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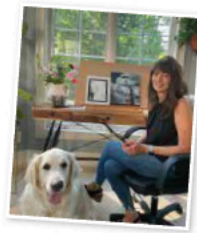
TRUE TO

Nature

portrait of an artist

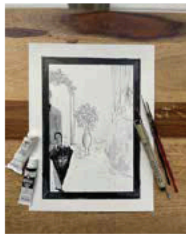
By resident Katie Gildea

ARTIST DIANE MICKLIN'S LOVE OF THE great outdoors INSPIRES HER STUNNING LANDSCAPE PAINTINGS



There is a quote on artist Diane Micklin's website from Laura Ingalls Wilder that reads, "If you truly love nature, you will find beauty everywhere." It is clear from Diane's portfolio that she truly does love nature, evidenced in her gorgeous landscape paintings. "As I'm driving in the car or taking a walk, I see the sky and imagine the colors I would mix to paint the scene," she says. For Diane, Mother Nature is the ultimate muse.

A Chadds Ford resident for 15 years, Diane started her career as a technical writer



and rediscovered her passion for art after her two sons and daughter were born. "I have always loved drawing. It wasn't until 2002 when I took some art classes with friends that my love of painting began," she says. It was at this point that Diane turned her artistic endeavors into a full-time career and set up a studio in her home.

Like many artists, the process of creating is as much a part of Diane's work as the finished product. "Painting brings me peace and joy," she says.

Diane also acknowledges that her work has evolved over the years. "I started out painting realistic landscapes but felt the pull to abstract creations. I love painting abstract art! You may always know where a painting begins, but where it ends is a beautiful surprise. I will often use a palette knife, building layers and

then scraping them to reveal the new design underneath. I try to capture the essence of a scene, yet lend some abstract elements to create mystery."

Diane's new *Earth and Sky* collection reveals this shift from realism to abstraction. The paintings capture the essence and feeling of the Lowcountry, a geographic and cultural region along South Carolina's coast that Diane and her family love to visit. "These paintings are a looser form of landscapes, based on the Lowcountry. The sky seems lower here, and the warmth welcomes you like a hug. Right away you relax and feel a bit calmer, a bit more at peace. Slower days are ahead as you spend time here. It's a place where you can reconnect, pause, and rediscover what matters."

Recently, Diane tried her hand at something new: she teamed up with her friend, author Bern Clay, to illustrate a book. "My husband Alan is a cardiologist and practices with Bern's husband Anthony. Our families have been close friends for almost 30 years," explains Diane. The pair worked together on Bern's first book entitled *The Umbrella That Changed the World* (featured in *JunXion Magazine* in June).

Although Diane had never illustrated a book before, she was honored to bring Bern's story to life. "I read the first draft as we were sitting on the beach together 13 years ago. I told her I loved the story and that she should publish it. Right away Bern asked me to illustrate it," recalls Diane. "We used stock photos as the background for a few of the illustrations, but I created the expressions on the umbrella from the words and emotions in the story," she says.

The illustration process took a few months to complete, and not surprisingly, Diane learned a few things along the way. "When I first started illustrating the book, I was determined to use pen and ink. After trial and error, I realized it's ok to use my own style of acrylic washes and marker," she notes. Diane has advice for budding illustrators who are interested in this line of work: "Don't be afraid to capture the author's words with your own unique style."

In terms of where she finds inspiration for her paintings, Diana cites an array of artists as her favorites. "I love the faces and expressions captured by Auguste Renoir, the spontaneity of Jackson Pollock, the energy of Joan Mitchell, and the layers of Gerhard Richter. And as a Chadds Ford resident, I appreciate and admire the detail and moodiness of Andrew Wyeth's paintings," she adds. Given the rich history of art in Chadds Ford, it is obvious that the rolling hills and open fields of Chester County are also a likely source of inspiration for Diane.



One thing Diane is certain about is that she will never stop creating. "As a painter, I will always be exploring new mediums and styles. I think about art all the time. We live in a beautiful area, and I am inspired every day."

For more information, visit Diane's website at dianemicklinart.com and Instagram account @dianemicklinart.



Know a local artist that should be recognized here? Contact editor@cfjunxion.com