

Visual Artist: Emma Gardner
Website: www.emmagardner.com

About:

"I am a third generation painter born in Philadelphia. Encouraged from a young age, I have been painting for as long as I can remember. My formal training began in high school and continued in college where I was trained in a program modeled after the Swiss School of Design, a perceptual and analytical approach to the visual arts. I went on to study advanced Chemistry and Art History in the Art Restoration and Conservation program at University of Delaware. After completing some independent studies in Florence Italy, I moved to Northern Arizona where the dramatic landscape and diversity of natural beauty leave me in awe to this day. Although sometimes distracted by the occasional white water adventure, mountain biking or snow boarding, I have dedicated the bulk of my time to painting and creating. Spiral Eye Studio is where I produce works of fine art as well as jewelry and sculpture. My love of art is bound by no one medium. Experiences run from mural painting, sculpture and illustrations, to costume making, window dressing, graphic design, restoration, and replication. I've always loved marionettes, and recently I've been experimenting with them, merging the visual performing arts with writing and engineering.

"I am inspired by the natural beauty and rugged diversity of Northern Arizona. A student of art history and world religions I reference sacred images of many cultures to create an eclectic mix of ancient characters applied to modern society. Archaic goddesses and pop icons collide in a human narrative sometimes stripped to the bone. My latest series are skeleton pin-up girls.

"I enjoy collaborating as well. I've done some group projects with children, and it's amazing to see the look of surprise in their faces when they look at a big wall of art and realize that they made it happen!

"Commissions are welcomed. I find working together with a patron and helping to manifest their vision a challenge and an adventure."

The thing I love the most about Emma's work is just how playful and unique it is--very much like Emma herself. I especially love how she juxtaposes immortal creatures such as mermaids and Barbies with the idea of mortality--in other words, skeletons. What this does is make us question our own assumptions about what it means to be "real" and "make believe;" "alive" and "dead;" "serious" and "silly." And she does all of this with just enough whimsy to make it fun. The fact that she is also an extremely talented painter, both in terms of her originality and her technical skills, make her an obvious choice for a Viola Award..

Emma is very supportive of the art community in Flagstaff, and can always be counted on to contribute her time and talents to the many silent auctions that are the bane/blessing of this town.



EMMA GARDNER 2018



