



MyWorld

A VISIT WITH **JULIE HANSEN**
AT HER STUDIO IN KANSAS CITY, MO

Text by **Bonnie Gangelhoff** · Photos by **Aaron Leimkuehler**

What elements were important to you in designing your studio? I wanted an open space with great light, good storage, a big sink, and an easy-to-clean floor. I also wanted it to be a place where I could take collectors to see my work. It needed to have a little bit of a gallery feel. One important element for that was the entrance. We built custom double mahogany doors for the entrance to the studio. They give it a bit of grandeur. Once you enter the studio, you face two large picture windows, and there

are also windows on the side walls. Slightly to the right is a “feature” wall. This space is for hanging finished work or work in progress. There are directional spotlights that highlight the feature wall. After considering concrete, I decided on a stained maple floor. I like the feel of wood; it is warmer to me.

Describe your custom-made art table.

What I had in mind was a functional art table unlike anything I had seen. I found a local carpenter who created the perfect asset for

the work space. The table is 105 inches wide by 60 inches deep. The table top lies flat and rises to a 45-degree angle. There are deep drawers on the sides filled with pastels. In the center, underneath, there are flat files that slide out for storing large works on paper. The table is on casters, so it’s moveable. I consider it a work of art in and of itself. It didn’t take long to break it in.

How does the surrounding environment influence your work?

We raised the windows slightly to have more of a sky view. You can see plenty of treetops and the Missouri River bottoms in the distance. I think it does influence my work because of the colors I see in the sky and the changing seasons. My color palettes often reflect that.

What inspires you to paint something?

I find inspiration from many places. It can be from the places we’ve traveled or from the 18 months we lived in Australia. The color there was so vibrant, and the sun was so bright. However, my favorite subject matter is right here. I love to paint our native prairies and flint hills filled with native grasses and wildflowers, as well as our sunrises and sunsets.

What attracts you to pastels as a medium?

I like their intense color and velvety texture. I earned a bachelor of fine art in drawing and painting but never took a pastel course. After much time experimenting with pastels, I found my own style. I use my hands to create gestural marks on a prepared paper or board. There’s a lot of blending and layering by hand. If I’m successful, the final piece will reflect the beauty around us and evoke feeling within the viewer.

Do you listen to music while you work?

One of the little enjoyments in this space is surround sound. I play music every day that I paint. It helps me get lost in the work and get a lot done. The kind of music really varies. Some days I feel like playing classical. Other times, I want to hear U2, Louis Armstrong, Amy Grant, Michael Bublé, Andy Grammer, or George Winston.

What artists have influenced you?

I love the

simple, bold paintings by Georgia O’Keeffe. I am moved by the romantic work of J.M.W. Turner. Living artists I admire are Keith Jacobshagen and Phil Epp. Their massive skies and low horizons appeal to me. Wolf Kahn’s pastels are so lovely, such great colors. I am inspired greatly by all women artists.

What is your proudest accomplishment as an artist?

Last year I was invited to have a solo show at the Albrecht-Kemper Museum of Art in St. Joseph, MO. I created more than 30 works for the show, and the museum kept one of my favorites for its permanent collection.

If your studio were on fire, what one thing would you save? I would, without a doubt, save my collection of angels.

What do you enjoy doing when you are not painting? Having coffee with a good friend.

What is one place people will never find you? Probably a *Star Wars* convention or the like.

Where do you like to take people when they come to visit you? We have a gem of an art museum here in Kansas City; I love to take friends to the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art. They have a cafe inside that has so much charm. The museum is a magical place. ✦

representation

Strecker-Nelson Gallery, Manhattan, KS; **PS Gallery**, Columbia, MO; **Prairiebrooke Gallery**, Overland Park, KS.

upcoming show

Group show, **Prairiebrooke Gallery**, September 1-30.



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