

ARTIST CLOSEUP INTERVIEW
Joy Hutchins

1. WHAT IS YOUR BACKGROUND & HOW DID YOU START YOUR JOURNEY IN THE ARTWORLD?

I believe we all manifest with a very unique and specific blueprint, and being an artist, is the path that I was destined to travel.

I lost my mother to ALS when I was seven. That traumatic event, as well as subsequent traumas I experienced in my early years, left me struggling with depression.

In college, I major in psychology, which had come to deeply interest me, as I was attempting to make sense of, what appeared to me to be a nonsensical world. My childhood trauma and depression left no room for pursuing the making of art until I was married and had two small children, at which time I had the emotional stability to take time to indulge my creativity.

I began drawing and painting with watercolors, transitioned to acrylic painting, and then made words sculptures with PVC pipes. For the past several years, creating digital art has become my passion.

About a year after making art, I submitted some work to a local artist guild. The work was juried in by a local college art professor who awarded me a best in show. When he asked me what kind of training I'd had, I responded that I was self taught. He advised me never to pursue formal art training because it would provide too many rules and would interfere with my intuitive style.

I felt very encouraged by this and have been a prolific art maker ever since.

About the same time, I started making art, I began exploring, eastern, spiritual teachings.

Raised by my atheist father, I had no religious indoctrination. The eastern religions, such as Hinduism and Buddhism greatly resonated with me because of their deeply psychological nature. Their concepts became the foundation of my artistic style and message.

2. WHAT INSPIRES YOU?

I'm inspired by the beauty I perceive in all it's myriad forms. Art, photography, faces, love and compassion, animals, science, and exploring the big philosophical questions, all provide me with inspiration.

Ultimately, the inspiration that fuels my artmaking mysteriously arises at times before, and mostly during the creative process.

3. WHAT THEMES DO YOU PURSUE? IS THERE AN UNDERLYING MESSAGE IN YOUR WORK?

My work includes four main series: PORTRAITS, TATTS, BLENDS & ABSTRACTS.

PORTRAITS:

There is nothing more compelling than a face to reveal emotion and sow connection. Every face provides an open invitation to see into that being's soul.

All of my portraits are photography based and digitally manipulated. They may include tattoos, text, symbols, scribbles, and neon like flashes of light that point to the sacred light within all beings. Multiple images of a face is an acknowledgment of the various selves we all have. Each face determines the particular, artistic vision and artistic strategy that I employ.

TATTS

The history of decorating the body with tattoos goes back to neolithic times and across many cultures. At one time, in the not so distant past, tattoos denoted an unsavory mentality but the donning of tattoos is now a more broadly acceptable practice, though facial tattoos are still deemed unacceptable or improper in our current culture.

My most recent series TATTS explores the beauty of these inked marks and symbols and denotes man's creative urge to decorate himself.

BLENDS:

My BLENDS series, with its collage-like visual, incorporates some or all of my series.

ABSTRACTS:

My abstract series may, at times, be inspired by the works of the famous artists, Franz Kline. These digitally created works use simple, geometric shapes, where I seek to illicit a strong, graphic and spiritual feel.

I think beauty is at the core. When we are perceiving beauty, we are in the very state of love itself. The state of love arises simultaneously with the perception of beauty. Therefore, I know a work is completed when I've entered into the state of love, which I believe is who we all really are.

The underlying message in all of my work, inspired by my interest in psychology and Eastern wisdom, teachings, addresses concepts, such as duality, illusion, unity, and the nature of reality. Ultimately, I seek to imbue the sacred into the ordinary and mundane.

4. HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR WORK?

I would describe my work as strong, at times angsty, unique and edgy.

5. WHICH ARTISTS INFLUENCE YOU MOST?

My work has been greatly influenced, from my early years of artmaking, by Franz Kline, Andy Warhol, Jean-Michel Basquiat and the early works of Cy Twombly.

Their innovation, in their time, strongly impacted the way in which I work till this day.

6. WHAT IS YOUR CREATIVE PROCESS LIKE?

I use a variety of apps to achieve the effect that resonates with me. I play with color, add and subtract images repeatedly, often over a period of days, and sometimes weeks until the work intuitively feels complete and right to me.

I liken making art to meditation. When I'm in my creative mode, all the thoughts and worries that preoccupied my very active, analytical mind disappear, and all that remains is the intuitive state, peace and inspiration.

7. WHAT IS AN ARTIST'S ROLE IN SOCIETY AND HOW DO YOU SEE THAT EVOLVING?

Artist's works can shape the current culture, serving as a catalyst for change, pushing boundaries and questioning societal norms.

Art can elicit an array of emotional responses, and a really strong, visceral reaction, which can shift mood, beliefs, and actions.

The current creation of digital art, born out of technology, has allowed art to reach a much larger audience, and has given the artist a vastly broader range of influence.

This evolution will continue with the advances of technology.

8. TELL US ABOUT ANY PREVIOUS EXHIBITIONS YOU FOUND NOTEWORTHY

This past year, a friend of mine, and I visited a local gallery, the work of which I'd long admired. I introduced myself to one of the owners, and asked how I might submit my work to their gallery. I had not yet submitted my artwork and résumé when a few days later, I received an email from the owner. She'd highlighted three works from my Instagram feed and asked if I could have them available for an upcoming exhibition. Those three large artworks, 36" x 36" each, were represented as a triptych in their next exhibition. At the end of the show the gallery owner moved them to an interior design center, where they're currently on display.

This was the first time in my experience that a gallery owner pursued showing my work without my artist submission.

I was delighted that the owner took it upon herself, while only knowing my name, to look me up online and offer me this great opportunity based on the work she saw on my Instagram page!

