

online member of the month AMY GUIDRY



ArtScuttlebutt.com member Amy Guidry (www.amyguidry.com) loves investigating the hidden aspects of human nature in her art.

“In general, I focus on people and the psychology behind people — not just our interactions with one another, but also with the natural world and the animal kingdom,” she explains.

Naturally, Guidry’s fascination with psychology fueled her attraction to surrealism as a subject: “Surrealism was the marriage of my two loves: psychology and art. It was just a natural progression for me to find that subject so interesting and to incorporate it into my work.”

The 33-year-old painter from Lafayette, Louisiana, mines her own psyche regularly as part of her artistic process. “Much of the images in my work have come from dreams and from free association exercises where I let my mind wander,” she says.

Guidry then collects the sketchbooks and reworks concepts to form a cohesive body of work. In her most recent series, *New Realm*, Guidry looked to the fantasy world of traditional fairytales for inspiration. While the setting suited her creative sensibility, she found herself disturbed by the depiction of women in the stories and decided to use her paintings to challenge popular views about women. Instead of someone who is out of her element — scared, ready to run away or look for help — Guidry created a heroine who is calm, collected and in control of the situation.

“The whole concept of women being victims needing to be saved or waiting for Mr. Right bothers me,” she states. “I like to consider myself an independent, strong person, and I hope that comes across. I don’t like for women to be seen in art as simply the muse to someone else.”

Unsurprisingly, the artist used herself as the model. And although Guidry doesn’t consider the choice to be personal, and feels the narrative is universal to women in general, Guidry’s take charge attitude fits her character’s persona. “In a way you could say it is about me in that I am woman and have had

my own trials and tribulations associated with that. I can certainly relate to the series,” she admits.

After graduation from Loyola University with a B.A. in Visual Arts, Guidry worked for a decade as an in-house jewelry designer for Stuller, Inc.

“Like everyone else, I assumed that in order to have a career in art you had to be involved in commercial arts,” she recalls.

In 2003, she decided she’d had enough and was ready to explore a fine art career. “Not that I’m knocking (commercial work) — it just wasn’t for me anymore. At that point, I decided I want to paint. This is my dream, you know?”

In addition to her full-time job, Guidry toiled during her free time to put together a large body of artwork: “I remember the days when I would get up at 5 a.m. Then I’d come home from work, have my dinner and go back to the easel before going to bed. I did that for several years. Looking back on it, it’s kind of crazy when I think about how much I had done.”

Guidry then began contacting places she thought would be interested in showcasing the art. Several venues were interested in exhibiting the *New Realm* series.

“I’m always trying to promote my work. I’m always contacting galleries and museums and they elected to show it.” Since 2008, *New Realm* exhibited in several Louisiana venues as well as in Las Vegas. The show will make its way to the Schepis Museum in Columbia, Louisiana, this month. Guidry knows that her proactive approach has been the key to her success.

“If I didn’t make the effort, I probably wouldn’t have exhibited as much as I have.”

Guidry’s strong work ethic extends to her time in the studio. If a painting were purchased during a show, Guidry painted a new one to replace it. All together, Guidry estimates she created 50 original paintings for the series. “I’ve been contributing to *New*

Realm for years. Every time I would show it, there was always new work in the exhibit. The premise was the same but the shows varied because of the additional work.” How did Guidry cope with the pressure?

“It was pretty stressful,” she admits. “But if someone wants to put up a show (of my work), I’ll do whatever it takes to get it done. The end result is something to be proud of, knowing I put in all those hours.” **AC**

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Adaptation by Amy Guidry. Acrylic on canvas, 48" x 36".