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Interview with Artist Heather Brown

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We recently had a chance to speak with surfer and artist Heather Brown about her work and how she got to where she's at today. Most of Heather's stuff consists of unique looking paintings that are inspired by the ocean, surfing, music, and her home of Hawaii. Her paintings have been shown in galleries all over the world and she has worked with Rip Curl, Jack Johnson, and the Vans Triple Crown of Surfing, just to name a few. Heather was nice enough to answer some questions for us and send us a handful of pictures of her paintings, which can all be seen below.



SURFBANG: When did you start painting and how did you turn it into a career?

Heather Brown: I have always been making art since I was a child. My grandmother was an artist and when I would spend time with her we would always be creating something from drawings and sewing to crocheting and shrinky dinks! It was not until I was older though and had gone through a few different careers (boat captain, dive master, paramedic, hospitality worker....) and had not found any real personal satisfaction that I decided to go to school and focus 100% of my energies into my lifelong passion which has been art. When I graduated from The University of Hawaii with a Bachelor's degree in Fine Art I was still working as a dive master on the North Shore of Oahu. I would work every weekday diving and every night and weekend painting and working on my art. Slowly the demand for my art made it so I did not have

any more time left to work my dive job so I had to take a huge leap of faith and put 100% of my time into becoming a full time artist.

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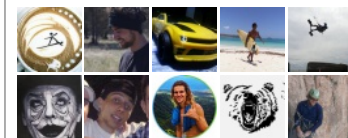
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SB: What inspires you the most?

HB: Living in Hawai'i and the natural beauty that surrounds me on a daily basis. The land, the flora, the expansive ocean that surrounds us and the Aloha of the people.

SB: What other artists are you influenced by?

HB: I have always admired and still do admire many of the classic artists like Picasso, Paul Klee, Hunder Twasser and it was not until I started studying art history that I discovered different forms of art that I had never been exposed to in the realms of Oceanic Art from Micronesia and Melonesia. With my passion for surfing I had been a big fan of artists like Wolfgang Bloch, Thomas Campbell, Barry McGee, Tim Biskup and Andy Davis. In the past few years I find myself influenced by everyone above as well as some newer artists like Ryan Tatar and Yusuke Hanai.

SB: What, if anything, do you try and portray to people through your work?

HB: Simply, I want my art to make people happy when they see it. I want them to remember their great times in Hawai'i or take them to their special Island place that sits in the back of their mind all day when they are at work. I have been told by many of my collectors that they always "get happy" when they look at my art and that makes me feel even happier when I am painting!

SB: Are you involved in any other projects outside of your paintings?

HB: I have been the "Artist of the Search" for Rip Curl Europe for the past two years and have gotten my designs on bikinis, slippers, t-shirts, etc with them. I was also just picked up by Rip Curl USA for Spring 2011. I have always been a big fan of printmaking so I also make limited edition prints here in my studio. In the past few years I have done design work for the Kokua Foundation, Plastic Free Haleiwa, The Van's Triple Crown of Surfing and the Women's Pipeline Pro.

SB: What bands/musicians have you been listening to lately?

HB: I am somewhat all over the place when it comes to music when I am working. I am a big fan of old reggae and dub, and really get inspired by musicians like Ray Barbee, The Mattson 2, Jack Johnson and my favorite musician, Tommy Guerro. I do still find myself listening to anything from The Smiths, Morrissey, and The Pixies to old school punk like Minor Threat and The Bad Brains.

SB: Could you tell us about your artistic style and technique?

HB: I work primarily with acrylics when I paint. I try and break down everything that I see in life to the most basic shapes and lines. I think that the "uniqueness" goes back to my days in school in my Color Theory Class taught by Professor Dugal. During that time I began working with color relationships and mixing colors that someone would normally never think of using together.

**SB: How long have you been surfing?**

HB: I started surfing when I moved to Hawai'i about 11 years ago. Between breaks in classes with my friend Hilary, we would rush down to Waikiki and return to our next class with wet hair and sand between our toes. I remember many teachers telling me how it was a waste of time and that we should concentrate more on our studies, when in actuality that was exactly what I was doing when I would go surfing!

SB: What is your favorite surf spot?

HB: That would have to be any of the many spots in Waikiki.

SB: Where do you travel the most?

HB: For Pleasure, I try to go to a new location every time. In the past few years I have been fortunate enough to travel the Hawaiian Islands, Namotu Fiji, Bali, Tahiti, Costa Rica, Mexico and Japan. I also travel to Japan about 4 times a year for business.

SB: On your leisure trips do you do more surfing or painting?

HB: I would have to say that I do more surfing. I try to experience, observe and absorb the places I go as much as I can so when I get home to my studio I am filled with fresh new ideas. I always bring paint and supplies on all of my journeys and usually come back with a few new pieces.

SB: How would you compare surfing to art or art to surfing?

HB: Each one gives you a different feeling but both have a similar effect on my mind and soul. Whether it be feelings of exhilarating joy and happiness or total peace and tranquility. Both have added so much beauty to my life in so many different ways.

SB: I see you've worked with surfer and musician, Jack Johnson and the Kokua Foundation. How did that come about?

HB: It all started when I met his wife, Kim, when I was a participant in the Haleiwa Arts Festival. She purchased some art from me and shortly after, they contacted me to do the painting for the Kokua Festival 2008. Since then I have continued to work for them, most notably for the Plastic Free Haleiwa project.



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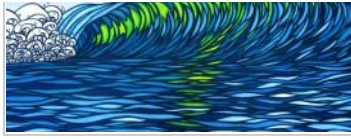
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SB: If you had to pick one of your pieces as your all time favorite, which would it be and why?

HB: It would probably be a piece of mine called, "Glassy Green" When I first painted it I was experimenting with different textures in the waves and how the light comes through the water as the wave starts barreling. The painting also gives me the same feeling of being out there ready to turn around and start paddling to catch this perfect wave. It is the picture that I have on my business card!



SB: You are pretty much living the dream, how does you feel about that?

HB: I have so much appreciation for everything that I get to do and absolutely love it. I continually strive to continue this for the rest of my life!

SB: Any advice or last words you'd like to give to our readers?

HB: I just really appreciate all of the collectors and fans of my art. I don't ever feel like I should give advise, but what I would tell any of my friends old or new is to enjoy and appreciate life and strive to keep following your passions.

We want to give a big THANK YOU to Heather for answering our questions! Check out some samples of her work below and make sure to head over to [Heather's website](#) to see more and purchase prints.

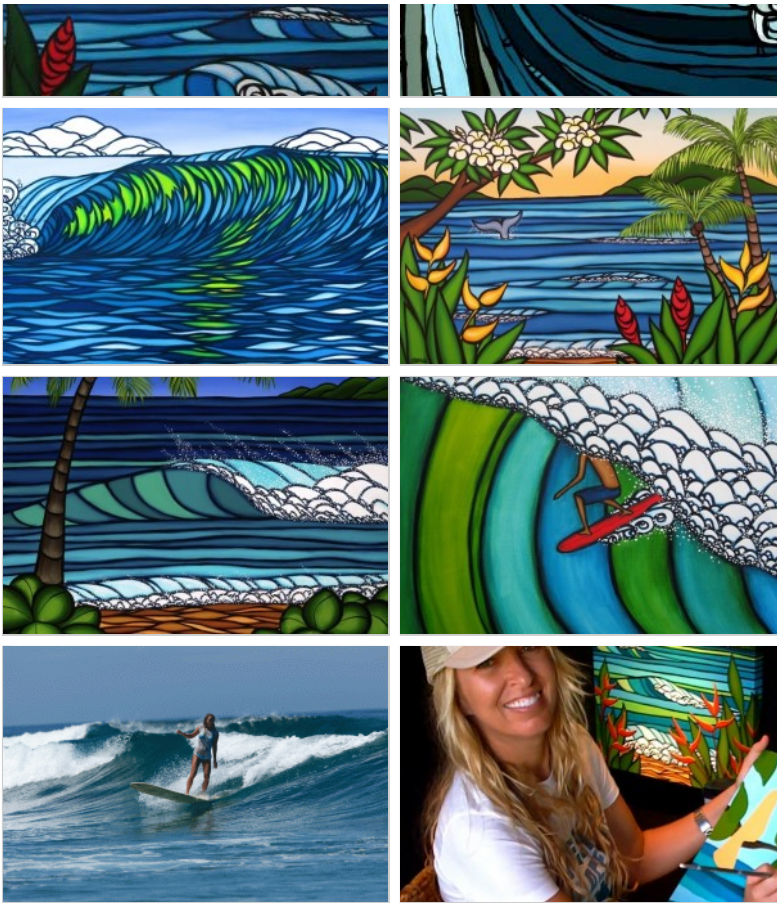
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