

LOCALSGUIDE

magazine

Ashland, Oregon - LocalsGuide

Katrina Meister

Katrina Meister is a fine artist living in Talent with her husband Michael and two youngsters — Christopher and Anabella. They are regulars at Farmers Market and long-time members of the [Lithia Artisans Market](#). I was introduced to Katrina's beautiful paintings at one of our early Holiday Markets at the Briscoe ArtWing. She and Michael will be showing again this year at Holiday Market — the first three weekends in December at the old Briscoe School, North Main and Laurel, Ashland. It was a pleasure to sit down and chat with Katrina about her art.

The Holiday Market was your introduction to the Lithia Artisans Market. Any sentimental connection to that show for you?

Katrina...The Briscoe Art Wing Holiday show was one of my first art fairs five years ago and really shifted my business into a full-time career for my husband Michael and myself. That first show our son was just 6 months old and we kept him with us for the entire show. I really enjoy this show, it is such a relaxed and friendly atmosphere, the artists are high quality, and a lot of the customers are old friends that I look forward to seeing every year.

As a parent of young children, how important to you is art in schools?

Katrina... The world would be such a dreary place without the arts – just imagine a world without music, without well-designed architecture, without stories that are told in books, plays, movies, without artwork that makes you think and feel just a little more. Art in the schools is one of the few places that young people can really experiment and express themselves in a healthy, positive and safe way. I think we all will need to be creative to give our young people these opportunities or we will see a very real backlash in our culture and our society.

How long have you been creating your art form?

Katrina... As long as I can remember I have drawn or painted, even as a child I carried a sketch book around. Over the years my preferred mediums have shifted. While attending the University of Oregon I was pursuing a psychology degree and taking photography and sculpture courses as a treat to myself. Half-way through I realized that I was fulfilling requirements for two majors at once, so I received a double major. Later I returned to painting, both watercolors and oils, and some printmaking. Back then I would make handmade cards, some to sell at a friend's bakery in Phoenix, some as gifts for friends and family. I have one design, "Lavender in Terracotta", which is still one of my best-selling cards. The original was a birthday card for my dad a couple of years before I started my business, Katrina's Cards, in 1999. After our son was born my husband Michael stepped in to help me keep up with my wholesale accounts, and we started to work some art festivals together. With Michael's help the stacks of original sketches and paintings languishing in portfolios began to emerge on more cards and then organic cotton baby clothing, canvas bookmarks, tote bags and all of the other wonderful useful items that Michael reproduces my artwork on.

What would you say is your main inspiration when you create your art?

Katrina... I find the world around me, especially the natural world, constantly inspiring – light, color, movement, line.

How long have you lived in the Ashland area?

Katrina... I grew up in Ashland — a sixth generation Oregonian. I feel very lucky to have such a strong connection to this wonderfully diverse and beautiful area that we call home.

What sets you apart from other artists in your medium?

Katrina... Style — though I am not certain I have one style — my oil paintings with bold colors, my delicate Asian-inspired watercolors, or even my cartoon-like illustration technique. The technique I use depends on the subject, mood I am in, and practical thoughts such as what is readily available to me if I am in the field or have a time limit. Many times customers have asked if the artwork is created by more than one artist — nope, it is all my artwork

Briefly explain how your art form is eco-friendly?

Katrina... I returned to painting because it is such a low-impact creation process — minimal materials, natural pigments, biodegradable, minimal waste. I print on recycled content paper. When we expanded into clothing and other textiles we consciously chose to support organic and fair-trade companies to supply us with our materials. It is not always easy to find the quality of product that we strive for but I am really pleased and proud of the entire Katrina's Cards line of items.

What is your favorite time of the year and why?

Katrina... Each season has its own beauty and magic — I can never settle on just one.

Where else do you sell your art?

Katrina... Local retailers who carry our work include Bloomsbury Books, Northwest Nature Shop, Grange Co-Op, Emz Blends, Bug-A-Boo, as well as the Oregon Shakespeare Festival's gift shop The Tudor Guild. The past few years Michael has also been setting up a booth at the Rogue Valley Grower's and Crafter's Market, but we are

starting to travel to more regional art festivals so we don't know if he will be there as reliably in the future. We are working on building a website at www.katrinascards.com, but it is taking much longer than I would like. We also have a shop at <http://www.etsy.com/shop/katrinascards>.

Why did you choose to become an artisan?

Katrina... I didn't, it chose me. I feel incredibly fortunate that I was able to turn it into a viable business and with Michael's help it is supporting our family. I am a full time artist and mom. Each year the business grows a little, and each year I think my skills as an artist improve as well. Hooray!

Why should people buy your art?

Katrina... If a piece of art calls to a person's spirit, then making it a part of your life adds so much value to each day, it is worth the small expenditure. I have consciously tried to create a line of items that can be used or given as gifts, it is a great way to get and give art for very little cost. Having a young family my goal is to acquire less "stuff" and what we do purchase should have a certain inherent value that brings more spirit or soul into our little home.

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