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Fields of Beauty

The floral paintings of Cejay Helt explore a style she calls abstreal art.



Cejay Helt was born in Iowa, but raised in Southern California surrounded by colorations that often influence her artwork. She later moved to Utah to raise her family, and to study at Westminster College. She then continued studies at Scottsdale Artists' School. Today her artwork focuses on fields of lush flowers and vegetation, and she experiments with therapeutic aspects of painting.

"I'm pretty persistent about what I think and feel, and I kind of took a different road...I call it 'abstreal' art," says Helt of her style that combines abstract forms and realism. "I'm playful with what I do and very interested in abstraction, very interested in negative and positives, and I love the vectors and color."

One of Helt's main artistic influences is Sorolla. "His work draws me in like a magnet. I am fascinated with what he does...I'm drawn to it because I feel the emotion he puts into his pieces," she explains, adding she is also mesmerized by his colors. She finds the colors of Spain relate to the colors from her upbringing in Southern California.

When selecting a scene for her paintings, Helt will reference plein air travels and photographs she has taken of a place. "I go out and do plein airs as well as photographs because of the short period of time I have to catch the scene. I might be somewhere and not even have my tools, my oils or watercolors. Therefore, I take photographs," she says.

Helt further explains the landscapes are usually fleeting moments, there in one instant and gone in the next. "You go out and try to find things in the field, and they are here and gone," she says. "I can find a spot and feel so fortunate I found it because a storm can come and take it all away. I only have a certain time that I can catch the flowers in bloom."

The artist also searches for places that are balanced, soothing and inspiring. "The flowers to me are a reminder of this





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peace that can exist on the earth, and we have to find that," Helt describes. "Each one of us had to find that peace. To me the flowers breathe such life and emotion. Being a colorist, that really draws me in. I do a variety of work, but that is sort of the starting point because of what they teach me."

In addition, Helt tries to convey to the viewers a sense of depth in her work, so they get the feeling of being there in the landscape. "To me I feel that I am dealing with the highest senses—sight, sound, smell and touch," she says. "When I am painting I'm feeling that, I'm smelling that, I'm hearing that..."

Helt's artwork can be found in collections around the world. She is represented by Ivy House Fine Art Gallery in Salt Lake City. ●

Helt was the Second Prize Winner of International Artist magazine's Challenge No. 88, Favorite Subjects.



- 1**
Cejay Helt in her Utah studio.
- 2**
Vibrato, oil on fine canvas, 18 x 24"
- 3**
Ambrosia, oil on fine canvas, 24 x 36"
- 4**
Rue in Vermillion, oil on fine canvas, 24 x 18"



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