

INSPIRED BY BEAUTY

Artist: 'Painting is my refuge'

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By Sue Mayfield Geiger



Photos by Kevin Cox

Fontaine Jacobs began drawing at a young age. She even painted theater sets as a teen and young adult. But her mother steered her into teaching.

Still, Jacobs never lost her love of art. She took up painting and sold some pieces while living in Memphis, Tenn., where she met and married her husband. After subsequent moves to Virginia and California, she went to work for an advertising agency, where she climbed the ladder from art director to vice president. “I got my creative fix from doing ad concepts, logo design and brochure development,” Jacobs said.

After a move to Friendswood in 2005, she decided to get serious about her art. By 2009, her portfolio was blossoming.

“I met other artists in my neighborhood, and we started an art

group that met monthly, which provided critique and art appreciation,” she said.

Jacobs, who is self taught, said she studied with art teachers through the years but reached a point where all she really needed to do was just paint. Her influences include Peter Paul Rubens, John Singer Sargent, Andrew Wyeth and Galveston artist George Campbell, among others. Fontaine describes her style as somewhere in the middle of realism and impressionism. She likes to work in several mediums and to capture an image with the least amount of brush strokes. “I like the happy accidents that happen with watercolor — you can just throw paint and have something emerge,” said Jacobs, who also likes the speed of acrylic and the forgiving nature of oil. Her favorite subjects are people, she said.

“I love doing portraits and figurative work — I’m a big people watcher,” she said. “I love to see the colors in their faces.”

The paintings throughout Jacobs' home and studio are a mix of florals, abstracts, still lifes, animals (she raises weimaraners) and, of course, people. One of her newest works is the Galveston Island



Historic Pleasure Pier.

Her most poignant piece is that of a nude she painted two weeks before she got a diagnosis of breast cancer. After a double mastectomy, Fontaine is cancer free. But that painting is one she'll never sell, she said. "Shortly after I painted it, I felt a lump, so I have a connection with that painting," she said.

Jacobs does not depend on the muse to inspire her. "My inspiration comes from just the beauty around me," she said. "I have so many paintings rolling around in my head, so I don't lack for ideas." She paints with the Bay Area Plein Air group weekly. The group, whose members paint landscapes in the open, meets at such scenic places as Armand Bayou, Challenger Park and Maas Nursery. "I work in oils when I paint with this group because I don't have to worry about it drying," she said.



"Ruffled Feathers"

Her current painting in progress is a night scene of the Kemah Boardwalk, but it's not unusual for Jacobs to have four or five paintings in progress at once, especially when she's preparing for a show. She has exhibited at multiple venues, including Island Gallery in El Lago and both Mod Coffeehouse and Mosquito Café in Galveston. She donates a portion of her proceeds to breast cancer research and low-income housing development. Jacobs recently was contacted by The Artist

Within studio in Kemah to paint 30 paintings for the organization's inventory. She'll begin teaching classes for The Artist Within in May.

When not in front of the easel, Jacobs enjoys cooking, gardening, furniture design, jewelry making and meditation. "Painting is my refuge," she said. "It centers me, challenges me and provides me with my sense of self." Her confidence comes through to reflect that in her self-portrait. "I've learned not to let any painting scare me," Jacobs said. "An art teacher once walked up behind me and said, 'Don't let it scare you,' so that stuck with me. You can create angst that is paralyzing, but I don't let that happen. I'm having lots of fun doing this." www.fontainefineart.com



"Maiden Voyage"



"Room with a View"



"Self Portrait"