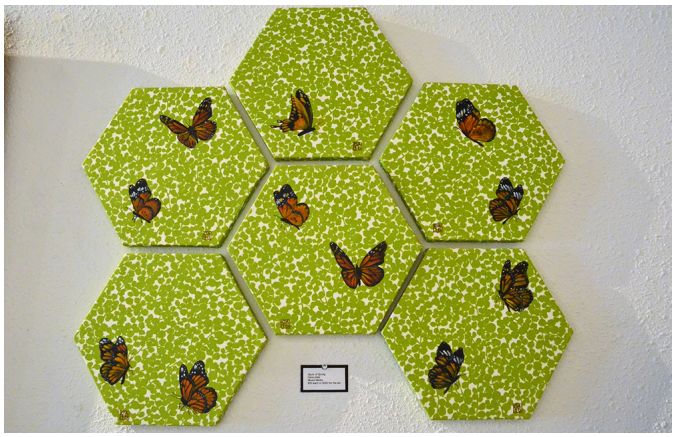
Artist of the month Dana Aldis talks drawing, painting

Written by By Cody Begaye Sun Correspondent
Friday, 26 July 2019 02:42



Dana Aldis, of Gallup, has been painting professionally since 2008. She transitioned from painting primarily still life, animal portraits and landscape paintings, in oils.

“I try to participate in the local art scene when I can, mostly by displaying my work at ART123,” Aldis said July 16.

BACKGROUND

Aldis, who moved to Gallup from West Virginia in 2018, said she has lived in a number of places where her husband worked for numerous tribes.

Last June, Aldis joined gallupARTS and became very active in the arts scene. In February, she helped coordinate *15 in 30*, a show where 28 local artists created 15 paintings in 30 days.

This path of teaching art comes from her time at the New York Academy of Art, where she earned her Master of Fine Arts.

Since she began sharing her work, Aldis has been exhibited in New York City, Washington, D.C., and cities in Idaho and Washington State.

“I’ve shown my work mostly in galleries and group shows,” she said.

EVOLVING CRAFT

“My work has evolved from painting straight-on pet portraits to including more environments,” Aldis explained.

Some of the paintings Aldis shared with the *Sun* included recent works featuring goats and ducks, set in a colorful patterned background.

These pieces were done as part of Aldis’ work with the *Goats of Anarchy* animal sanctuary, established in 2016 for special needs baby goats, where she will donate a portion of the sales proceeds.

Another piece featuring a sun with blue cloud and sky patterns draws from Aldis’ half-Chinese heritage, she said.

Aldis said patterns are important in her work because they have always been a part of her life.

“A pattern is a repetition, it allows you to have your eye rest on a design and focus on the main element,” she said. “It is something to look at without being blank and can lead the eye into different areas.”

A REWARDING EXPERIENCE

Aldis said she continues to look for inspiration around Gallup to get ready for a 2020 art show in Washington state.

“I was drawn to the landscape and local culture,” she said. “Inspiration is all around you here.”

In addition to looking ahead, Aldis reflected on her decision to take up painting full-time.

“The decision to take the plunge was scary, but I think it’s one of the best moves I’ve ever made,” Aldis said.

She said in addition to support from her husband, who is also dedicated and driven to succeed, the rise of social media has been a big influence for her.

“Being able to get the word out has allowed me to find an even bigger audience,” Aldis said.

Despite social platforms, Aldis said it is important to develop a rapport with clients because they are more likely to work with someone they have met personally.

More than that, the experience of seeing art in person is something that cannot be replicated, Aldis pointed out.

“The most rewarding thing about my work is seeing people experience art in real life,” she said.

FUTURE WORKS

In addition to preparing for upcoming shows, Aldis will be teaching Painting and Art Practices courses at UNM-Gallup this fall.

Aldis’ work can be seen on display at ART123, 123 W. Coal Ave., where she will also be teaching Paint and Sip courses at the end of this month.

Aldis also wanted to express her gratitude to Rose Eason, executive director of gallupARTS, her past students, and the Gallup arts community.

“I appreciate this community and being a part of it,” she said.

To see more of Dana Aldis’ work, visit her Instagram page at https://www.instagram.com/danaaldisstudio/ .

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