On the cover

MELISSA KEY

LINDSAY H. JONES

Lindsay H. Jones Fine Art

Title: Queen City Reflections

Description: mixed media, canvas

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Artist statement:
Drawn to nature, I paint coastal, pastoral and mountain landscapes. I also paint city skylines, capturing where nature and civilization come together. Utilizing color, texture, paint application and changes in value, my goal is to guide the viewer easily through the painting with visual rewards and cues along the way.

Q&A

Where are you from?

I was born and raised in Charlotte and have always considered this home. After graduating from West Charlotte High School and Wake Forest University, I moved to Washington, D.C. Five years later, I married my high school sweetheart. We moved back to Charlotte to be closer to family. It was amazing to see how much the city had changed and grown in our time away. When I left, it was a small Southern town and when I returned it had transformed into a fun, vibrant, culturally rich city. These aspects, in addition to our family members, have kept me here.

What is your opinion of the Charlotte art scene?

I have found the Charlotte art scene to be inspiring and collaborative. There are so many talented artists in our city with varied backgrounds, each with something different to offer and a willingness to share industry knowledge. Whether artists are interested in pop up shops, street shows, gallery representation or opening up their personal studios, Charlotte has a number of opportunities for artists to share their work.

What is your favorite or most inspirational place in the Charlotte area?

Hands down my favorite place in Charlotte is anywhere you can see our beautiful skyline.

What inspires you? What inspired this piece/idea?

I am a primarily a landscape painter, drawn to both coastal scenes and mountains vistas. My travels in North Carolina and the Southeast inspire each landscape painting I create. While natural beauty is the source of most of my inspiration, I also enjoy painting landscapes where nature and civilization meet. My painting featured in the Charlotte Business Journal is a good example of this, capturing the skyline reflected in the man-made lake in Marshall Park. The water, buildings, trees and sky all come together to create a unique composition.

How did you start making art?/Why do you make art?

I've always been creative but growing up, I was more interested in music than fine art. I took my first oil painting class from Paige Laughlin at the suggestion of my freshman year adviser. Professor Laughlin was fantastic, and I was fortunate to have a spot in her class. Upon realizing I was the only non-art major taking intro to oil painting, I tried to drop the class. She said, "If you are willing to try, I am willing to teach." That is really the main reason I paint – I am willing. Willing to try, willing to make mistakes, share part of myself, step out of my comfort zone and do something new. I make art because I am always surprised by the outcome of a painting. I truly lose myself in my craft. I step away from my easel wondering what time is it, and where has the day gone.

Who are your biggest influences?

In addition to Paige Laughlin, Andy Braitman has been my biggest influence. Like many oil painters in Charlotte, I took several years of painting workshops and classes with him. He showed me a path to painting professionally that I am not sure I would have found on my own. I also admire the work of Richard Diebenkorn, an abstract expressionist who used geometric shapes, angles, lines and vibrant color in his landscape paintings.

How have you developed your career?

I've developed my career through repeated practice and daily effort in front of my easel, picking up my brushes, mixing paint and doing the work. Most people who aren't painters think some sort of magical inspiration is required behind each piece but more often than not it is the daily commitment to practicing over and over again.

How do you seek out opportunities?

I receive referrals from galleries who represent me and inquiries about my work through my website and social media. Instagram is such an incredible tool for artists to not only connect with buyers but with galleries and other artists as well. I am also committed to art accessibility and removing barriers to ownership of original artwork. I believe in the value and impact art has to change an environment and look for opportunities to help support this effort. Recently, I launched a program called Art Share in partnership with Habitat for Humanity of Charlotte to provide Habitat homeowners with original, commissioned pieces of art for their homes. So far, I've completed commissions for two Habitat homeowners and look forward to growing this program to reach more people.

What's the best piece of advice you've been given?

"It is better to be respected than liked," is the best piece of advice I've been given. Growing up, this was taped to the refrigerator for as long as I can remember. Popularity comes and goes. Cultural and societal trends change. Character and staying true to who you are cultivates long-term satisfaction and respect. In an industry where success is often based on paintings sold, social media followers and likes, this is more relevant than ever and is an excellent reminder for me to be the best painter I can be by staying true to myself.

What is the biggest challenge you face professionally?

The biggest challenge I face professionally is making time for the business side of running Lindsay H. Jones Fine Art. While I have 15-plus years of public relations and marketing experience, I have to make a concerted effort to carve out time for business activities – invoicing, website updates, commission proposals, bookkeeping – in the midst of painting. I'd rather just paint!

What is your dream project?

My dream project would be to work with a network of Art Share artists to create original works of art for each new Habitat homeowner across Charlotte — and beyond.