

## EXCLUSIVE: Artist Spotlight on Jennifer Vranes



**Jennifer Vranes is shown in her studio.**

Jennifer Vranes started her art career as a portrait painter but discovered that achieving extreme realism through creations of the human form started to become stifling.

Seeking a subject matter that allowed her creativity and color expression to blossom, the San Francisco native started painting her first landscape, which depicted a large poppy field with vibrant reds and greens.

From then on, she was hooked. "Armed with large paintbrushes, each stroke was a liberation for me," Vranes says, describing the process of that initial painting. "I had found a subject matter that gave me the freedom to paint with the intense colors and thick textures that my soul craved. It was then that I became a landscape painter, and I haven't turned back since."

Today, Vranes is making a name for herself in the art world as an Impressionist artist defined by her large-scale paintings with extreme textures. Her artwork is featured in several galleries nationwide, and she was present at the recent Artexpo New York and Las Vegas shows. Her studio is based in Southern Oregon where she resides with her husband, Matt, and their four children.

Vranes' inspiration for landscapes comes from her world travels. Particularly, she enjoys painting European scenes.

"I do, however, have to plan the trips around the right seasons," she says. "When I go to Tuscany, I love to paint fields of red poppies and lush vineyards, so going in the spring is important. In the south of France, I go primarily to see the lavender, so going in June and July is the time when the lavender is at the height of its bloom. Besides doing small plein-air paintings while there, I literally take thousands of pictures. I come home exhausted because everywhere I seem to look, there's another perfect photo opportunity."

In the United States, Vranes enjoys visiting vineyards in Sonoma, Napa Valley and Oregon and the mountains of Colorado and Utah. She also plans to visit upstate New York in October to view the colors of the birches and maples.

Another source of inspiration comes from a visit to Musée d'Orsay in Paris several years ago. "Those were artists I could relate to and understand," she says of viewing works by Van Gogh, Monet, Gauguin and others in the Impressionists, Expressionists and Fauvists realms. "I couldn't wait to get back to the studio."

With her trademarked "Textures of Life" technique of painting, Vranes says her landscapes take on a realistic attribute suitable for contemporary and traditional homes. Last year, she switched from oils to acrylics to expedite the drying process of her multi-layered canvas paintings. She encourages clients to touch her work because her paintings are meant to be irresistible to the fingertips.

She describes her painting process as follows: "In the first stage of a painting, I sculpt on texture just where nature intended. The sky and distant mountains, for instance, remain flat and smooth. I contrast this dramatically with highly textured fields, bushes and trees in the foreground. This juxtaposition of texture versus smooth in just the right places lends my paintings their distinct and unmistakable 3-D effect. I literally sculpt on the thick texture with a large palette knife. The trunks of my aspens actually feel like bark to the touch, and the petals of the wild poppies can almost be picked," she says.



**"Autumn Path"**



**"Tuscan Meadow II"**

The sheer size of her paintings makes them unique. She recently completed a triptych of an aspen forest that she is excited about. Normally, the canvases are all the same size in a diptych or triptych, but with this one, Vranes mixed up the sizes a bit. The middle panel was a 48-x-48-inch square, and the two side panels were 36 x 48 inches each.

"I think diptychs and triptychs are really popular right now because the client has the flexibility to space the panels as far or near apart as they want to fill up the wall," she observes. "Plus, it makes for a more contemporary look."

Vranes says her decision to switch from painting humans to landscapes continues to pay dividends today. "For me, each painting I paint is my own private utopia," she says.