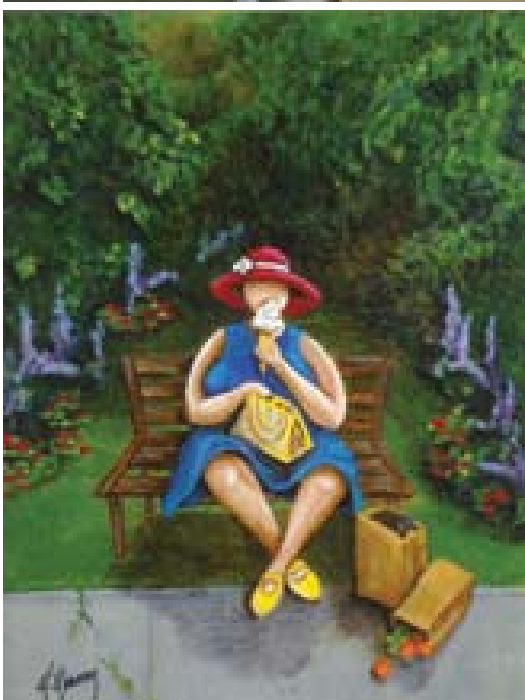


Kathy Meaney



How did you get into the industry?

Wow, I never considered it an industry, because in my opinion artists are doing their craft because they love doing what they do. I was given a gift that was recognized early in my childhood, so I've dabbled in many different mediums over the years struggling to find my thing. My dream was to become an advertising artist, but I started doing computer graphics in the late '70s when no one knew what to call us. Back then I was one of 200 individuals across Canada. It was a creative job and I loved it.

Then marriage and babies and a construction business cut into my creativity. My soul found a home when Brian and I bought a cabin where the "Ladies of the Lake" series eventually evolved in 2005. I yearned to do something artistic and the creative juices were inspired there. Until then, I was always experimenting, trying to find my glitch, but was never really satisfied with what I was doing. My sister Darlene and I have the ability to create unintentional adventures and then laugh at our antics. So I decided to paint memories and laughter. Not saying these are our personal memories, but striking the chord for others is what I am trying to achieve.

Why did you get into the industry?

Art is an outlet for me. It allows me to breathe mentally and this is when I am the happiest. To watch pictures evolve to a finished product, then watch someone study it and appreciate it, it is a reward for me. Many people encouraged me to reproduce my work as they could see its uniqueness and potential for sales. I did not have the foresight they did. I will admit it. As my series evolved I understood its purpose and what I am trying to achieve. Through the "Ladies of the Lake" series, I have also recognized the power women have in friendships and memories and that men and women alike enjoy the series.

Did anyone inspire you or do you have a mentor?

The women of my family have in-





spired me to pursue my dreams. As I already mentioned I wanted to become an artist. In 1999, my Pasemko family celebrated 100 years in Canada and, I wrote a family history book and traced back to my great great grandfather in Ukraine. After researching the stories of pioneering in Canada, I became conscious of the struggles facing each and every settler. My heart aches when I think of them leaving their families in Old Country to fulfill their dreams in the Promised Land. When they arrived here they had many things to overcome. Then I think of myself. I know I can do anything in comparison to what they endured in their lives. I truly believe if anyone puts their mind and heart into something they believe in, they can attain their dreams! My dreams were to be an artist that people could relate to. Hidden meanings are not on my agenda. We as Canadians have so many entities available to us to become successful and that can take advantage of.

How long have you been doing this?

The series began accidentally in 2005. On a peaceful afternoon spent reminiscing about my sister and my relationship and laughing at our antics, I first applied paint to the canvas. Nine months later, I held a private show in our home to have the “closest and safest” friends critique my work. I was completely overwhelmingly terrified! Since then, I too evolved and have come out of my shell to have shows in Victoria, NYC, Calgary, Edmonton and St. Albert. Opening nights are nerve wracking and exciting at the same time. I have been published in *Rising Women*; *Mosaic Magazine*, *Notebook Magazine* and now *Alternative Trends*. There have been a couple of newspaper articles printed as well.

The company I use to scan and reproduce my work encouraged me to make cards and prints. He and some friends’ friends kept saying, you are onto something. Since 2007 my cards have slowly spread across Canada. This has been such an adventure and I would have never dreamed of so many people who would touch my life. And from what I’m being told, the “Ladies” are touching the hearts of others too! So encouraging!

What do you feel makes you stand out from the rest?

I've been told that my style of this series is easily recognizable and it is my understanding that many artists may struggle with this for years. I was fortunate with the series because the women evolved very quickly. I love to meet the people who buy my work because of the relationship they have with the series. The buyers always have a story to tell me and through the course of time we eventually become friends! Because I truly value these relationships and wanted to share some of their stories, I decided to hold a "Ladies of the Lake" series Writing Competition this year. I invited my "Ladies" followers to submit their stories of either relationships or memories stirred from my series. I received an incredible response. The winner won a free print and of course there were two honorable mentions. Inadvertently the responses from the competition pushed me forward to continue with the series. Some of the stories will be posted on my website www.kmeaney.ca.

What have been your challenges, if any?

I know it's time. My mind has a tremendous amount of ideas to paint, but life in general (family, friends and volunteering) can eat up a majority of my time used for painting. Let's face it, I'm getting older and don't quite have the "oomph" I used to! C'est la vie! Promoting my work was intimidating for the first few years. It takes a lot of courage to expose yourself and your work to the public. I've had many people pushing me and I've finally come to the realization "so what." Either they like you or they don't. The last couple of years have been great for expansion and friendships. Exploration is not a problem. It is always TIME!!!!

What do you feel is your specialty, if you have one?

I think it would be the ability to tell a story that people can relate to and even though the ladies are faceless, the viewer immediately can identify a person from his/her own life with the character in the picture. This is why I call my artwork "narrative artwork." There is so much decorative artwork out there that does not speak to the viewer.

My intention is to bring joy to others and tell them it's okay to be round and curvaceous. Love your body and love yourself.

Real people do have fun and enjoy themselves. Media has infiltrated our minds so we believe that women must be slim and perfect in every way. My women are not perfect but they enjoy themselves, relish in their friendships and create or recreate memories. To me, that is of utmost importance in life.

What's new or cutting edge in your opinion?

I love giclees, for the fact a person can have the look of an original in their home. If you can't afford an original – get a giclee of something you love! Financially, I've been on both sides of the fence and like to have art for people they can enjoy and afford.

Anything else you would like to share?

If you are interested in the "Ladies of the Lake" series which are also available in blank cards, prints and giclees, send me an email to kathy@kmeaney.ca or call me 780.267.9996. I can add you to my list and notify you of upcoming events and new pictures. I limit my email newsletters to once or twice per year and do not share your address with others.

Have fun and be positive in life!

