



## **Take Five Q & A with Suzette Boulais**

### **1. What's your background in art?**

I don't have any formal background in art. I didn't study it in high school or college and so I am a bit of a late bloomer. I was raised in a household with two very artistic brothers, however, one who received a scholarship to attend Indianapolis' Herron School of Art and so I have been surrounded by art for much of my life. I was well into my 40s when I decided to experiment with art and pursue it on my own. Right

from the start, with my very first painting that I still keep for sentimental purposes, I could see my style was leaning toward the contemporary and abstract and so have followed this path ever since.

## **2. What does your art aim to say?**

My art aims to communicate universal, abstract concepts like peace, hope and serenity, and by doing so, offer a sense of calm to the viewer. My paintings are often abstract landscapes that use light to reflect a soothing optimism. For me, light is a spiritual, not just physical dimension of my work. With a strong interest in graphic design and a love of symbolism, my paintings are in many ways symbolic graphic designs set to color and paint. When I paint a circle, for example, I use it as a symbol to represent the unity in all of life. The sun and moon are symbols for the light of God. Birds in my

paintings reflect the spiritual quest throughout our lives and water represents the eternal life force.

### **3. Who is your biggest art influence?**

My biggest influence to date is abstract expressionist Mark Rothko. I find his work with basic color schemes simple, yet sublime. On my best days when I feel my own colors and shapes are working together in harmonious ways, I hope my paintings express a small element of the sublime, too.

### **4. How have you developed your career in the arts?**

I can't say that I have developed a career in the arts. What I have developed is an avocation in the arts. Creating art is a part of my joy, passion, therapy, prayer, meditation, contemplation, connection to Source and soulful expression. Creating art for me coincides perfectly with the

Joseph Campbell quote, "Follow your bliss." It's my joy and my bliss to enter into the quiet and private sanctuary of my art room and watch how colors and shapes come alive to form paintings of abstract art.

## **5. How do you seek out opportunities?**

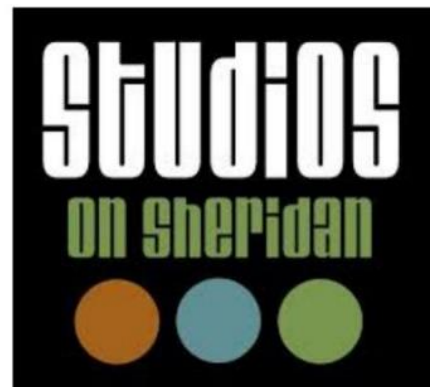
As a member of CIAO (Central Illinois Artist Organization) I like being aware of various opportunities to show my work along with the works of fellow CIAO artists. I have also found that promoting my art on Facebook and using my art as a backdrop to my Facebook Thoughts For Living series where I put quotes to art, is a great way showcase some of my work. Facebook has also come in handy for doing callouts to businesses or organizations to see if they might be interested in showing my work at their facilities.

For instance, after a recent public call out on Facebook regarding some of larger pieces I had that

were available for display, I received word from Methodist College that they would like to hang these pieces in the waiting room areas at their main campus. I was thrilled about this opportunity since it's such a win-win for the College seeing that they have so much wall space to support local artists by displaying our work and it's a win-win for us artists because it gives our work public exposure. And what artist doesn't appreciate this kind of public exposure? I certainly do. To this day, I've never gotten over the thrill of seeing my art in public places and so whenever I drop by the College, it's joy and honor to see my art hanging there.

Finally, while speaking of opportunities, I'm delighted that I and my two art colleagues, Rebecca Draland-Doyle and Jaci Willis, will present a combined art exhibit at Studios on Sheridan in Peoria, Illinois that opens with a reception on the First Friday of August 2020. We'd held an "Art and

Mind” exhibit there several years ago and are excited about coming back for yet another chance to showcase our respective, contemporary art styles.

The logo for "1st FRIDAY" is written in a teal, cursive font. The word "1st" is positioned above "FRIDAY", with a horizontal line separating them.

**Save the date:**  
**Friday, August 7, 2020**  
**Original art by:**  
**Suzette Boulais**  
**Rebecca Draland-Doyle**  
**Jaci Willis**