



Artist Bios

Texas Heat, an exhibition of the Women's Caucus for Art

Laurie Ambrose - www.lkitart.com

In her own words, "There is beauty in all things, we just must stop, take a few moments to breathe in our surroundings and open our eyes to find it. Light, shadows and shapes intrigue me and I try to incorporate all these things in my photos and paintings. My goal is to make my viewers feel what I see through my art".

Laurie recently retired and is thoroughly enjoying rediscovering her joy in painting. As a teenager she took drawing lessons at Fort Worth Museum of Science and had the honor of studying oil painting with Texas State Artist, Renne Hughes. She has received numerous awards in photography, as well as painting, from Brazoria County Fair Association. Her photographs of "The Ladies of the Brazoria County Courthouse" were selected for a special artist's display at the Brazoria County Historical Museum. Laurie enjoys getting out in nature and landscape painting monthly with a local Brazoria County group called "The Plein Aire's".

Suzanne Buckland - www.bucklandgallery.com

As a visual artist currently living in Katy, Texas, Suzanne specializes in painting oil and acrylic on canvas, mixed mediums and drawing charcoal, pastel and oil pastel on paper, clay, photography and sculpture. She has been drawing and painting most of her life and studied art in The Netherlands over 40 years ago. She is a full-time professional artist and instructor. Suzanne's goal is to put a smile on the face of humanity, to preserve nature, the natural world, our environment, and create a greater appreciation for art, nature, freedom and artistic expression.

Suzanne can be found every Saturday at The Silos, 1502 Sawyer St. Houston, Studio 122.

Suzanne's perspective varies. Like most other artists, she has experimented with styles, media, and size. She paints in several different styles including ancient hieroglyphs to more classic post expressionism. Suzanne's subjects include her take on ancient art forms, floral and botanical, landscapes and seascapes including sunsets, animals, birds and more. She is also available for commissioned artwork. You can see Suzanne's work on Facebook and Fine Art America. Or email confident_realm@yahoo.com.

Della Calfee - www.dellacalfee.com

Artist photographer Della Calfee uses the camera to capture moments that evoke intense unspoken meaning. Drawn to graceful form and the beauty of the glorious Texas landscape surrounding the Houston area, this artist brings decades of observation and practice into each image. Della delights in using texture, color, light, and simplified bold forms to intentionally convey complex ideas. The Texas Heat series was created during some of the hottest days during the recent years, with a focus on the joyful moments between the hard times.

Sarah Beth Castillo - www.instagram.com/redhandedpainter

As an artist, Sarah Beth is deeply concerned about the devastating impact that climate change is having on our planet. Drawing from her experiences growing up in East Texas, where over 35 years she witnessed firsthand the worsening effects of severe droughts, hurricanes, and other extreme weather events, Sarah Beth creates art that reflects the fragility of our human infrastructure and resilience of our communities in the face of immense and preventable disaster.

Using a range of media and her perspective as a Mexican American, she aims to engage viewers in a dialogue about the urgent need for collective action. To address climate change, ultimately, Sarah Beth's goal as an artist is to use her creative skills to make a positive impact on the world around her.

Afi Ese - www.afiese.com

Afi Ese is an African American figurative narrative artist and art psychotherapist. Her work focus is portraiture with an emphasis on generational trauma and triumph in rural Black America. Her paintings are conceptualized narratives of the African plight through the eyes of a self-aware Black American.

Afi identifies as a disabled artist and is wheel-chair dependent. She expresses her journey through pain, both metaphorically and physically. She views artistic ability as a mental skill just as much as a physical skill and aims to show others with disabilities that they can find catharsis and relief through art.

Jill Friedman - www.fineartamerica.com/profiles/1-jill-friedman

Jill grew up on the beach in Florida. She always loved the water, and spent her days swimming, sailing, fishing, and exploring the natural world. After being sent away to high school on a large square-rigged sailing ship (so she couldn't skip school), Jill decided she wanted to be a ship captain. Her dream was to sail around the world and get paid for it. So she moved to Texas in 1978 to attend the Ocean Marine Technology program at Brazosport College in Lake Jackson.

Jill has kept a home base in Lake Jackson, but has been able to travel to many interesting places over the years. Until recently, she has spent most of my time working on the water: fishing vessels, tankers, dive boats, yachts, construction vessels, heavy lift ships, etc. She has traveled around the world, both for work and for fun. Mexico, Tanzania, Korea, Ireland, Singapore, China, Thailand, are all fantastic places to be. Jill has always loved photography and has taken hundreds of photos of everything she sees. The photos have improved greatly with practice (and upgrading from the disposable cameras of her high school adventures on the sailing ships).

Jill takes pictures of many different things, but concentrates on seascapes-boats, ships, offshore life-travel, animals, nature, weather, food, and architecture. She loves night photography, too.

Jill has more time to spend on her art lately. She always fiddled around with it - drawing, painting, writing, playing music - but hasn't really done anything with it since Junior High school. She might get bored every once in a while out on a ship somewhere and come up with something out of her head (like her pastel Red Starfish she drew while she was on a tuna boat somewhere in the South Pacific). She started taking occasional classes with Dolores Reynolds (oil) and then Robert Ruhmann (watercolor) and joined the Brazosport Art League. Jill has been concentrating on learning how to paint water, using oil and watercolor paints. She started writing a blog (www.captainjillsjourneys.com) as a way to improve her writing and connect with people around the world.

She entered a couple of pastels in the Brazoria County Fair art show and won a couple of prizes. She has entered a couple of paintings in the Gallery at the Brazosport Center for Arts and Science.

Between teaching (maritime) at San Jacinto Maritime College and looking for a real job back at sea, Jill keeps busy with writing (published in Maritime Executive, Incomes Abroad, Sidelights), uploading her photos to [Bigstock](#), [Alamy](#), [Dreamstime](#) and other stock sites. Jill is also online at [Society6](#) and [Fine Art America](#).

Diane Gelman - www.dianegelman.com

Diane Gelman is a mixed media artist. Her artworks are a celebration of food, the beauty of nature, and focus on interesting people. Diane earned a Certificate in Fine Art in Painting from The Glassell School of Art in 2012. She also has a Master's Degree in Nutrition and is a Registered, Licensed Dietitian. Diane had a long career in food before being trained as an artist, specializing in food- based artwork.

Diane's artworks are mixed media, combining paint with paper, fabric, and collage in a finely detailed fusion. Much of her works are hyper- realistic sculptures and paintings of food that look so real, that the viewer feels like a kid in a candy store; like they could pick any treat that their heart desires. Many paintings have an exciting 3 dimensional aspect, adding depth and interest.

Diane works full-time creating exciting artwork in her studio at Sawyer Yards. Diane has had six solo shows, numerous private commissions, and many awards. In 2020, Diane created a 15'h x 30'w Mural, **The Big Dreamer**, commissioned by Midtown Houston at Camden McGowen Station Apartments

Debbie Gibbs - www.debbiegibbs.net

Debbie Gibbs, an educator for over forty years, is now fulltime artist, living and working in Houston where she has a studio at The Silos in Sawyer Yards. Debbie is the President of the Woman's Caucus for Art-Texas, having restarted this chapter of the national organization to support Texas women in the arts through activism, education and art exhibitions.

Debbie uses paper on stretched canvas in abstract paintings, mosaics and collages. Debbie creates colorful artwork with a variety of papers, using acrylics to adhere paper, paint, enhance, glaze, and varnish. Debbie often explores equity, justice, and inclusion in her work. She uses iconic images such as hands, hearts, crosses, flowers, sun, moon, Venn diagrams, turtles, dragons and peace symbols. Sometimes, in contrast to this controlled style, Debbie enjoys creating more freely and intuitively, doing mixed media acrylic abstract pieces where the papers are usually part of the underlayers, and by masking and painting out, the painting emerges.

Debbie Hollis - www.debbiehollis.art

Debbie Hollis is a painter, sculptor, photographer and poet/songwriter. Her work has been featured in exhibits, galleries, magazines, films, and arts websites and numerous private collections. Throughout her career she has served as juror, arts advocate, gallery owner, designer, creative advisor, curator, teacher, business advisor, program creator and administrator, website designer, mural designer and mentor.

Her artwork has earned awards from the Smithsonian Magazine (2009), the Meadows Museum of Art (2013), the Marlene Yu Museum (2018) and the Greenville Texas Art League (2022).

Debbie grew up in rural Louisiana, and recently moved to East Texas. She graduated from Centenary College of Louisiana (2004) with a degree in Art and Visual Culture.

Rona Lesser - www.ronalegger.com

Rona Lesser is a Houston artist and art educator working in watercolor, acrylic and pastel. She has lived most of her life in Texas and loves to be outdoors painting in the Texas spring and fall weather. She specializes in landscapes and figure work but enjoys painting animals or other subjects also. She works from life and her own photos.

She has shown her work in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, and Boston as well as in many Houston juried exhibits, and has several awards from Houston juried exhibits. Her work can be seen at Sawyer Yards Silos Studios #123. She has trained at the Art League of Houston, the Glassell School and many other workshops in Houston and around the country.

Describing her work, she states: "I try and catch the emotional effect the subject has on me and share that with the viewer. I see beauty in the human figure and in the land around us. I express myself with line, shape and color and find that creating art focuses me."

Melody Locke - www.alternativephotography.com/melody-locke

Melody uses traditional and alternative photographic processes to create fine art prints. Using B&W and infrared film, she develops black and white prints in a traditional wet darkroom. She also uses non-camera photographic processes to create ethereal images from botanical material and negatives.

Melody is a graduate of the University of Houston and began her long-term association with Museum of Fine Arts-Houston Glassell School of Art in 2007. Melody has a studio at Silver Street Studios at Sawyer Yards, and opens her studio to the public every second and third Saturday of the month.

Nergis Mustafa - www.nergismustafafineart.com

Nergis is a Mixed Media Artist living and working in Houston where she has a studio in The Silos at Sawyer Yards. In her words, "I paint to forget reality and dive into a world with no limitations. Color and line dance and become one." The beauty of nature is the driving force behind her work.

Barbara Rubenstein - www.barbararubensteinart.com

Barbara retired from commercial banking in 2005 and began studying art. She paints in the genre referred to as "abstract expressionism", primarily using acrylics, ink and clay. Barbara is noted for rich layers of color and texture. Her work seamlessly melds geometric elements with vibrancy, spontaneity, and organic form

Barbara and her family live in Houston, TX and have a vacation home in Santa Fe, NM. Much of Barbara's inspiration comes from nature, particularly the rich colours and awe-inspiring landforms found in Santa Fe. She has studied at Houston's Glassell School of Art and has participated in various other classes and workshops in Houston and in Santa Fe. Her work has been acquired by many commercial and private collectors.

In her own words, "Art takes me to a fanciful, fabulous place surrounded by beautiful color and dramatic feeling. My creations are an expression of what I sense in the world around me. I strive to convey my feelings through the use of many layers of color, texture and movement. My hope is that you will be inspired and energized by what you see...that you will feel a connection that evokes good feelings and creates a special memory. I long for my art to take you, as it does me, to a fanciful fabulous place."

Iris Salmins - www.houston-abstract-painting-artist.com

Texan, Iris Salmins, is best known for her colorful abstract paintings. In 1996 while living in the country of Latvia, her future husband had become her translator. Iris found out that if she wanted to be with him on his "off-time," she would need to hang out with him as he painted. So, what was a girl to do? She went out and bought canvases, paints, and an easel.

Her first claim to fame was winning first place in a juried exhibition, which was judged by the director of the Glassell School, which is part of the Museum of Fine Arts Houston. Her abstracts have been said to be a fabulous collection of eclectic paintings. Currently, her paintings can be seen in Houston at Fellini's and Eliana's.

Carolyn Todd - www.galleriesitka.com/carolyn-todd

As an artist, instructor, and naturalist, Carolyn is inspired by her experiences with people, nature, wildlife, and conservation. She started attending the University of Texas when she was in the seventh grade as a gifted student. The project was called the Saturday Morning Art Project. Carolyn was awarded an art scholarship among others to attend the University of Texas at Austin, where she received a Bachelor of Fine Arts and a Secondary Art Teaching Certificate. She also earned a Master of Arts from the University of Houston.

Carolyn's paintings, drawings, and illustrations are in private collections in the United States, Europe, Mexico, and South America. She was proud to be selected as the "Artist in Residence" for the National Park Service, Amistad National Recreation Area near Del Rio, Texas. While living in Massachusetts beginning in 2016, she taught art classes for the ALFA program at Fitchburg State University, Fitchburg Art Museum, and the Creative Minds, Seven Hills program at the Worcester Art Museum. Currently, Carolyn teaches at the Cultural Activities Center in Temple and the Georgetown Art Center.

All of these classes or workshops involve the instruction of several different types of media for private lessons, curriculum based classes, and workshops in drawing (including life drawing), mono-printing, colored pencil, crepas/oil crayon drawing/painting, watercolor, acrylic, oil, and encaustic painting.

Diana Marie Waguespack - dianamariefineart.com

"To be submerged in a totally creative state is to escape into the mind's eye and envision the beauty within." - Diana Marie

Diana is a fine art photographic artist who specializes in underwater fine art. Her work is whimsical, has a great fashion sense and is timeless in its beauty. She creates artistic works that are unique, individual and cannot be duplicated or compared to other photographic or artistic disciplines. For those who desire a custom experience she creates commissioned works. Her fine art is also sold to collectors who desire a unique art piece.

Diana set her pool up like a photo studio, all underwater, with special camera equipment and more. When she is under water it is magical to her, and she can see the images flashing through her mind visualizing what the art piece will be. Sometimes she captures exactly what she imagines and other times much more than expected. It is

truly her passion and she loves beginning her fine art piece with the underwater camera. After her art is complete, she will also often embellish it with oil paint, encaustic waxes, or other processes.

Diana wants the viewer to love what they see while feeling the emotions that speak to them - to have a special piece of art to cherish always. She invites you to dive into her works of art and let the images speak to you in a personal way.

Emily Hensley Whitman

Emily is a visual artist based in Houston. Her photography and paintings of regional narratives and landscapes are informed from her studies in international environmental & cultural relations and upbringing in the Texas hill country. Inspired by environmental conservation, American archives, memory, & heritage, she focuses on art as a personal and cultural record.

Whitman's work has been featured in Glassell's Kinder show series "Urban" (2022), Hardy & Nance Studios' Black & White 7.0 show (2023), & Hardy & Nance Studios' Ratio Redux Analog Photography show (2023).