

It is recorded that you became interested in the visual arts when you were 9 after coming across a book on Van Gogh. What do you remember about that moment?

*I found an old large-scale book of the works of Vincent Van Gough at a garage sale and bought it for a quarter. I was sitting on the floor of my bedroom—the sun was setting making the air gold and thick with beauty. I remember turning the pages and gazing at the paintings and feeling something change in the very center of me. I knew at that exact moment that I had two homes: the home of my mother and that of my spirit. I remember so clearly feeling an absolute overwhelming sense of comfort, relief and gladness, and I knew that I would not get lost along my life's road because I loved something very much, and that something was art.*

How do you view arts education? How do you view self-teaching?

*Arts education is super, it breaks my heart that public schools have removed arts education entirely from their programs which removes the ability to reach or connect with any children who learn differently, like myself.*

*In more advanced fields of arts education it too can be great, except that there are some classrooms where all the students' work resembles that of their professor. To me this is windowless teaching, where the teacher didn't allow the students' spirits into the room. This is not teaching. Teaching of any kind must be like the element of the gravity of this earth. It keeps us here, but we are always jumping and pushing away from it on swings and on trampolines – glad to have a place to come back to but always looking out, up and forward.*

*Regarding self-teaching, this is a job for us all but especially for the artist. Everything we learn or discover shows itself in our art. Art cannot stagnate. It must constantly change and evolve like clouds across the sky. I am a ravenous person by nature, so I am always hungry to discover and know things I didn't know before, to discover and admire the accomplishments of others. I see Life as a joy and a challenge but believe we must do it actively with both hands.*

What is your relationship with color?

*Color for me is emotion, it is memory. It makes the world have punctuation as opposed to being one long run-on sentence. The Fauvist's got it right. Especially [Kees van Dongen](#), & [André Derain](#). Some of their works make you catch your breath. The color is so personal you find yourself saying, oh yes I too have felt that!*

How would you describe the basis of your work? What do you draw from?

*My mother asked me very often from an early age "America – what are you passionate about?" Passion was expected of me – and have come to demand it in myself. To be*

*bored was never an option. My mother use to have a Goethe quote pinned to her bookshelf. I would read it any time I felt the uncomfortable feeling of lack luster and it would revive my spirits like water to a thirsty camel. "Whatever you can do or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power and magic in it!"*

You are an artist during what I believe will be considered a very transformative time in art history. The trajectory of fine art has changed so much with the Internet and the proliferation of social media. What is it like to be an artist now?

*I agree that this age of fantastic technology makes communication and sharing information so much easier. It's quite dreamy the things we can do. We are generally squeezing the word 'can't' and 'no' out of the cupboard of thought.*

*How will this new era mark fine art? To create something from nothing, to solve problems, to dare to dream – these are still and will remain the prime functions of all artists.*

*However slick we get as a society, we still put one foot in front of another and walk to pick up shovel and dig. There is beauty in work, dignity in sweat and triumph in confronting things that are difficult. The style and voices of artists will continue to be as unique as each individual regardless of the advancements of time. I believe there is honest beauty in a tactile thing made by ones hand head and heart.*

Imagining the salons of the twenties and thirties leaves some longing for a time when there was intimacy and rapport within the art community. What are art communities like now and do you see yourself as part of an art community?

*One of life's great joys is meeting other like-minded people who think, question and do things. Artists are members of a kind of tribe. We all know each other when we meet and are fast friends. In my studio, which is a wonderful 10,000 square foot warehouse, I enjoy hosting all kinds of salons. We have a regular meeting called Table Reads, where myself and three women each month choose a play and do a full cast table read. I host everything from dance performances, poetry readings; art shows for artists I admire to plays of original playwrights' work. This has been such a personal joy, for much of fine art is done in solitude. It is important to remind ourselves that we are not alone, that there are other lion tamers out there doing great and inspiring things.*

A few years ago you got a new studio and put a lot of work into it. What role does your studio play in the production of your art?

*I sometimes literally pinch myself to be sure I am not dreaming – that the walls around me are there. I wonder at my great good fortune that I am lucky enough to paint in such a place. Then I remember the last nine years of working and saving – and the last year and a half of renovation. Seven days-a-week, my husband and I and two hired hands replaced walls and pipes and ceilings and gates and learned about windows and*

*molding and roofs and leaks! So many things we now understand and appreciate. Then I say to myself, "Go ahead you lady painter! Go on and paint and enjoy yourself!" And I do. The fact that I am in one place where my roots may un-curl. where I can research and discover and grow, to play at top volume the songs of Lucinda Williams to Richard Burton reading his favorite poems. This is bounty for the artist heart and I count myself lucky.*

What is your process when creating a work of art?

*When I was small my grandmother would come and read to me and I would draw. My process is the same today. When I work, if I'm not listening to music I listen to audio books. I go through vast amounts of literary works. I love to devour all the works of a writer, for then I can see how the style and perspectives changed over time and get a true sense of that author's work.*

Figuration and abstraction have a contentious relationship in art history, as they have been said to have an oppositional relationship. How do you reconcile these two components in your work?

The importance of representational and non-representational art has always been a subject for discussion – but not for me. The only discussion of value should be the presence of the artist within the work. Later, you can fill up paper with pencil and chat about breaking it down.

Many of your paintings are accented with little dots. Is this your trademark?

Ah dots... yes, they are done with my finger. They balance the eye, and carry it from one color to another, and are tender bits. For when skin touches canvas or paper there is a blessing that silently accompanies each touch.

One of the strongest qualities in your work is line. Can you explain your use of line, conceptually and formally?

In line my eyes see form and shape -- but all separately. It is the joy of the process of art to join them into one voice, into one piece.

Your work references the Classics. Do you feel a responsibility to the movements of the past? Or is your relationship with them more light hearted?

I am by nature one who leans toward classical elements. I prefer reading Portuguese poetry to reality TV shows. I do not reject the present. I love the architectural works of Gerhy but I don't really dig the works of Philip Glass, though I admire his prolific creations. The only responsibility that I feel is to learn about as many of the artists and creators that are working now as well as those from the past because it makes the world smaller and smaller and from the perspective of one who loves to study, you can see and feel in works of art be it literary, fine art or music the currents and

patterns of a culture. And its lovely to know where one is going and where one has been as a whole.

Have there been any events in your life that have made a big impact on your work?

The real game changer was the gift my mother gave me when I was 21.

My mother and stepfather had just divorced, and my older brother had been very ill, and I had begun to think that life was becomingly repeatedly keen on coming around and kicking you in the shins when you weren't looking. I was living in Los Feliz. I had had group shows and had sold art but I had been waiting tables and bartending and painting every chance I could, but it was never enough.

My mother came over one day and said some magic words that went like this: How about if you move out of your apartment, quit your bartending job, live in my garage and paint full time. I said that sounds like a dream but I need to still keep my job. She said she didn't know how long she could do it, but she would give me the money I needed to cover my expenses every month so I could focus on making art. And I said what! And she said you heard me. I said for real? And she said yes, for real. And I said thank you thank you thank you and yes yes yes please!

That changed everything for me. I finally was able to create a body of work. Not long after I had my first solo gallery show in Santa Barbara at the Santa Barbara Art Company – which is now the Elizabeth Gordon Gallery. My work sold well and I never looked back.

Do you ever think about your legacy as an artist?

Legacies are the footprints you make while you're busy walking up and down the hills of your life. I'm just beginning to enjoy the scenery.

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