

Get to know your local artists with Gallery1608

The work of Holywood artist Quinn Russell is showcased at Gallery 1608

Quinn Russell lives and works in Holywood, a small town close to Belfast in Northern Ireland. Her painter's name is an amalgam of strong female family names. Following some major changes in her life, she began painting with more purpose a few years ago.

When did you start painting?

As a child I was an art materials and stationery freak- dolls and Lego simply did not have a place in my life! My father declared that being an artist was not a 'proper job' and refused to allow me to apply for art college. So, I went to Queens and became a teacher and then a school principal. I teach young children and have spent every day of my career mucked up to the eyeballs in paint. Over the years, this kept my link to creativity sustained. Then, more recently, I decided to paint for my own home. I love interior design and I began to paint canvases that made me smile and use colours that I want to live with. I am very keen that my paintings enhance and complete the space they live in.

What do you paint and why?

I love light and sunshine. In my paintings I am drawn to use a lot of metallic paints- gold, bronze and copper. I love how the natural light interacts with the paint on the canvas and the position of the sun during the day changes the way the painting will appear. For me, this gives them a fluidity and life of their own. This focus has led me to use metallic leaf in more recent work. These works reflect the light and the reflection of flames from an open fire particularly brings my eye to them as they hang in my home. They never become a 'part of the furniture' as a result!

What inspires you?

My love of animals has drawn me to enjoy animal portraits and in particular hares. The hare has a great deal of



meaning to me as it is an animal that symbolises a creative way of looking at life. Hares have a naturally solitary nature and are not too quick to conform. The hare teaches us to reach for our dreams and not let anything get in the way. This is exactly what I try to do in the process of painting. Often, I paint little flowers or insects into my paintings. I search up their symbolic meaning and chose carefully. Likewise with the names I give my paintings. They are carefully considered and researched. Sometimes I have a name in mind as I paint but when the painting is finished I can change my mind if I think the name doesn't quite fit the personality and character of the finished work.

Why you paint?

For me, painting is an obsessive and

compulsive passion. When I am not in school or running around after my own children I can't stop thinking about the painting I am working on and I don't stop until it is complete. I use every single second of my free time to create, so I rarely sit down! School holidays are a fantastic opportunity for me to catch up on many ideas and aspirations for painting. My mind doesn't switch off. My favourite medium is acrylic, with its strong colours and shining finish, it is fantastic to apply thickly with a palette knife and raise up from the surface of the canvas. This impasto technique gives a definition to the subject and its texture. I enjoy the feel of this paint on a finished work.

Who is your favourite artist?

I love the work of masters such as Van Gogh, Monet and Matisse. My favourite contemporary artist is Brad Kunkle.

COMPETITION

Win this piece of work by Quinn Russell!



Simply email your answer to the following question to Gallery 1608. info@gallery1608.co.uk:

Which university did Quinn attend to become a teacher?

The draw will take place on Monday 3rd July Good luck!

83-85 Main Street, Bushmills, Co. Antrim, BT57 8QD

T: 028 2073 1324 E: info@gallery1608.co.uk W: www.gallery1608.co.uk