where printing was flawed. (One day I'll be so good at it and use such very good gelatine always, prints will nevermore be flawed, I hope!)

Secondly, all the figures save that of the mermaid (which I copied from an illo I did for a Tink in 1973) are by our daughter Sylvia, who knows animals and funny people like I know trees and clouds. Indeed, she lives in another world than do I, though who is to say which is the "realer"? (Why not both equally real?) Our worlds, do, however, overlap and she sees my views too. But her sharp eyesight catches details I miss (I'm myopic). She sees what sort of gear the criollo country-folk use on their horses, what they wear, how they look and act. She sees the much too tightly fastened saddle-girth on that horse carrying a boy and girl to a fiesta (No.3), and when retouching was needed because the "black" carbon for the features I used was too pale, she wanted the "boy" to look like an eagle-nosed tough fellow but I -- who did most of the retouching of the hundred examples of "him", made him touchingly eager and innocent everytime. "Do your own retouching, then," said I, but she laughed and trotted off with young Tony, our lastborn, for another roundup of cattle eagerly, instead.

(Excuse, incidentally, poor typing. No conflu and the machine also tends to stick and must be "hand-pushed" at times.)

I was going to say our children think "in the round". They grew up modeling everything around, using plasticine which they used so lavishly, it used to stick to our shoes all over the house and adhere to stair bannisters and chairs. We never grumbled though we often had to take a knife to scrape the gobs off of things. But the result now shows. They can draw you from their imaginations a horse or a dog or a cow, viewed from any angle. They have made endless dogs, cows, horses, peones, in all sizes ever since they were mere toddlers and if they do less now, it's because life has got at them and they're all off studying (to be vets and so on). But I'm satisfied with the two-dimensional way of viewing things, reducing the massive shapes of light and color, shadow and darkness, that form my ever moving landscape, into hecto-images I can share with my friends. At least, I used to do so till the shocking new prices came into vogue, and the only way I can continue experimenting with hectography as a printing medium for full-color art, is to earn my right to buy new gelatine, paints and paper from now on. Hence, these Tinks have had to be sold, not given away henceforth. However, this is also so my other zine, the Tomzine, can continue to be sent out free as an extension of personal correspondence. To get it be yourself, tell me about yourself, paint your own image to fascinate us all down here, and you'll be on the mailing list (and I hope once again the zine can have more pages, once I solve the problems faced this past year.)

Actually, the possibilities of hectography are far more promising than anything ~~that~~ I have yet managed to paint/print suggests. I glimpse possibilities I hope to achieve in another year or two, (and by then I'll be able to tell you the tricks and what pitfalls need avoiding), but meanwhile, even when retouching was required for some of the 100 prints in each example, I'm still quite pleased with the results on the whole. They tell a story. They tell you -- better than words can do -- **THIS IS OUR LIFE**. This is our life down here in these wilds, these central Cordoban hills our children love as their true home, for they grew up here. It is going on for 15 years since we first came here, when Vadim took on this job of managing this hilly estancia, and we'll probably be here a few years more, since the former peso is now worth only one new centavo, and savings went up in smoke for us all as a result.

Now briefly let me describe the pictures.

1) Mare with foal; ranchito in background and a beehive oven. The mare's belly is huge and Sylvia insists, "It has to be. She just foaled." She looks proud and fatuous, doesn't she. The foal's tail is held high. "All the foals do," says Sylvia. She knows...

2) "Draw me a horse looking over a paddock gate waiting for you to bring some homemade bread," said I. She drew one, but left no room for the gate, so that is now painted separately, in Illo 7. That's a scene twenty steps from our house!

3) What a job this print was to retouch. Count them: three dogs, one horse looking exasperated, and the gal and her guy. Multiply by 100. I retouched most of them, right? Only a very few prints didn't need a bit of retouching, at least.

Disgusted at last, I did the next painting without any "life" save for the house in the distance. But if you compare the two prints, you'll see it's "approximately the same scenery".

Sylvia returning from the cattle-chase, gave me a huge fragrant cactus bloom. "Now draw it," said she. "Mañana," said I, and she looked sceptical. So on Monday, with the kids away and back at high school and universities, I did sketch in the flower and borrow a bird flying from the girls' Encyclopedia they bought for themselves with their own earnings years ago. (They used to do photographic prints for their schoolmates when small, right at home.) We are now up to Illo 6. (Bird and flower was 5. Scene without figures was 4. Same scene with figures, 3.)

Illo 6

I think came out very realistically. That's exactly how these hills do look at dusk when driving up from Jesus Maria and the plains. And the ~~horses~~ settle on the winding dirt trail in just that cozy-looking way. And a rider afar outlined against the lingering brightness of further hills is also exact. Illo 7 is the paddock gate. A bigger

version gave me almost no copies, alas. But it came out much brighter and more golden with lights. Hecto is tricky. It all depends on the moisture and temperature of the atmosphere as well as the condition of the gelatine, that's all. (Oh, and good paper, of several types, you must use. Can't get more supplies down here, not within any price range affordable right now.)

Illo 8, shows a peon in the heights above the estancia working with steer. I betrayed Sylvia there. (Her sketches are done with a pencil and my brush stroke was wrong in one case, copying her. Vadim complains one steer looks like a pig. My fault!)

I like Illo 9. Vadim complains, "Caritos don't look like that," but I had to remind him, "Some do". It's a cozy scene, I do think, those two machos going uphill peacefully, with a crumbling cliff-edge to their left and endless heights still to be scaled. (It is the way the drive uphill looks, for us, too.) I thought, "Is Mayucuman awaiting them somewhere?" She is the old Quechuan "Mother of the Waters" (Mayu = river), so I drew her next (Illo 10), as per descriptions in most ancient myths. Then, recalling how hard-headed you are, not to offend you, with just a few brush-strokes and still using the same gelatine bed, (Illo 11), I turned her into a willow tree, just. Okay? Illo 12 shows a bunch of innocent posies from our garden right now. If some of them have faces, not my fault. I wasn't trying to sneak anything across on you...

I wanted to do more but the gelatine crumbled when I attempted Print 13, and -- fed up -- I said, "That's it, this time." Next time, I'll try to do more!

\* Cows, I meant!

Mae