

- Your first memory of painting...

My first memory of painting is when I was three years old and suffered from an asthma attack. I was in the hospital for a few days and they gave me paints. I painted a bath tub in my room at the hospital. Not sure why? I do love baths.

- How did you decide to become a painter?

That's a hard question. As a teenager I was interested in painting. I never did well in art class. But was good at numbers and drafting. In University, I ended up going into industrial design and then architecture. I painted on the side while pursuing architecture. It was in my late 20's and when I had my first daughter Uma, that my career in Architecture ended. I was faced with a decision whether to pursue architecture or be a stay at home parent & painter. My husband became the architect and I became the painter. Painting for me is immediate satisfaction and I didn't want to work for anyone. We both are lucky to have had each other to pursue what we always wanted to do. That was over 9 years ago. And, I have to say now, one of the best decisions of my life.

- Did an artist particularly inspire you?

I was really into 16th century Dutch art. I loved the stories behind each painting, the light, colours, realism. There wasn't a particular artist but I remember I felt inspired whenever I saw a piece from that time. I lived in The Netherlands for a year and it was one of the best times of my life. Every week I would visit the same galleries and visit the same pieces - it brought me so much joy.

- Do you need to understand to love a painting?

No. I don't think so. Like anything, if something moves you and time stands still, isn't that love?

- Is there a work for which you said to yourself "This is exactly what I wanted to do"?

Always, sometimes it takes awhile to get a line, colour, or angle. It can sometimes be very quick or a painfully long time. But every piece that leaves my studio, I have to love personally.

- The famous work that you don't like ...

Not really famous(maybe within my family) but I have one large painting that my Mother asked me to make when I was a teenager. We couldn't afford the actual painting from a store so she found the image in a catalogue and I copied it. The painting is approx 6ft tall and 4.5ft wide. It's of a man and a woman dancing and it's still up in my mother's home. I am still very much embarrassed by it.

- What is essential for your creation?

Time. It's hard for me to carve out time when I have 3 young children. So I usually sketch and draw with the kids around and when everything is lined up well and I have time by myself, I try to execute it on canvas. Music is also something I love to have playing while I'm painting.

- What is your relationship to recognition?

I do this for myself. Being recognized has had many benefits and I've had the lovely opportunity to meet and engage with people all over the world but at the end of the day, painting is my solace and therapy. Being recognized for what I do is an honour and an added bonus.

- If tomorrow you could no longer be a painter, what would you do?

Photography

- Your artistic dream ..

To follow at my own pace & to not take myself too seriously.

Thank you.

Rubeena Ratcliffe