



STORIES & INSIGHTS

Meet Susan Lizotte

STORIES & INSIGHTS // 14 HOURS AGO

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We were lucky to catch up with Susan Lizotte recently and have shared our conversation below.

Susan, appreciate you joining us today. What's been the most meaningful project you've worked on?

Painting my Spring Map series has been the most meaningful project! When Covid hit the world it was terrifying. Navigating the Pandemic of 2020 gave me the time to be completely introspective. I turned to old Renaissance maps to tell my story of living through a pandemic and exploring the timelessness of disease and its impact on countries, people, borders. Taking old maps and creating new ones using figurative as well as abstract paint language offered up a whole new way of crafting a painting series project. Using soft spring colors and fluid and thick paint application gave a new perspective to me on my painting process. Since time was not of the essence I was even able to procure real sheepskin and deerskin parchment for some of my maps. I felt as though it was 1347 again, the Great Plague was happening all over again and the centuries of progress were shattered. The parchment maps help tether my narrative to the past and juxtaposing it with the present.



Awesome – so before we get into the rest of our questions, can you briefly introduce yourself to our readers.

I'm a contemporary artist based in Los Angeles California. I paint landscapes, abstract and figurative maps and dramatic paintings of my home city Los Angeles. My color palette is very important to me and I mix all my own colors. Mixing colors from a very limited set of paint tubes in order to create a certain mood in each series and each painting within the series is unique to my process. I even mix my own "black" or darkest colors myself. I like to paint about my theme or idea of something specific and I like using a series of paintings in order to get the theme across.



We often hear about learning lessons – but just as important is unlearning lessons. Have you ever had to unlearn a lesson?

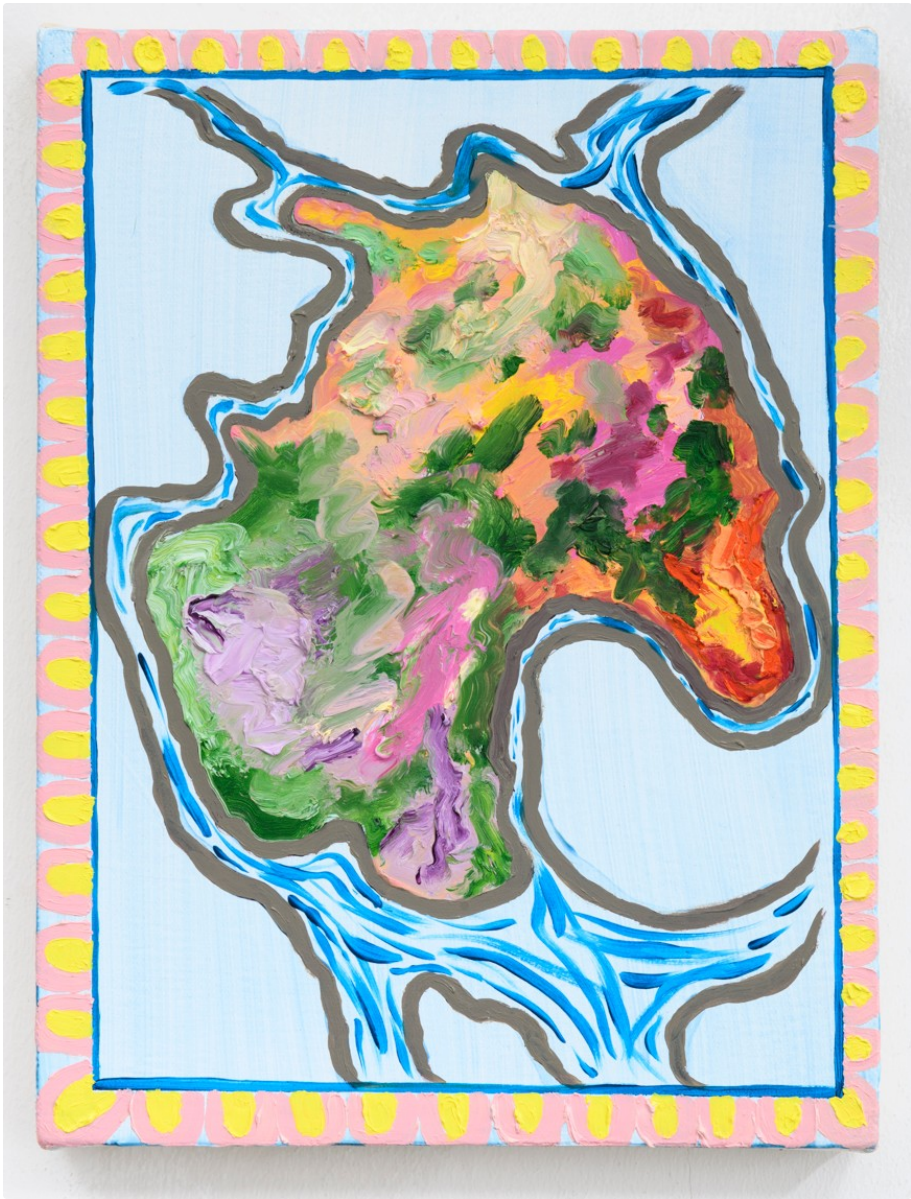
I had to “unlearn” thinking that “perfect” painting would impress people, in order to prove to others that I had the chops, that I was good enough, or skilled enough. I have learned all the skills of what to do, how to do it, and all the technical stuff. And learning what the “rules” are and then being able to “break” the rules on purpose is part of my learning and unlearning process. The “rules” of color theory for example and then adding a color that creates dissonance on purpose, another color that has no business being part of the painting but then adds another layer in order to say what you want to say with the piece. What’s so interesting about painting is that you can see and feel the energy in the paint or painting. The individuality of the artist coming through is actually, to me anyway, what makes looking at a painting so fun and interesting. You can see right away if the artist was happy, free, relaxed, and conversely you can see if the artist was tense, rigid or even angry. If that’s all on purpose then the entire piece will have its own feeling.

But I had to unlearn my preconceived notions and just allow the painting process to flow. The results are usually astounding.



Are there any resources you wish you knew about earlier in your creative journey?

I wish there had been a “manual” about how to get your work photographed, what submission sites are best, how to write an artist statement, and things like this. So yes, I wish I’d known about different resources in the beginning of my artistic journey, I’ve had to learn all this and more as I go.





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Image Credits

Credit Alan Shaffer and Susan Lizotte