

LINDA RYAN FINE ART



LINDA RYAN - BIOGRAPHY

Linda Ryan's first brushes with artmaking left her thinking that she would never be an artist. Coloring inside someone else's lines never felt right – she tended to happily make a mess in any coloring book. However, after her mother bought her sketching pencils, a book on "How to Draw Horses" and an art pad for her 9th birthday, she found that she was actually good at drawing inside of her own lines, and found the effort fascinating.

She "sold" her first art shortly after that, trading horse drawings for beloved school hot-lunch mashed potatoes (this was a new school, and hot lunches were a new and treasured concept, but one that her family could not afford). That new school also introduced her to her first real experience with art.

"My first real art encounter was in fourth grade. As usual, I'd finished my work early and was either too talkative or too helpful with others' schoolwork – or just too bouncy – and was sent to the library as punishment." To Ryan, this was heaven, not punishment. She explored new worlds in those book stacks.

Ryan opened a picture book of famous impressionist artworks in the donation pile and was astounded. "At first it seemed as if they were painting the way I saw the world without my glasses on," says near-sighted Ryan. But there was something more. She'd been raised in a fairly utilitarian family without a lot of frills, and the art she was generally exposed to was either realistic or whimsical. "These paintings seemed alive," she says, like they could move or dance, "and they weren't even trying to paint inside the lines! It was messy! Imperfect, and they were called masterpieces!"

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The lesson from this experience was destined to bubble up later in life, for in her younger years, Ryan was driven to keep drawing realistically, honing her skills with a pencil. Her mother encouraged her and kept her supplied with drawing tools even though money was perpetually tight. Ryan's mother also helped her enroll in art classes in college as a young adult.

Ryan studied realism with Robert Steiner, acclaimed award-winning Master of the fierce State and Federal Duck-Stamp competitions (an unprecedented 70-time winner in all). Steiner helped her become an early master of pen & ink. Ryan was one of three students chosen to help him recreate one of his early masterworks as a 32' billboard advertising his first one-man show in San Francisco.

While she achieved excellence in realism and drew constantly, Ryan always felt there was something lacking. Accuracy did not feel like enough. Tightness had become too constricting.

In 1999, Ryan began studying painting with the late Bill Paskewitz though Las Positas College in Livermore. Paskewitz was known for his critical eye and teaching style which influenced many San Francisco East Bay Area artists, including Ryan. She immediately knew that painting was "it" for her. Her third painting won a \$1,000 first place college competition award. She began painting on her own and her work began to sell.

Constantly painting and exploring acrylic gel mediums, she quickly moved away from exacting realism and began to find an emerging artistic voice, underlaid by an expression of energy, a sense of movement, and a sense of life expressed through bold, fluid brush or knife/rubber tool work, often leaving much to the viewer's imagination.

Robert Butler, owner of a gallery by his own name (formerly The Danville Art Gallery), saw her work and invited her into his stable of artists, and after repeat sales of her exploratory gel abstracts, Butler gave her an award of \$10,000 to continue her explorations and expand her studio space. And, after the events of 9-11-2001, she began exploring abstract figurative as a way to bring viewers an experience of the power of connection to humanity.

Robert Butler sold almost the entire series of of her large abstracted and energetic dancers, gave her commissions, and jokingly complained, "I can't keep her work in here for more than a week!". Ryan became known and collected for her abstracted dancers and nudes in her region, and became a stable artist at another small area gallery as well.

When the Robert Butler Gallery closed due to personal reasons, Ryan continued to paint and sell her work on her own. In 2006, Ryan opened and began managing the Bothwell Arts Center, where she maintains her studio space to the present. Through the Bothwell and her own efforts, she significantly influenced the arts in the Livermore Valley, giving over 60,000 people arts experiences; coordinated exhibitions for hundreds of artists in multiple venues, functioned as the driving force behind exhibitions and arts festivals; and helped provide the arts community with 25 affordable working visual arts spaces. In 2014, she received an Arts Leadership Award for her work on behalf of the arts community from the Alameda County Arts Commission.

Ryan continued to paint and sell, and tried new methods and materials in her figurative explorations. Then she tried a newer medium called Liquitex Acrylic Pouring Medium. The new medium quickly became an extension of her early work in pure abstraction of movement and energy, as well as her energetic abstract figurative work. She spent two years experimenting with the reactions of different pigments to the medium, and learning to master her own technique in painting by pouring with generally transparent pigments. Working this way requires an ability to work quickly and boldly. It also

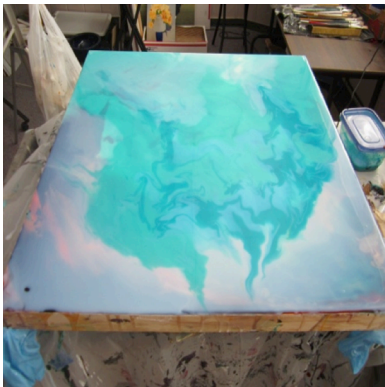
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requires letting go of a degree of control. “This is so far from coloring inside the lines,” says Ryan, “I feel like I’ve come full circle, come home. It’s exactly what I need to be doing.”

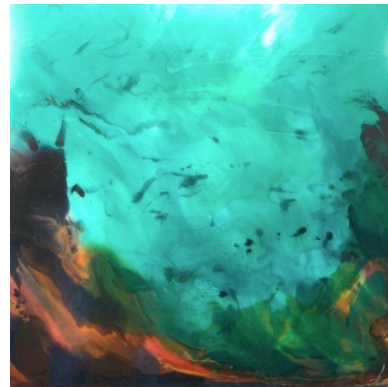
In 2014, with an upcoming solo show, Ryan fell and her painting hand ended up in a cast. Characteristic of Ryan’s outlook on life, she took this problem as a challenge and ordered boxes of cradled boards, gallons of pouring medium, set up an interim studio with level drying space, and set out to create art with the pouring medium she’d been fascinated with and exploring on a small scale for years.

The Flow paintings, as she calls them, became a series of bold, colorful abstractions on cradled board based on creating movement, then halting it to dry when the composition is complete – oftentimes layering them to achieve even more depth and luminosity. Ryan began exhibiting them to enthusiastic response in late 2014 and showed them on invitation at the Parallax Art Fair in Chelsea, London mid-2015.

Ryan’s newest series in the Flow works are abstracted underwater scenes using her luminous pouring medium technique, which she exhibited at the Art San Diego Contemporary Fair in late 2015 and in Art Nation Wynwood, Miami Beach, Florida, through early February, 2016. Their resinous luminosity catches the eye and tantalizes viewers with a sense of swimming, diving and snorkeling beneath the ocean surface, still leaving much to the imagination, with a sense of movement and alive energy that is the calling card of any work by Linda Ryan.



In Process – Dreams of the Reef at Dawn, Wet Pour Painting



Final – Dreams of the Reef at Dawn, 20x20"

If you’d like to know more about acrylic pour painting, please see the blog at www.lindaryanfineart.com - quick link to the pour painting lesson is at <http://bit.ly/1LcrNTf>.

There’s also a demo video up on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vNeztQBoMcl> - it makes the process look extremely simple, but we were lucky enough to catch a superbly “in the flow” session on video.