

Forest & Bluff


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GET HAPPY

Kristi Kohut brings her Hapi Art
to *The Kelly Clarkson Show*

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A woman with blonde hair, wearing a patterned two-piece outfit, stands in a room. Behind her is a large window with colorful abstract art. To her right is a dark console table with several trophies and books. To her left is a large potted plant.

Kristi Kohut

GET HAPPY

Lake Forest artist Kristi Kohut's dazzling Hapi Art studio presents high-end work that is accessible to all.

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IN ARTIST KRISTI KOHUT'S Hapi Art studio, all that glitters is much more than gold. Ribbons of rainbow, fantasy florals, and creative collages glimmer and glisten in a multi-hued, sparkle-dusted array.

Retaining the joy of her childhood prism on the world, Kohut's artistic creations—from paintings and collages to luxurious pillows, poufs, fabrics, and wall coverings, are a hot commodity. Featured everywhere from *Forbes* and *Architectural Digest* to *Elle Décor*, Kohut's cheerful aesthetic, plus her "make art accessible" mantra have catapulted her into place as one of the top-selling independent female artists in the country.

And all of this is the Lake Forest resident's second career. Leaving a position as an art director for a global advertising agency when her son was born in 2007, Kohut picked up a brush and started painting. "I'd always connected to the world of color and art," she says, "but when young, just didn't fully believe I could make a career of it."

Honing her craft for the next several years, Kohut's studio soon filled wall to wall with canvases. At that point, "I knew art was my true calling," she says.

From the start of this new endeavor, Kohut set out to make the process of collecting art more inviting. Believing that the high-end art world had been an intimidating, inaccessible market for far too long, Kohut made the decision to sell her original art online.

"I went right where the rest of the art world had been resisting and started selling my art directly to collectors and consumers," says Kohut, who connects with the masses through Instagram, her website, and various media outlets. In one click, someone can browse her work, connect with Kohut or one of her team members, become a collector, or commission a piece of art.



That personable, direct approach has garnered her a loyal following. Of her 32.6K Instagram followers, roughly 25 percent have purchased art, with many avid collectors among the group.

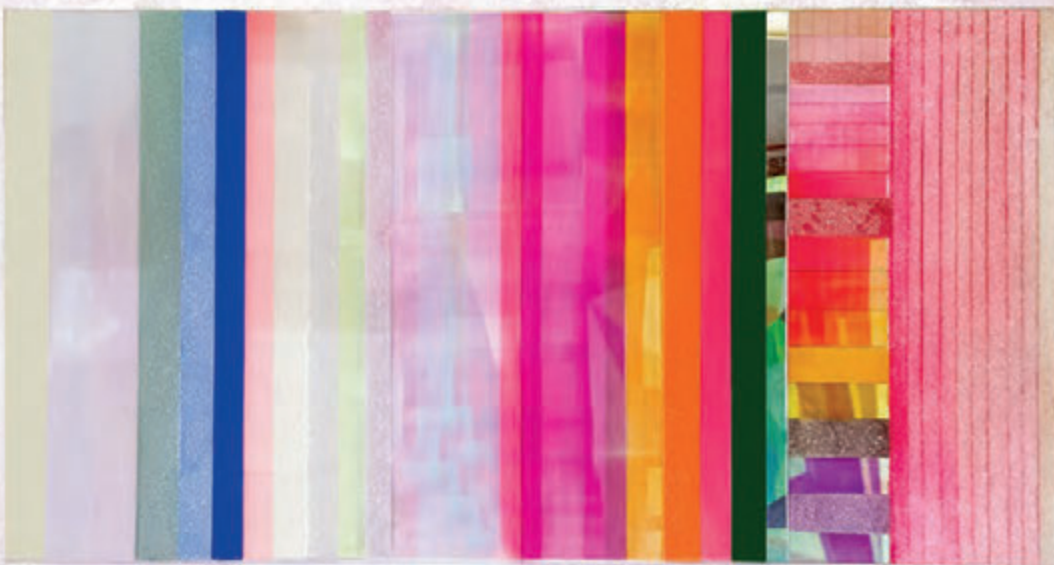
Of these, "some really have become a part of my journey and are building a collection of art that spans the breadth of the different styles and series I work in," she says.

Among the fans? Singer, songwriter, and talk-show host Kelly Clarkson.

Prior to the start of *The Kelly Clarkson Show's* first season in Los Angeles, Clarkson's creative director introduced her to Kohut's art.

"She immediately loved it," says Kohut, explaining that she was then tapped to give one of Clarkson's Los

One of nine green rooms at *The Kelly Clarkson Show*



Quantum Radiance



Hapi Art at home and in *The Kelly Clarkson Show* green rooms.

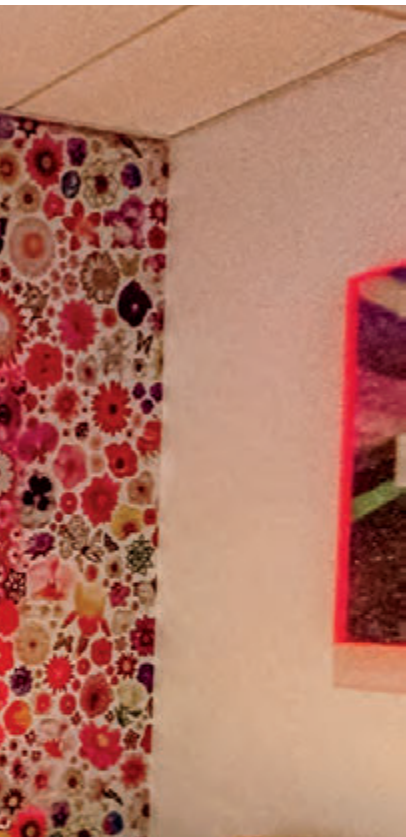


“I really enjoyed working with Kelly and her team...”

Angeles studio green rooms a makeover.

Delighted with the result—dubbed the “Annie Lenox Diva Room,” Clarkson expanded the Kohut collaboration. When the show relocated to New York City at 30 Rock last year, Kohut was asked to design all nine of the green rooms and invited to be a guest on the show’s new season premiere.

“I really enjoyed working with Kelly and her team,” says Kohut, “so I was thrilled with the opportunity to make the move with the team to their new home and to transform, not just one, but nine green rooms for Clarkson’s celebrity guests.”



With nine to work with, Kohut sought to make the look of each room completely different.

To start, Kohut chose a unique wallpaper or mural for each space, sequencing the room designs in a progression that made sense “as you walked down the hallway and peered into each room,” she recalls.

From there, she added a selection of her artwork to fit each room’s look, plus bright throw pillows for pops of color and whimsy.

Some of her favorite design elements? “The Kintsugi wall mural,” she says, “it really envelops you as you walk in. I also love the mirrored flower wallpaper—one of my newest creations.”

The reveal of Kohut’s green rooms and her appearance on the show has created a lot of buzz. “We are talking to some pretty interesting people about some upcoming projects,” she hints.

Beyond this, Kohut’s 2024 will include doing what she loves most—painting and working with a group of collectors who have commissioned pieces for homes all over the globe. Her most recent releases are created with elements like cut-glass glitter and glossy iridescent acrylic. These play with light and reflection, transforming paintings into immersive 3D art experiences that



Trust the Timing of Your Life

she describes as “emotionally resonant and inviting you to feel as if you’re an integral part of the artwork itself.”

“From the time I was a little girl, I have felt a passion and love for creating art,” she says, adding that embracing this love as her new career has been beyond fulfilling. “Bigger and better than I ever could have imagined.”

For more information about her work or the Hapi Art studio, visit hapiart.com.

