

Featured Designer - Inspiring Interview

# BellaGLADYS

## ANNE NEILSON

### PAINTING WITH A PURPOSE

A lifelong artist, Anne Neilson began painting in oils in 2003, quickly becoming nationally renown for her ethereal Angel Series. A favorite among individuals and private art collectors, Neilson's paintings are inspiring reflections of her faith and recognized for their innate flare for color and light.

In 2012, Neilson self-published *Angels In Our Midst*, an inspirational coffee table book featuring stunning fine art images of Neilson's signature Angels, birds, figures and landscapes, as well as uplifting and inspirational stories behind some of Neilson's favorite charitable causes. To date, *Angels In Our Midst* has sold more than 30,000 copies. Following its success, Neilson released a companion book, *Strokes of Compassion*, filled with acclaimed art from artists around the world continuing her journey of giving back through art.

As a response to the growing demand for affordable access to Neilson's original Angels, Neilson launched Anne Neilson Home — a collection of luxury home products, including candles, note cards, scripture cards, prints, and journals. Neilson will be showcasing her products, including an exclusively designed candle at the 2017 Golden Globe Awards Secret Room Event.

In addition to her artistic and business endeavors, Neilson is a passionate philanthropist. A percentage of her proceeds from all of her product and art sales are donated to national and international charitable organizations. Neilson paints with both passion and purpose, and she always seeks to give back to those less fortunate.

In response to her heart's desire to extend her generosity in innovative ways, Neilson released her third coffee table book, *Angels: The Collector's Edition* in the fall of 2016. This special edition book included the largest collection of stories and Anne Neilson fine art original images to date. *Angels: The Collector's Edition* contains the original inspirational content from *Angels In Our Midst* as well as 154 pages of new content, with stories from critically acclaimed music artists Matthew West, Steven Curtis Chapman, Amy Grant and Audio Adrenaline. A percentage of sales from *Angels: The Collector's Edition* benefits organizations dedicated to fighting against the effects of homelessness and poverty worldwide.

In 2013, Neilson opened Anne Neilson Fine Art Gallery in the Southend area of Charlotte, representing over 40 national and international artists. The Anne Neilson Fine Art Gallery exists to be a lighthouse in her community and beyond, supporting Neilson's desire to spotlight worthy organizations, new artists and partnering with Charlotte's growing arts culture. She lives in Charlotte, NC, with her husband and their four children.

*"What energizes me about our collection is the accessibility we have been able to create through this line. The care and wonder that goes into every brush stroke is the same care and wonder that was poured into the creation of our products. Our hope is that we can make a huge impact in our world by giving back through art and our products."*

— ANNE NEILSON

Author, Artist & Philanthropist

[anneneilsonhome.com](http://anneneilsonhome.com) | [anneneilsonfineart.com](http://anneneilsonfineart.com)





## Q & A

### HOW DID YOU DEVELOP THE IDEA OF CREATING A CANDLE?

We are crazy about our candles, and we hope our customers see that love. Even early on in our development phase of Anne Neilson Home, we knew we wanted to include a candle in our product offerings. There were several criteria we kept in mind when developing the perfect candle. We wanted a hand blown glass rather than simply a generic manufactured glass. It was also important to us that customers would be able to keep their empty glass jars and upcycle them into something fun. For the record, our favorite use is as a margarita tumbler. As an artist, the look of the glass was important to me. It took a long time for us to land on the perfect, artisan glass, but we love the final look.

### HOW LONG DID IT TAKE TO MAKE THE PERFECT SCENT?

It took us about a year and half to find all the components for the candles. We met with our manufacturer and came home with about 30 different scents. From there, we spent about a week with our samples out in the gallery and had clients come in and rate the scents. Using their feedback, we chose the top 8 scents for our first candle line and we recently introduced the ninth scent, Luminous, at the Golden Globes in January.

### IS THERE A SPECIAL MEANING BEHIND YOUR CANDLE?

We want to be a "light" in this world for Parkinson's Disease. My dad was diagnosed about 2 years ago, and we wanted a product that would allow us to give back a portion of proceeds to assist Parkinson's research.

### WHAT INSPIRES YOU?

I'm constantly finding inspiration in the ordinary. I believe my faith gives me a lens that draws beauty and inspiration from colors, textures, art, even the process of creating is inspiring to me. I also discover inspiration in my family on a daily basis. With a husband and four children, there is always a wealth of fun, challenge and experience to draw from.

### HOW MANY CANDLES DO YOU HAVE IN YOUR HOME OR IN YOUR STUDIO?

We have about 12 candles at home. Sometimes you'll walk in and find all of them burning throughout the house, and from time to time we keep it simple and have just a single scent burning in the kitchen. In the Gallery, we burn just one at a time to set the atmosphere and allow the fragrance to shine.

### WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE STYLE OR ERA IN THE HOME DESIGN WORLD?

I describe my favorite style as classic with a twist of modern. My poor home is like the cobbler's children who don't have any shoes, but when I do have the opportunity to spend time choosing things for my home, I'm drawn to simplicity with pops of color that come from wonderful pieces of art.

Interview by Jenny Leeser