

Studio Views began in May of 2020

We got a rare view of the artist at work in their studio and gained insight to their unique creative processes during Covid-19. In May of 2021, we asked them to check back in.



## JUNE 2020

Like everyone, my husband and I have experienced some challenges during these weeks and months of quarantine due to the COVID 19 virus. Our two small family owned businesses have both been closed and employees laid off until just last week. We have now reopened with restrictions and more safety measures in place, but have had minimal customers and so our concerns continue about how well our businesses will be able to bounce back. However, we hope for the best and march on.

One of the most difficult aspects of this season for us has been the social distancing from our two young grandsons and their parents. We know that soon we will feel safer about spending time with them again and we look forward to that day.

A positive for me through all of this situation has been my art practice. It has been gratifying to watch two of my galleries — with Art in Bloom Gallery being one — pivot and quickly implement creative ways to virtually/online reach both collectors and art lovers who simply want to continue to view art during these days. In the face of such dark and unsettling times, it is heartening that many still believe that beauty matters and therefore, take steps to pursue it. For me personally, I am glad that my studio is at home and I have been able to put in long hours there doing what I love. Art for me is a place to find peace and once again find my center when life has thrown us all a bit off kilter. It serves as a place of spiritual connection for me that has proven to be a true lifeline during this time. I'm very grateful for my art. I'm grateful for my galleries and for each person who cares about art and beauty.

I'd like to close with this admonition from contemporary writer, Shauna Niequist: "Please keep demonstrating the courage that it takes to swim upstream in a world that prefers putting away for retirement to putting pen to paper, that chooses practicality over poetry, that values you more for going to the gym than going to the deepest places in your soul. Please keep making your art for people like me, people who need the magic and imagination and honesty of great art to make the day-to-day world a little more bearable."

# HELEN LEWIS

## STUDIO VIEWS



## JUNE 2021

A year after my initial reflections on my art practice during the Covid 19 pandemic, I have been considering how I would summarize this experience of navigating a pandemic and where I find myself currently. Pictured is a tightly cropped view of my palette holding molten encaustic paints ready for me to use. I feel that this photo is indicative of one of the most valuable lessons which was driven home to me during the last year. I have learned that in order to keep creating, it is necessary for me to edit very carefully the outside input that I take in. There is so much "noise" out there coming at us from every possible avenue pushing various agendas and opinions. A contemplative by nature, silence and solitude have always been important to me.

This last year with Covid and all of its ramifications, as well as both political and racial upheaval, I have seen how absolutely vital that silence and solitude are to my creativity. Only as I was able to shut out those outside influences and find a place of centered peace and focus could I tap into the inner direction within my spirit which is essential for me to paint. I have learned even more definitively that my intuitive creative practice and my own well-being depend on pushing away the noise and distraction, quieting my mind and heart, and focusing on bringing forth the art in front of me.

*The following quote addresses this idea well:  
Treasures are hidden away in quiet places. They speak in soft tones and often become silenced as we approach. They don't beg to be found, but embrace us if we do happen to find them. They are the product of completely ordinary circumstances unfolding in wonderfully extraordinary ways. They are found hidden in the nooks and crannies of our existence; all around us if we quit allowing our attention to be captivated by that which is noisy and listen for that which is quiet and still.*

~Craig D. Lounsbrough

Going forward, as Covid restrictions start to lift, I want to hold onto this truth and continue to judiciously edit, while going even deeper with my art.