

Check out Isabelle du Toit's Artwork



Today we'd like to introduce you to Isabelle du Toit.

Isabelle, we'd love to hear your story and how you got to where you are today both personally and as an artist.

I was born in Strasbourg, France. As my father worked with German clients, We moved a lot between living in Germany and France. Rarely staying in one place more than a year or two. My father became unsatisfied with European life and decided to move our family to South Africa when I was about ten years old. So we arrived in South Africa without being able to speak the language! Luckily South Africans are very welcoming and helpful, so my brothers and I learned

English within six months. Unlike my brothers, I kept some French accent to this day. After university in Port Elizabeth where I received my BFA, I moved to Cape Town to work as a graphic designer. I got married to my wonderful supportive husband when I was 24. Six months later, in the excitement of youth and potential new discoveries, we immigrated to the USA. We arrived in Chicago. We struggled for a while to adjust to this new country and being away from family. It was especially hard for me since I did not have a work visa. This gave me time to reflect and also time to pay attention to nature around me. Red Cardinals in winter branches were so incredibly exotic! I started painting to keep busy. Once we had our green cards, I was able to approach galleries to sell my work. By then we had moved to Dallas Texas where we stayed 14 years.

Since then I've been having solo shows in Dallas, Houston, Chicago, Aspen, Cincinnati, Miami, Naples, Palm Desert, and Seattle. I've also shown my work in London (England), Panama City (Panama), New York, Sag Harbor, and Memphis. I've also participated in countless Art fairs across the USA and England.

We have now been living in Fort Myers Florida for eight years. To keep things interesting, we stay aboard our sailboat for a few months a year to stay close to nature and see new Florida destinations, especially the Everglades.

We'd love to hear more about your art. What do you do and why and what do you hope others will take away from your work?

I'm a realist painter. I work with oil paint on Canvas. My mission is to speak for the animals that cannot. My work is extremely detailed to keep things intimate as the viewer looks close up. All animals are painted life-size to help the viewer connect on a personal level with the image.

I make a collection of work, each with a different topic to explore. My work is about man's encroachment on nature, empathy, the future of humanity and the importance of wildlife for emotional health. My work is foremost about conservation and our responsibility to keep wildlife thriving on any continent. I

don't see animals as being from a country or another but as our planet most precious heritage. Animals are what brings out the best in us. They give us wonder, curiosity, peace, and love.

My last series was about 'Truce,' using animals to open a conversation on the importance of talking to each other in order to understand each other better for peaceful resolutions.

I am working on a discussion about the importance of diversity at the moment for my next solo Show in Seattle this July.

My hope is to bring people closer to nature. I hope they will take that trip to Africa to see giraffes in the wild, scuba to see sharks and corals and get some binoculars to spy on their backyard birds and squirrels! If we don't love and care unconditionally for wildlife, I don't think there is a future for humanity.

The stereotype of a starving artist scares away many potentially talented artists from pursuing art – any advice or thoughts about how to deal with the financial concerns an aspiring artist might be concerned about?

Being financially able to create is the biggest challenge. I've been fortunate to have my husband's support. At the end of the day, it's a sacrifice which very few people understand around you which only makes things harder because you don't choose to be an artist... you just are. On the pragmatic side, I would tell a young person to first get an education for a reliable job to fall back on and then start doing your artwork on the side as much as possible, to see where it goes. I'd like to add that to make it financially in the art world the most obvious thing is having the talent, but you also have to be willing to work very hard at it, every single minute you have available, or you will not make it. So not only is Art a financial sacrifice, but it is often also one in living a balanced life.

Do you have any events or exhibitions coming up? Where would one go to see more of your work? How can people support you and your artwork?

At the moment my work is at Cris Worley Fine Art Gallery in Dallas, at Patricia Rovzar Gallery in Seattle and at Imago Galleries in Palm Desert. I don't have representation in Miami at the moment. Once a series is completed, I put it up on my website and Facebook.

My next Solo Shows are in Seattle at Patricia Rovzar Gallery on 11 July 2019 and Cris Worley Fine Arts in Dallas in April 2020.

For current collector, I can organize a studio visit in Fort Myers, Florida. Please find a complete list of solo shows, Art Fairs and group shows on my website.

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