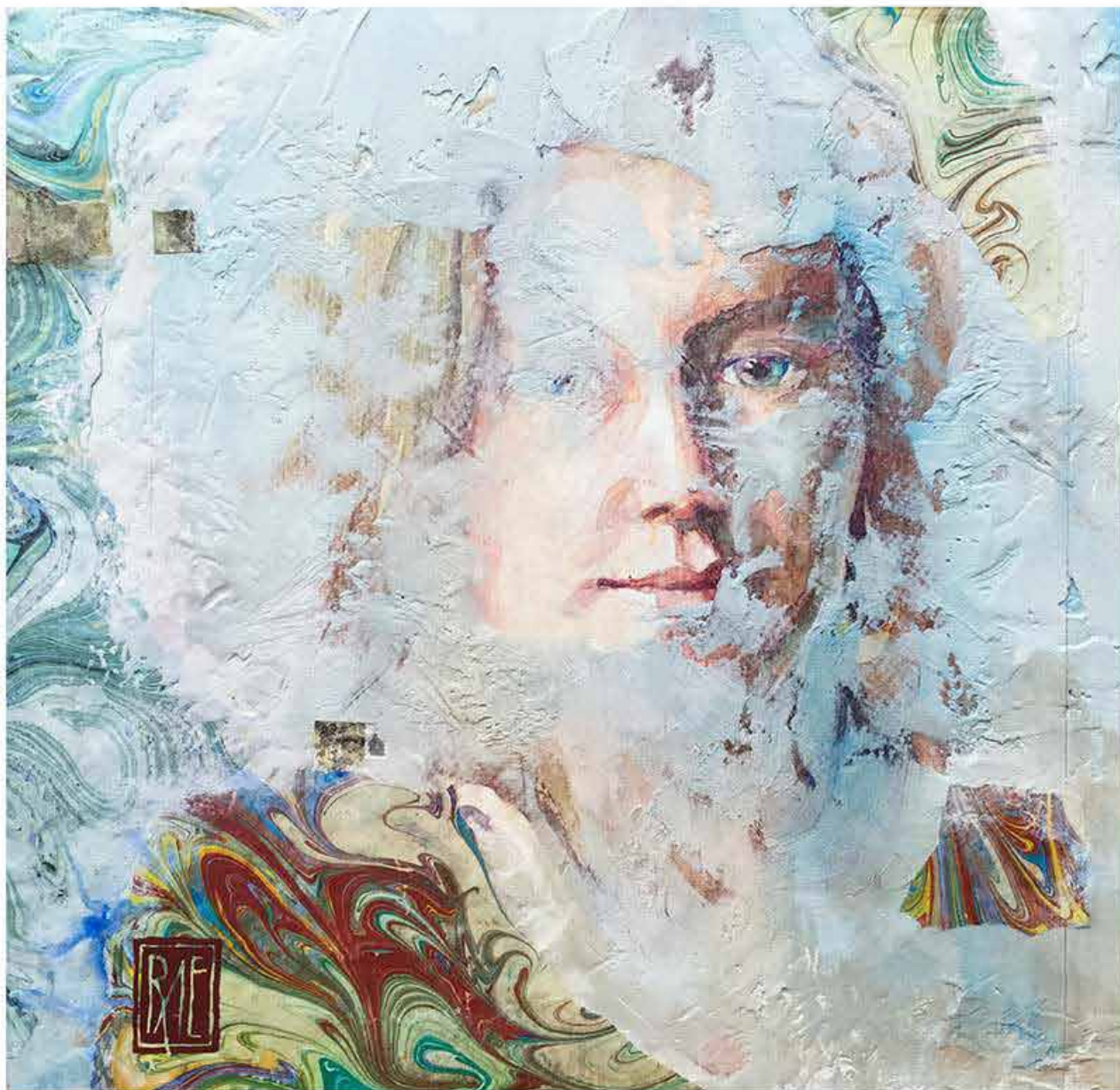


**Blue Fresco.**

*"This small painting, on a 30.5 x 30.5 cm panel holds special meaning for me. The portrait was originally a study painted in a workshop led by Lynn Powers, of her daughter. I later used it to experiment with a concept I'd been mulling around after trips to Italy, where peeling plaster walls reveal the secrets of ancient worlds. I added bits of marbled papers and blue paint, naming it after a ruin of a shrine."*



RENE EISENBART'S WATERCOLOURS EMBODY A DELICATE FUSION OF ARTISTIC EXPLORATION AND THE TIMELESS ALLURE OF UNFORGETTABLE MOMENTS. EXPLORE THE WORK OF THIS PASSIONATE ARTIST WHO, THROUGH THE ARTISTRY OF MARBLING AND A PATIENT HAND, INFUSES HER CREATIONS WITH LIFE AND A SENSE OF MYSTERY.

**T**he creative process is intensely exhilarating! Art is a very personal expression. There is a huge amount of freedom in this. I absolutely love being "in the zone" of creation – the energy is palpable. Creating is what makes me feel truly alive. As a child I loved

to paint and draw and discovered my mind will easily visualise and problem-solve, both skills being conducive to art making.

**Images anchored in memorable moments**

Each of my paintings has a story in it. For some, the

inspiration comes from exploring my own back yard; other paintings are born of exposure to the world around. Many take root from an image I see and capture digitally. All these images were defined by a moment in time that resonated with me! Remove an event from my life and that painting is gone. Without the experience the art would not exist.

**A changing artistic imprint**

My work covers a broad range of subject matter and technique. I don't want to be predictable or boring. Maybe that's why I keep experimenting and trying new things. Who I am determines the marks I make and each painting has my hand in it quite literally. While my subject matter is diverse, the body of work is cohesive, even with a variety of style.

**Letting the paint take its course and responding to it**

I might be thinking about a painting for years before I ever have a chance to paint it. Working loose at the

Rene Eisenbart

# A singular and unique approach



Self-Portrait.

## KEY FACTS

Rene Eisenbart lives in the mountains of Tualatin near Portland, where she creates her work with passion. In addition to her personal artistic pursuits, she shares her knowledge and passion by teaching locally and running painting workshops in various locations, including Tuscany, Croatia and Costa Rica. She is also a prominent member of several watercolour societies, including the American Watercolour Society, the National Watercolour Society and the Western Federation Watercolour Society.

[rene-art.com](http://rene-art.com)



*The Picnic*. Watercolour 75 x 56 cm.

beginning – throwing paint around or letting it puddle – allows the painting to evolve. I want to let the flowing paint speak. It directs where the painting needs to go and I listen. Watercolour has a reputation for being a difficult medium, but it's actually very easy to control when you know how. The trick is to allow the paint to do what it does and respond to that. The resulting texture is often more beautiful than anything I could impose. I am careful to encourage and leave the blossoms and drips. It's the "imperfections" that make my work unique. Art is in knowing what to keep and what to change.

## My creative process

My paintings always start with a sketch. The sketch is sometimes placed directly onto watercolour paper but other times I work out the drawing on another sheet of paper and transfer it. I often do a value study before I begin painting and block in shapes of whites, greys and darks. It becomes my roadmap, if you will. The more I know where I'm going, the less fear and uncertainty there is. The painting goes faster when decisions are made in advance. I usually work from light to dark, but flushing in some of the darkest dark midway in the process helps me calculate how to set the other values. Working fast and sure, the painting is fresh. Layering to adjust colour and value can add sophistication but there's always a cost – some of the freshness is lost. So it is a calculation of what to keep and what to give up!

## My marbling technique

I have harboured a deep appreciation for intricate patterning throughout my artistic journey. The turning point came when I participated in a one-day marbling workshop facilitated by Galen Berry, a master of marbling techniques hailing from Oklahoma. Initially, the

process seemed daunting, but as I followed a few key steps, I discovered its simplicity. To my surprise, marbling evolved into a central element in my paintings, becoming a defining feature.

My experimentation with marbling extended beyond standalone artworks to overlaying it onto existing paintings. Despite my initial lack of direction, this trial-and-error approach proved to be an invaluable learning experience. Many of my early attempts ended in failure, yet each misstep served as a crucial lesson in refining my technique. What fascinates me most is how the marbled patterning, when harmoniously integrated with a painting, creates an enigmatic allure, adding a layer of mystique to the overall composition.

### A new work, a new enigma

In truth, I don't adhere to a specific formula. Each

## My palette

I exclusively utilise M.Graham paints due to their ability to retain moisture in the palette. It's important to allow freshly squeezed wet tube paint to dry for about a week before sealing the palette. I find that the paint performs exceptionally well when it is slightly dried over freshly squeezed, as it can still be easily reconstituted. As for pigments, my palette is relatively limited. I refrain from using pre-prepared grey or black mixes, opting to create my own. My go-to black mixture comprises 4 parts Ultramarine Blue, 2 parts Alizarin Crimson (either permanent, regular, or a combination of both) and less than 1 part Gamboge. This concoction produces a purplish dark shade, which I then blend with other colours to achieve the neutral tones required.

## Flesh tones

Flesh tones are crafted by blending Quinacridone Red, my preferred red for various applications, with Yellow Ochre and a touch of Cerulean Blue. To achieve deeper shades, increase the proportion of blue, opt for Ultramarine Blue, or incorporate the aforementioned black mixture. Additionally, I frequently introduce Cobalt Violet as a highlighting colour for the flesh, as evident in my work. In terms of other hues, I employ Quinacridone Gold for my greens, mixing it with Phthalo Green and a hint of Quinacridone Rust to create olive tones. To produce greyish greens, I incorporate Quinacridone Violet. Occasionally, I incorporate traces of Phthalo Blue and possibly a touch of Cobalt in certain areas of my artwork.



*Marina  
Tattooed.  
Watercolour,  
30 x 30 cm.*

new painting presents itself as a unique puzzle to be unravelled. On occasion, I adopt the approach of working from light to dark, strategically building up the layers. Alternatively, there are instances when I prefer introducing some of the darkest tones early in the process, envisioning the entire range even as a considerable expanse of white paper remains visible. In Hawaii, we abide by a mantra: begin anywhere. This philosophy allows for flexibility and creativity in my artistic process. If I were confined to a rigid method, the creative journey would undoubtedly lose its allure. Nevertheless, there is a method to the madness. I would characterise it as a gradual build-up of paint to achieve the desired values, all the while fostering an environment that embraces playfulness and freshness, acknowledging the beauty found in spontaneous mistakes along the way.

### Final stages where every decision counts

There are instances when I find myself at a creative crossroads, struggling to discern how to enhance a piece. It's fascinating how even the minutest adjustments can wield a profound impact on the overall success of the artwork. Initially, the painting process unfolds rapidly, but the true essence lies in the meticulous attention devoted to perfecting that final 10 percent. It's during this phase that I invest the bulk of my time, methodically contemplating each move to ensure a polished and refined outcome.

### The importance of drawing

While it may come more easily for some than others, drawing is something to form a habit of. The benefit is in the doing! Drawing is a learned skill and just like swimming or playing the violin, the more you do it the more comfortable you'll be. Beginning artists either feel like they have a latent ability for art – or they don't. It's really fun to watch someone who has absolutely no idea they can draw, discover that they have an aptitude for it. That happened with my friend Mary McCarty, who is phenomenal! That is not to say that drawing will come easily for you – sometimes it does and sometimes it does not. But you can count on this: If you give yourself permission to work with it – to actually spend time doing it – you will improve. It's best starting out if you simply let go of the idea of being "good" or having "good" drawings and work on being expressive. Just draw for yourself. Sometimes working on accuracy can be useful, but the main thing is to find a way to enjoy the meditative process of drawing, so you will continue to want to do it.

### Consistency and diligence

I had always thought of drawing as being a "drawn out", time consuming process! My goal had been either to make complete, intricate drawings as a way of better understanding my subject or to make simple outlines as painting guides or when working through design issues. The idea of quick, expressive sketches appeals to me. Just like with any exercise, the discipline of regular, short intervals makes a huge difference in comfort level with drawing. Try it! Not having time is no excuse

# Step by step *Judy In The Spotlight*



**Step 1** A few years ago, I did a portrait of Oregon artist Judy Hoiness using a photo I'd taken during a discussion session at a watercolour society meeting. In the photo she was holding a pencil in front of a curtain. I later started to think about improvements. The portrait part always delighted me, but the curtain drew too much attention and the meaning of the pencil wasn't as clear as I would have liked. Some spectators even interpreted the pencil as a tube of lipstick!



**Step 2** Last summer, I gave the piece a marbled texture, giving it a mythical character. I was instantly captivated by the result, although I think it could still benefit from a few tweaks. Note that in the final version of the painting, I made some changes to the design by removing the part covering the mouth. In addition, I lightened the pattern on top of the hair by adding a thin layer of watercolour base on top.



*"Each of my paintings has a story in it."*

**Step 3** I also felt the need to add a stronger focal point. Some critics suggested cropping the right side, but I liked what was there, or at least the idea of what might be there. I wanted to incorporate a captivating element to direct the eye towards the curtain. After being fascinated by the blue morpho butterflies at a workshop in Costa Rica, I had also taken photos of them at the Natural History Museum in New York. The idea of seeing them fluttering about in this watercolour began to take shape in my mind. I submitted the painting to the American Watercolour Society's 2021 Open Exhibition - it was accepted and I was awarded signatory membership!

when it only takes 15 minutes of your day. To develop the habit, set a time that you can devote each day. And stick to it! One other thing, if drawing isn't the place where you naturally excel, don't worry! You will discover other areas where your talents will sing. It could be your sense of colour or design, or even a pattern of discipline or tenacity. It could be something else. Give yourself lots of space to explore your own unique creative abilities.

## **My artistic development**

A strong work ethic is essential and my constant commitment to the creative process is proof of that. I'm open to trying almost anything and from time to time,

that daring is rewarded with good fortune! My stubbornness, which I prefer to call tenacity, is proving to be a major asset. Rarely inclined to give up on a painting, it goes hand in hand with my intrinsic optimism. Having the vision to see the potential of a work that is not yet fully developed is a precious quality. Another key aspect is my willingness to take risks. I experiment, I get out of my comfort zone, I allow myself to make a lot of mistakes. That's how I grow as an artist. Learning to create quality art also means knowing how to rectify less successful work, by paying attention to what works and understanding why. It is this ability to learn from failures that contributes to my artistic development.