

Becca Farmer

I love to find fleeting moments of beauty in nature and express how it impacts me through painting. My passion is to create a dramatic visual experience of vibrant color, contrast and depth. My distinctive artistic voice comes from a deep respect for nature and a keen curiosity for the mechanics of life. I enjoy exploring the space on the edge of what is visible, compelling the imagination to take a deeper look.

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An interview with

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An interview by **Josh Ryder**, curator
and **Katherine Williams**, curator
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Hello Becca and welcome to ART Habens. Before starting to elaborate about your artistic production we would like to invite our readers to visit <http://www.beccafarmer.com> and we would start this interview with a couple of questions about your background. You have a solid formal training and you studied *Design and Composition* under Chris Magadini, internationally acclaimed illustrator: how did those formative years influence your evolution as an artist? Moreover, how does your cultural substratum as well as your career as a graphic artist help you to develop your attitude to experiment?

Becca Farmer: Hello! Thank you for this opportunity to share my story.

My formative years in Europe were saturated with art. We lived near The Prado and visited it often. I have vivid memories of standing in front of the massive "Las Meninas" and being drawn into the beautifully mysterious space that Velazquez created. Standing in front of the "Mona Lisa" in Paris is a clear memory. She is so small and simple, yet it's like looking in a window into another world. My everyday life was filled with art on the streets and in public places. That type of creativity is contagious. I longed to be an artist too, so I emulated the artists I admired through drawing and painting.

When I was ready to formally study art, I pursued it with Da Vinci, Caravaggio, M.C. Escher and Dali in mind. I was fortunate that my teacher, Christopher Magadini, was acclaimed for his illustrative and composition superiority. To obtain depth, he was insistent upon the mastery of chiaroscuro. I drew spheres and flowing cloth to the point of annoyance! Magadini taught me a



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solid foundation of drawing skills to build upon. His classes on composition provided what I needed to succeed as a graphic artist.

At that same time I was also studying molecular biology and chemistry. Those pursuits had a strong influence on my curiosity for living organisms. My imagination was sparked by discovering the mechanics of life and that intrigue continues to be an important part of my creativity.



"Desert Gold" - 10x10 - acrylic on canvas

As I have matured as an artist, my process has become much more intuitive. I believe I can be free in my ability to improvise and experiment because I have proficiency in drawing and composition as a starting point.

The body of works that we have selected for this special edition of ART Habens—and that our readers have already started to get to know in the introductory pages of this article—has at once captured our attention for the way the visual language that marks it out seems to be used in a



"COVID Shelter In" - 24x24 - acrylic on gallery wrapped canvas

strategic way to explore and capture moments of life and expressing the fleeting beauty, providing your artworks with an array of meanings. New York City based artist Lydia Dona once stated that in order to make art today one has to reevaluate the conceptual language behind the mechanism of

art making itself: do you create your works gesturally, instinctively? Or do you methodically transpose geometric schemes? In particular, how do you consider the role of chance and improvisation playing within your creative process?



"Rose in Purple" - 12x12 - acrylic on panel

Becca Farmer: I begin with a very intentional exercise of exploring the subject that has inspired me. I examine how it grows and moves; what is close to the surface and what things are overlapping or hidden. I look at it from different angles and

experiment with close cropping and negative shapes that might be interesting.

Once I feel familiar with my subject and the composition I chose, I will mull over it for several

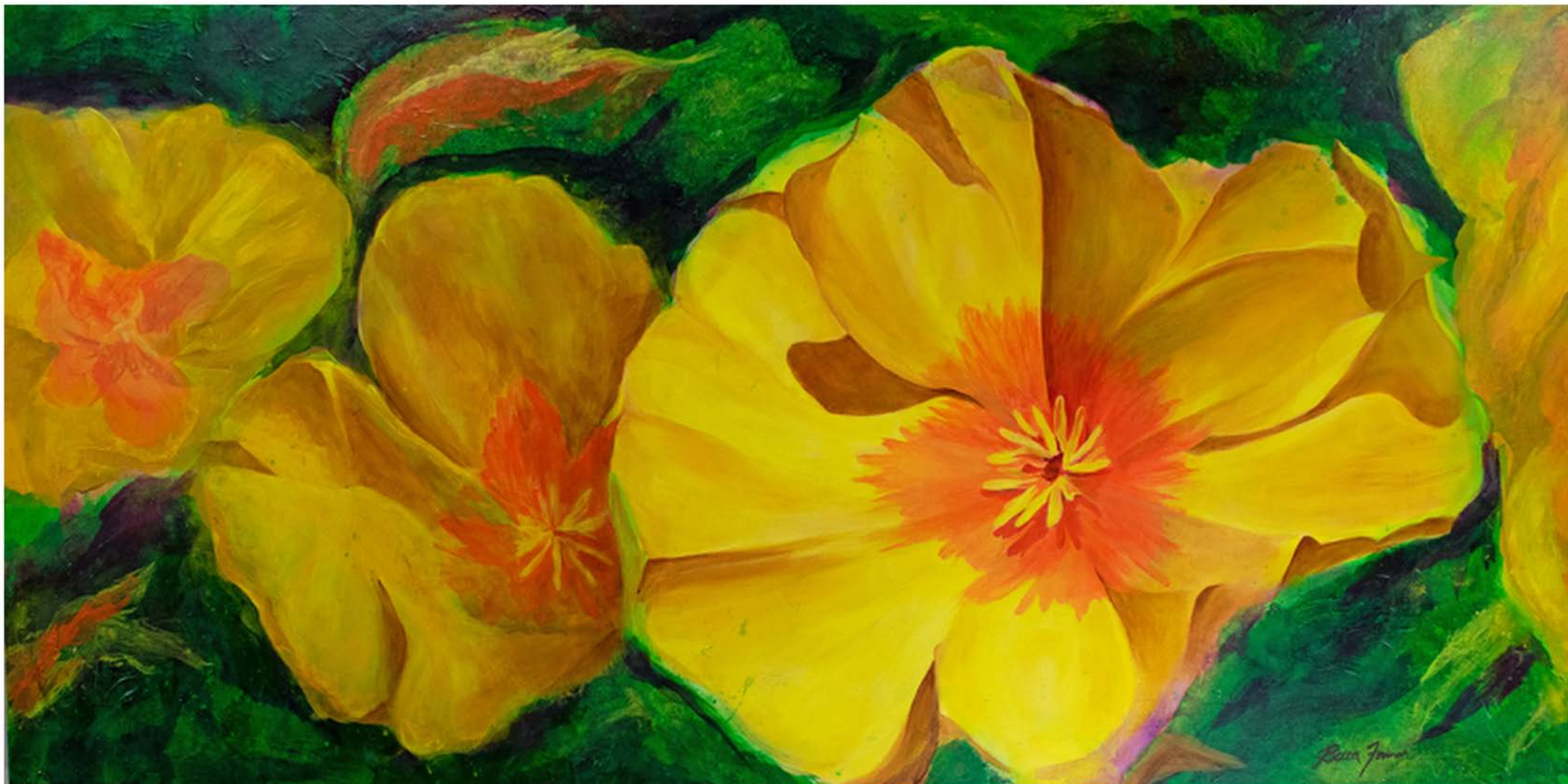


"Summer in Skeena" - 20x20 acrylic on canvas

days. I often dream about how to paint it. I have ideas for improvisation come to me in my dreams. Then there comes a moment that I know I am ready to begin. I'll sketch in a loose but proportionate representation and then block in colors. From that

point I will build up layers and develop depth. My imagination kicks in and I get lost in the creative process.

Your artworks often feature such vivacious tones



"Dancing Desert Poppies" - 24x48 - acrylic on canvas

and we have really appreciated *the vibrancy* of thoughtful nuances that mark out some of your artworks, and we like the way they create tension

and dynamism: how did you come about settling on your color palette? And how does your own psychological make-up determine the nuances of

tones that you decide to include in your artworks?

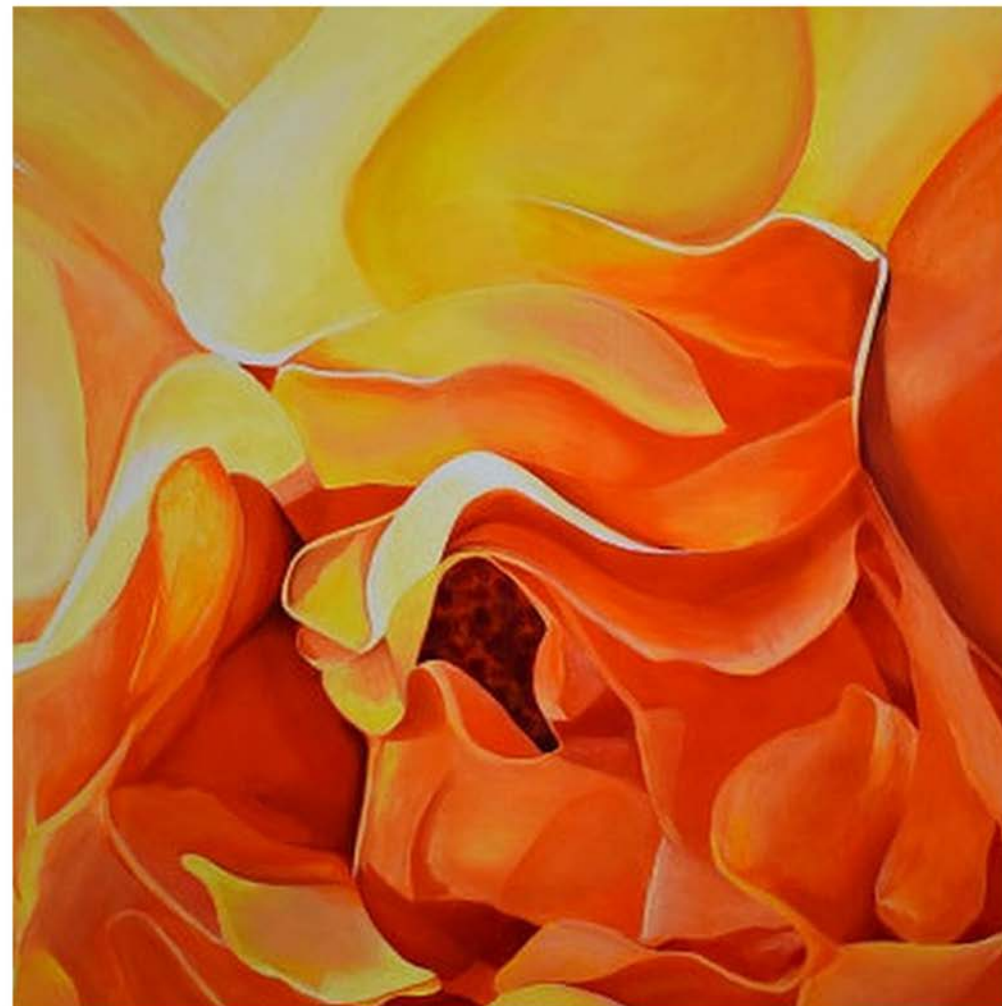
Becca Farmer: I am a very focused person. I notice

details. I am a whole-hearted person attracted to contrast and powerful images. My color palette comes from what I see in nature around me.



Desert flowers have some of the most vivid colors in the world. Desert skies are amazingly blue. Sunrises and sunsets can be extremely dramatic. This environment stimulates my "all-in" personality type.

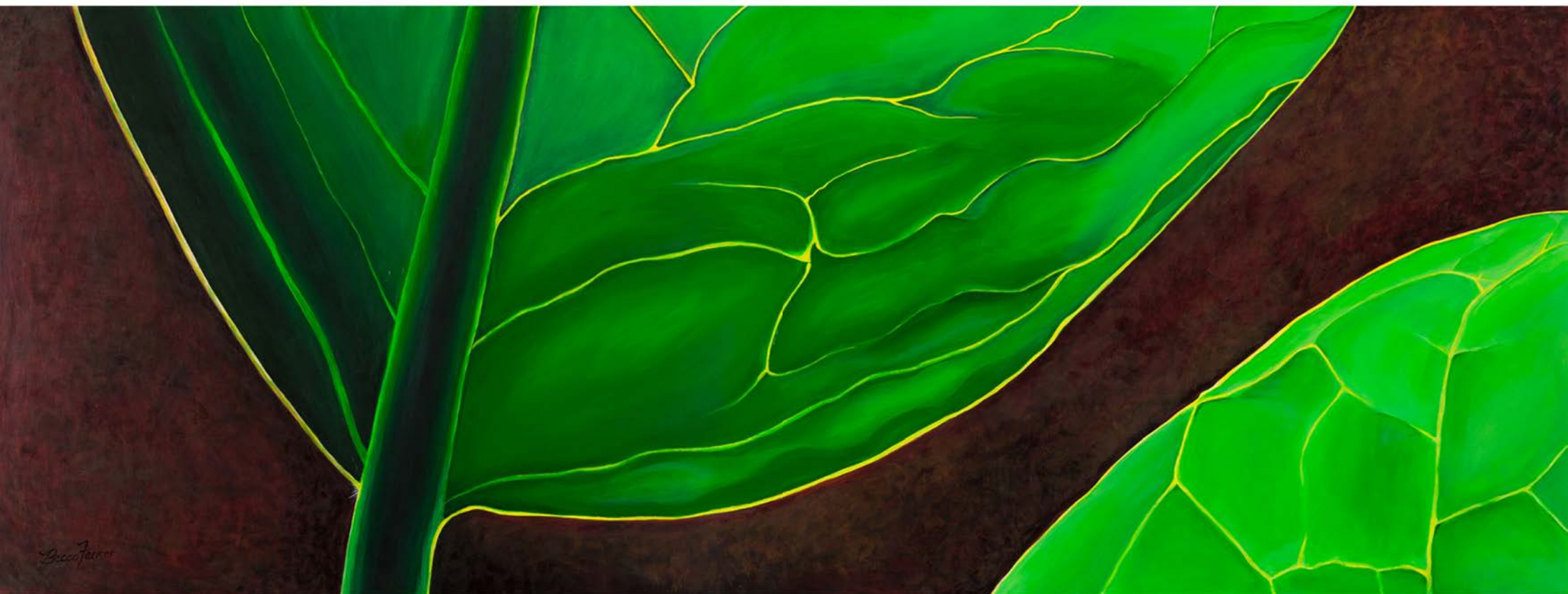
As you have remarked in your artist's statement, your passion in painting is to *create dramatic visual experiences of color, contrast and depth that draw you in, to experience a new view of nature and, just maybe, a new view of life.* With



"Obscure" - 20x20 - acrylic on canvas

their unique *multilayered* visual quality, your artworks seem to invite the viewers to *look inside of what appear to be seen, rather than its surface*, providing the spectatorship with freedom to realize their own perception: how important is

for you to *trigger the viewers' imagination* in order to address them to elaborate *personal interpretations*? In particular, how open would you like your works to be understood?



"A New Leaf" - 30x80 - acrylic on wood panel

Becca Farmer: My painting of the "Cactus Skeleton" comes to mind when you ask that question. Cactus skeletons are plentiful where I live and are always popular with tourists. In some ways they look exactly like my painting, only much smaller. But when I created that piece, I was imagining the life that it once was clothed with. I purposely intensified the colors that I saw, to give an impression of vitality. One person caught and

remarked on that nuance. Most people love it because of all the cubby holes that look like fun to explore. Others enjoy the power of the shapes and colors. I am completely comfortable with any interpretation that emerges.

My hope is that through my expression of exploration and celebration of natural beauty, that the viewer's imagination will be ignited with

similar responses. I hope that genuine value for nature will germinate and cause the viewer to take notice of their own natural surroundings, in a deeper way; ideally resulting in a personal concern for the wonder and fragility of nature.

You seem to draw a lot of inspiration from the deserts and forests of Arizona: what does attract you to portray nature?

Becca Farmer: The difference in seasons can be drastic in the desert, which is intriguing to me. I can empathize with the fluctuations of drama and drab. The desert is at times a monotonous expanse of dull, neutral colors; rocks, gravel and subdued dormant plants barely surviving in arid conditions. Then the rainy season comes and it bursts alive with vigorous colors of greens, scattered with fields of glowing wildflowers of

intense color, magnified in beauty by the bright sunlight. Such a dramatic and lush show must be seized in the moment; it may only last weeks or even days before reverting back to survival mode. I find it very exciting to capture those fleeting moments.

As you have remarked once, the greatest inspiration for art is found in the beauty of nature: how does everyday life's experience and memory — as well as growing up overseas and being influenced by cultures rich in art — fuel your artistic research?

Becca Farmer: Because of living in several countries, I carry within me different perspectives on history and nature. The deep, historic roots of art in Europe were alluring to me because of my constant moving from place to place. There I experienced a stability which instilled a traditional influence in my art.

In Arizona, there is very little evidence of human influence throughout many hundreds of years. Some ancient ruins exist from the native people of long ago, but their lives rarely intruded on the land they occupied. So in this land that I have lived in for most of my life, there is a deep historic reverence for nature that I have felt and embraced. It affects my life choices. It influences and gives depth to my art.

Your style has been described as modern realism, depicting ordinary subjects in a classical approach of order and timelessness: Scottish painter Peter Doig once remarked that even the most realistic paintings are derived more from within the head than from what's out there in front of us: how do you consider the relationship between reality and imagination playing within your work?

Becca Farmer: Some of my favorite subjects are found in my everyday life, specifically in my



"Sun Kissed" - 16x20 - acrylic on wood panel



"Prickly Pear Blossoms" - 39x 48 - acrylic on panel

garden. I am fortunate to have a husband that has always enjoyed growing food and roses. It's a thing with him and he does it well. I feel a deep connection and replenishment of life when we eat what we have planted and nurtured. As an artist, I love to take part in that process and find ways to incorporate that feeling into my art. I paint what my eyes see along with what my heart is feeling. Vibrant life. Growth. Purpose. How can those concepts be visualized except through imagination.

Gardening represents the continuum of growing and dying. Here today and gone tomorrow. It's a process worth giving attention to. It's worth exploring and celebrating. Painting is my voice to do so.

You are a professional artist: how do you consider the nature of your relationship with your audience? Direct relationship with the audience in physical locations is definitely the most important one, in order to snatch the spirit of a work of Art. However, as the move of Art from traditional gallery spaces, to street and especially to the online realm — as *Instagram* — increases: how would in your opinion change the relationship with a globalised audience?

Becca Farmer: I have discovered that having conversation with my viewers is like food to me. The interaction provides me with refreshment and energy. Each story is personal. Many times, hearing the revelations that have come through my paintings, will bring tears to my eyes because it was more profound than I had even imagined it could be. It's that crazy feeling that my offspring has somehow taken my knowledge and run ahead of me! That is the joy of being a professional artist; to find those who have value for my voice and let it stir their imagination for greater things.



"Rose in Red" - 30x80 - acrylic on wood panel

Through social media and the online realm, the doors of relationship between the artist and the patron have opened wide. It presents a valuable opportunity for my viewers to get to know me and my process, whether they live nearby or across the globe. It's an open door of story and relationship.

I gladly welcome followers on Instagram ([@becca.farmer.art](https://www.instagram.com/becca.farmer.art)), Facebook ([facebook.com/Becca.Farmer.Art](https://www.facebook.com/Becca.Farmer.Art)) and at my

website, www.BeccaFarmer.com. Because of this ability to connect so easily, it's a very exciting time to be an artist.

We have really appreciated the originality of your artistic production and before leaving this stimulating conversation we would like to thank you for chatting with us and for sharing your thoughts, Becca. What projects are you currently working on, and what are some of the ideas that you hope to explore in the future?

Becca Farmer: Thank you. It is my pleasure. I have enjoyed the conversation as well.

I am grateful to continue painting brilliant desert flowers and visual experiences from my garden. In fact, I have an appointment to hike in the desert this afternoon to marvel over the Arizona poppies that are currently blooming from recent rains. I am also excited to be working on a new augmented

reality piece that combines a painting with a visualization tool app. It has been a challenge for me to construct and integrate the video portion but I have found that a good challenge incites creativity.

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