



One With Nature

The Artwork of Loomis Local Victoria Brooks

Written By Kimberly Horg

That certain time of day when the sun highlights the water and trees just so at that particular moment is what impressionist painter Victoria Brooks tries to capture on canvas. She often travels to picturesque locations to paint with all of nature's wonders factoring into the composition of her paintings. "I appreciate abstract art, but I am more of an impressionist," she says. "I am a happy painter, and I like to touch people."

The Loomis resident has resided in the area for the past 11 years but grew up in Oregon, where she obtained her Commercial Art Degree from Portland Community College and Portland State University. After graduating, she worked as a broadcast art director with KOIN-TV (the CBS affiliate in Portland) for the next five years. She then moved to Universal City, in Southern California,

and worked as a graphic designer for Group W Productions, a leading television syndication company, for the next five years. And for a couple of years after that, she worked as a graphics director at the animation company Filmation Studios but then decided to pursue her dream of being a painter.

During the time she worked as a graphic artist, she studied oil painting at the California Art Institute to fulfill her desire to paint. However, she didn't paint that much because she used all her creativity in her work, so when she got home at the end of the day, she was burnt out. "You have to work under a lot of pressure working as a graphic artist," she says. "Working for myself is great! And I am able to express myself as an artist."

Under the Tuscan Sun

She now paints full-time and teaches others the tricks of her trade. Brooks likes painting with oils best but likes painting with water colors from time to time as well. "I fell in love with oil paints," she gushes. "There is something long-lasting about oil paintings. The longevity of oils is amazing."



local artist profile • victoria brooks

She recently returned from Italy, where she says she admired oil paintings that were hundreds of years old. Brooks took several students with her on the trip and taught them while she painted locals and their surroundings. The "Tuscana Americana" class will take place the same time next year, from September 1 to 8.

"I did 14 paintings when I was in Italy," Brooks says, adding excitedly that one of these paintings sold for around \$16,000. Brooks' and her students' paintings of Italy will be exhibited in December at the 20th Street Art Gallery in Sacramento. Brooks enjoys traveling to exotic locations to interpret their inhabitants' way of life in her work. She has painted not only the vineyards of Italy but also local Tibetans and Mongolians and Beijing's Forbidden City. The traveling impressionist takes the

summer off from teaching to paint on location. For her, it's extremely prolific, as she typically paints two or three paintings a day.

Techniques of the French Masters

Brooks believes that she will never be finished growing as an artist. "Once you think you know it all, your career is over because you stop learning," she observes. One method of painting she began several years ago is "en plein air," French for "in the open air." Painting outdoors is a completely different way of painting that presents the artist with ample opportunities to improve his skill. When she paints indoors, the shadows provided by artificial light do not change, whereas outdoors she has a limited amount of time to capture a picture before the light changes.

"There are only a couple of hours of light, so I have to work fast," she says. "There are a lot of factors involved, like reflective light and shadows. It is a resurgence of what impressionists did." Painting en plein air has been a challenge for Brooks, but she feels it has taught her a lot. "Outdoors is 3D; you can smell the flowers and feel the rain," she explains. "My mind goes into another place. No one can say anything at that moment that could upset me. I go into autopilot and am in touch with myself, and when this happens, I am thankful."

Brooks admires the work of early Californian impressionists who painted on plein air. One of her favorite impressionist artists is Edgar Payne, and she's also inspired by a turn-of-the-century Spanish painter named Joaquin Sorolla. She's been intrigued by art for as long





as she can remember. Her mother first gave her art supplies when she was a child so that she could express herself in a productive way—and keep out of trouble! The art gene runs in her family, as her sister, Chris Richard, is also an artist. She lives in Arizona, where she works as a graphic designer.

Brooks has two sons, Brandon, who is currently attending UC Santa Cruz, and Levie, who just graduated from UCLA with a degree in digital media. He inherited his mom's creativity and used his high-tech skills to design her Web site. Both of the boys modeled for her when they were young, because as well as outdoor painting, she loves painting children. According to her, both possess magical qualities. "I like painting children because of their innocence," she says. "I love the outdoors and the beauty and charm of children, so combining the two seems natural."

Sharing Her Passion

She teaches art classes at the Sacramento Fine Arts Center, Sun City in

Roseville (it filled up last May), and the Springfield Retirement Community in Rocklin. Because she likes to give each student one-on-one instruction, she only allows 12 students per class, so early registration is recommended. Simply visit www.vbrooks.com or send an e-mail to vbrooksart@hotmail.com. Parties interested in commissioning her work can also contact her by e-mail.

"I am very proud of my students. One of the greatest gifts from teaching is seeing their work progress," she says. "Art enriches your life. Once your eyes are turned on to it, you can't turn it off. I can tell the minute it happens to a student."

She is a Signature Artist member, so she is entitled to use the initials NOAPS following her signature on paintings, prints, and reproductions of her original work. She is also belongs to the American Impressionist Society, so she can include AIS beside her name as well. Brooks has an art gallery in Auburn called Auburn Old Town Gallery and another in Albany, California, called Solano Fine Art Gallery, not to mention several in

her home state: Primary Elements in Cannon Beach and Lawrence Galleries in Portland, McMinnville, and Salishan. "I have had some real successes in the past couple of years," Brooks says. "I am blessed especially to work with such wonderful people. The biggest compliment for me was when a painting made someone cry."

She has won numerous awards and often paints different areas of the country with a handful of other artists. In November, she will participate in the open studio held by Placer County every year. That means her backyard studio will be open to the public, as will the studios of other area artists.

Tell Us About it!

Know of a talented local artist who deserves recognition? If he or she resides in South Placer County, we want to hear about it! E-mail submissions to edit@insideroseville.net or write to us at: Inside Roseville Magazine, Attn: Artist Profile, 1420 E. Roseville Pkwy, Ste. 140, Roseville, CA 95661. **IRM**