



LOCAL NEWS

La Canada artist Trish Kertes' paintings soothe with scenery



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Brandi, a large brown and white dog, is by Trish Kertes' side as she answers the door of her La Canada Flintridge home. The former pound pup is calm and friendly, much like her owner's paintings, which are arranged on the walls throughout the house.

Kertes (www.trishkertes.com) has patterned her style after the early California plein air painters, such as Edgar Payne, Hanson Puthuff and their contemporaries, who depicted local sites in the early 1900s that are still recognizable today. She paints scenes of her town, including Descanso Gardens, as well as Pasadena and Eaton Canyon, Cambria and the Sierra Nevada Mountains. She travels and paints scenes in France, Italy and more.

"Being in nature and painting a landscape, seascape and some buildings is what really captures my interest," Kertes said.

She especially enjoys painting poppies around the Southland, as well as in Europe. Kertes also paints still lifes and miniatures and does commissioned pieces, often from vacation photos provided by clients.

Kertes begins by covering the bright white canvas with a soft warm or cool hue depending on the

planned scene. Next, she sketches the general shapes with a brush and paint and then gradually brings her work to fruition.

She usually paints outside and takes photographs of the scene so she can complete the piece in her studio.

“In plein air, you have two to three hours max before the light has changed and what I found is if you try to follow the light, you’re going to be constantly changing your painting,” Kertes said.

In the studio, Kertes displays the image on her computer screen, which gives it almost the same color and light as if she were outdoors.

Typically, Kertes works on a painting for four to five hours a day for two to three days to get it close to completion. She believes it is easy to “overdo a painting,” so she steps away from it every hour or so to look it over. Kertes will even take her evolving piece into other rooms of her home to see how it looks in different light, angles and distances. And even when she is satisfied with a painting, Kertes may still change it.

“No painting is safe from me. I don’t rework all of them, but you do (rework some) as you live with them,” Kertes said. “I put it in a frame and I live with it because it will speak to me over time and I get ideas and clues as to what else needs to be done or make the decision that it’s done.”

Framing the painting allows her to see the work as one piece as opposed to on her easel where it is muddled with the background of her art studio. Containing the image helps Kertes to better evaluate the work.

Kertes also has help accessing her paintings from La Crescenta artist and teacher Margot Lennartz, her mentor for the past 10 years.

“She’s not easy on people. She tells you how it is and as an artist, we’re too close to our work; we may think it’s great, but you need another set of eyes,” Kertes said.

Among Kertes’ most popular works are her 5-by-7-inch and 6-by-8-inch miniatures.

“The miniatures are intriguing because of the subject matter that I paint. I paint vistas, I don’t do close-ups of little plants or a single flower, I like the big scene. I call it the ‘long view.’ When you harness that, it’s like big image/little canvas and it has a certain interest for people to see it done that way,” Kertes said.

Kertes began drawing at a very young age.

“The main thing I remember about my childhood and art is how much I loved a fresh box of crayons. I would not want to use up my favorite colors,” Kertes said.

After marriage and having children, Kertes finally found time to take art classes. She also used art in her work with her clients as a marriage family therapist. Kertes is now retired and lives with her husband, also a retired therapist. The couple has two adult children, a daughter who followed in their career footsteps and a son who is a musician.

Kertes frequently hears from people who purchase her work that they find it calming, which pleases her.

“Having been a therapist, having emotion in my paintings is really important. It needs to say something, it’s not just a pretty picture, but it has a quality that people want to keep looking at it or revisiting it,” Kertes said. “Art can have a profound effect on people’s outlook on life and their emotional feelings, in addition to being something decorative for your home.”

Kertes has recently stretched her fingers by creating a few abstract paintings. She may dabble into the genre a bit more, but right now she is busy with her mainstay and energized by her upcoming exhibits.

“Shows are important. You need to get your art out there,” Kertes said. “It’s a real thrill when somebody buys your painting and hangs it in their home in a place of honor. That’s good stuff. It’s an honor to me that they like it well enough to put it in that place. I couldn’t be happier.”

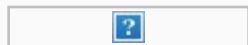
Watch a video about Trish Kertes and her dog Brandi at <http://www.tout.com/m/q384mv>

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Occasional Pasadena Doo Dah Parade Queen reigning 2007-2009. She is a professional belly dancer (swordwork is her specialty) and also studies Polynesian and Tahitian dance.

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