

Linda (RED) Harrison

We were lucky to catch up with Linda (RED) Harrison recently and have shared our conversation below.

Linda (RED), appreciate you joining us today. When did you first know you wanted to pursue a creative/artistic path professionally?

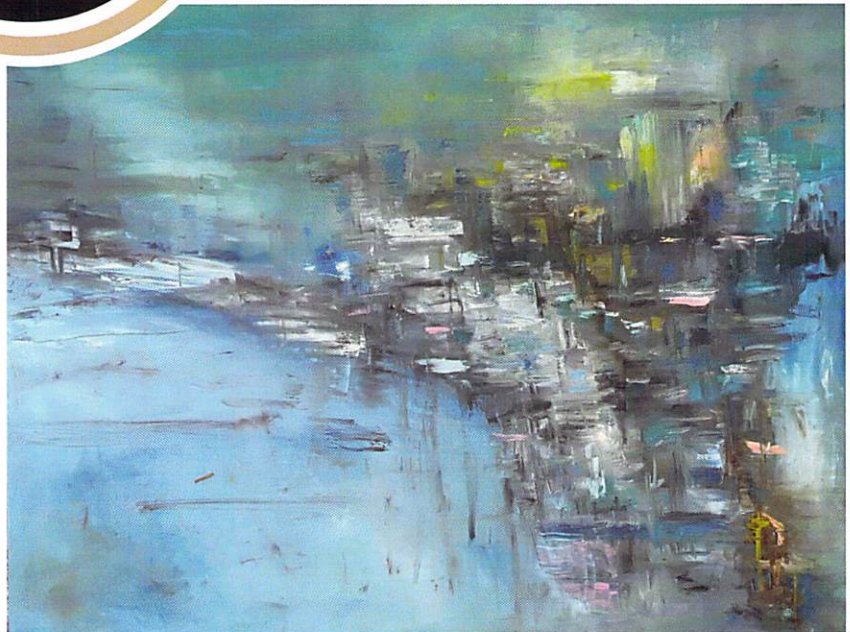
Hello. I am "Red" aka Linda Harrison an Abstract Artist. Over two decades ago when I created my first abstract that I titled No Turning Back Now I knew I found my inner passion. My love for painting abstracts was here to stay. It wasn't until a business colleague asked to purchase one of my abstracts that my heart soared with joy and the idea of selling my artwork to others became a possibility.

But jumping head-on into being a fulltime professional artist was not an immediate process for me. You see, the demands of owning my own Management Consultant company didn't leave much time to devote to establishing oneself in the artworld. I had government contracts, obligations and commitments that consumed much of my time.

No matter, I continued to paint abstracts in my spare time and discovered more folks wanted to purchase them. I received further acknowledgement as an artist when the Artist Magazine published a story about me with the title Stars On The Rise.



**LINDA
(RED)
HARRISON**



I setup an LLC for my art business and began to research different avenues to market my artwork. Like any small business owner in a new field, I had a lot to learn. So, while continuing to run my management consultant business, I spent my spare time creating art and learning the business.

Even on a part-time basis, I did well. I found different gallery representations and sold and rented to interior designers and property managers. All the while growing my private collectors too.



In January 2020, I retired my management consultant business and turned my attention to Strokes by Red art business. Just in time for COVID-19! I had four different shows lined up for early spring 2020; and I am sure you can figure out what happen to them. Yes, all were cancelled due to COVID. But my determination didn't wane. I look at obstacles as events to overcome, so I needed to find other ways to reach art collectors with my artwork.

Being a full-time artist is not about painting all the time. In fact, I spend most weekdays investigating various avenues for my artwork, researching marketing opportunities to include online outlets, galleries, property managers, and interior

designers. The road isn't always smooth, but I am thrilled to devote my time to creating my business around my passion – contemporary abstracts.

As always, we appreciate you sharing your insights and we've got a few more questions for you, but before we get to all of that can you take a minute to introduce yourself and give our readers some of your background and context?

One spring day over 20 years ago, I felt an overwhelming urge to create a work of art. See, my creative side began to assert itself. I had a desire to paint, but not just any painting. I wanted to paint an abstract, something I had never done before. I rushed around my home and grabbed an old decorative painting from the wall, collected every available house paint, spray paint, magic marker, brush, sponge, and tool. What emerged changed me. For I found the one outlet that gave me unlimited joy and freedom – painting abstracts.

It was just something internal that said, 'This is what you need to do.' And it did change my life.

See, I grew up in the small, sugarcane farming community of White Castle, LA, the fourth of seven kids. Whether preparing meals, organizing the household chores, and generally looking after my younger siblings, while my parents worked, I always possessed fierce self-discipline.

Art and creatively have always been part of my life. My parents, and parental grandmother were avid amateur artists. They painted landscapes and still life in oils, charcoals or watercolors, as well as creating ceramics and other assorted crafts.

I, of course participated in many of these activities and much more, such as knitting, crocheting, mosaics, designing my own clothes, making home decorations and yes, painting. However, the realism of painting landscapes, flowers or fruit did not appeal to me.



My career focus was all about going to college for business, earning a bachelor's degree at University of Central Florida in Marketing, and, in short order, obtaining an MBA at Florida Institute of Technology, graduating Summa Cum Laude in both academic programs.

My next 25+ years were marked by developing and managing solutions in healthcare, logistics, information technology sectors and, finally, forming my own consulting company in Denver, Colorado. However, the pull of creative expression, art and nature were ever present.

Now many years later as a result of that one day in Colorado where I painted my first abstract, I have evolved from a part-time artist to a full-time artist.

You might be wondering Why Abstracts?

Abstract art is a type of art that is not bound by reality. Abstract art allows me to freely express my creative spirit with endless imagination. Through the use of color, movement, textures, and shapes; my abstracts come to life. I create with brushes, palette knives and often just my fingers using oils and acrylics. I love the free-flowing movement of abstracts. This is my inner voice.

Abstract art is an expression of myself that hopefully touches and moves others with positive and spiritual energy. For I want my art to be positive and uplifting. You might not think or realize this, but abstract art, even more so than any other type of art, is very personal.



I seek to personally touch others by communicating through the freedom and expression of abstract art. A favorite quote of mind is:

"Abstraction allows man to see with his mind what he cannot see physically with his eyes.... Abstract art enables the artist to perceive beyond the tangible, to extract the infinite out of the finite. It is the emancipation of the mind. It is an exploration into unknown areas." Arshile Gorky



I enjoy experimenting and trying out new techniques with different mediums and tools. I especially like the affects and results of using my palette knives, but you can also find me just using my fingers as well.

I feel alive and in tune with my inner creative spirit in front of a canvas with a brush/palette knife or fingers in motion.

Integral to my artwork is my love of and connection to Nature and Music. Nature and Music evoke sensory experiences that awaken my creativity and free my human spirit. Nature's spiritual energy inspires me

to express its positive influence in my contemporary abstracts. And Music just gets into my soul and makes me feel so much while driving me to express these feelings through my creations.

To better connect with my audience, I write an uplifting short story for each painting. These stories may have some history, uplifting quotes, discussion about music, it all depends on the piece itself.

For me, my art is an adventure. Sometimes daring, whimsical, passionate, and challenging; but always expressive.

My creativity is fired by Red. "Red" is my art signature (not just the color of my hair). My process itself is simple. Once I select a few colors, the influence of Red (strength, passion, and spirit) takes over.



– Strength to express myself freely and allow my inspiration to dance across the canvas,

– Passion to discover in each of my creations, and

– Spirit to reflect on something greater and more meaningful than myself.

I am thrilled that my abstracts have won several awards throughout the years. But nevertheless, you will find I am immensely happy surrounded by paint splatters, canvases, brushes, and palette knives.

What do you think is the goal or mission that drives your creative journey?

Art is an extraordinary world with unlimited boundaries, opening doors to imagination, creativity, and spirit. This is my world. I always feel free, alive and in touch with my inner spirit when I have a brush in hand and direct the paint to fly across the canvas.

And my goal to myself along my continued artistic journey is to be true to myself and allow my creative spirit to always be heard.

"The hardest battle you're ever going to fight is the battle to be just you". Leo Buscaglia

I am sure many artists at some time in their life are uncertain of their abilities, talent, and direction of their craftsmanship. As artists, we receive a plethora of feedback from a diverse and vast audience, many who we believe are quite knowledgeable in the arts. We even stop and reflect on this feedback. We might even try to please others with our creativity by mistakenly thinking we need to listen and abide by the many voices of direction. There are even times when we think we should create work similar to other artists.

However, in the end, I have found my best work is a result of me not thinking, not listening to other's opinions, but doing, by letting my hands guide my strokes without my brain giving commands. Yes, we can learn and grow from others; but I find my finest achievements come from the inspiration that is waiting to be released by my inner self.

Hence my mission is to continue to paint intuitively which means "I don't choose the content, it chooses me". I can definitely say my greatest creations are when I let my hands do the talking.

As Aristotle said, "Knowing yourself is the beginning of all wisdom", and I know to reach my highest potential I cannot copy others but be an original without fear to create and yes, perhaps have some do overs. But in the end, finding my artist's spirit by remaining true to my creative soul.

"When you find you path, you must not be afraid. You need to have sufficient courage to make mistakes. Disappointment, defeat, and despair are the tools God uses to show us the way" – Paulo Coelho

Hence my mission is to be true to myself and Dream. Believe. Create. Succeed.

In your view, what can society do to best support artists, creatives and a thriving creative ecosystem?

It would be great if all of society would have a better understanding of the importance of Art and its value to all of us. For The Voice of Art can Make a





Difference. I am a true believer that art can play a significant role in our lives, whether you're young or old or rich or poor or a collector or not.

I think the voice of art can make a world of difference to each and every one of us. For I truly believe, art is an important aspect of our lives and one you probably don't even realize has played a significant part in your daily life. There are so many forms and expressions of art for us to enjoy.

Did you watch someone gracefully dancing or listen to lyrics that made you stop and think, or perhaps gaze upon a sculpture that was so exquisite that you wondered about its creator. All these are forms of art and more. Indeed, art is a diverse range of activities in creating visual, auditory, or performing artifacts, expressing imagination, conceptual ideas, or even technical skills, for us to appreciate their beauty or emotional power.



Art touches and enriches our lives while providing us a common language that can bring together people of all nationalities. For, Art speaks where words are unable to explain. Art transcends boundaries, it just speaks to all who want to gaze upon it. It can entertain, educate, provoke thought and illicit diverse emotions. Art can unlock profound human understanding and accomplishment. It has the power to bring all of us

together. It empowers us all through its simple truth and nourishes our society through its voiceless inspiration.

Art is one of the many forms to express creatively; and can you imagine a world without the freedom to express creativity. It would be dead, for art brings the world to life. It provides a freedom to imagine, experience, and connect with each other.

"Art is important. We tend to think it is a luxury, but it gives people deep pleasure because beauty is the personifications of hope that something grander is at work."
– Gil Dellinger, Painter.

Art is not just about the artist; it is about the viewer's connection to the work. Art can be considered the tree of life; and we all know how important a tree is to our life's existence.

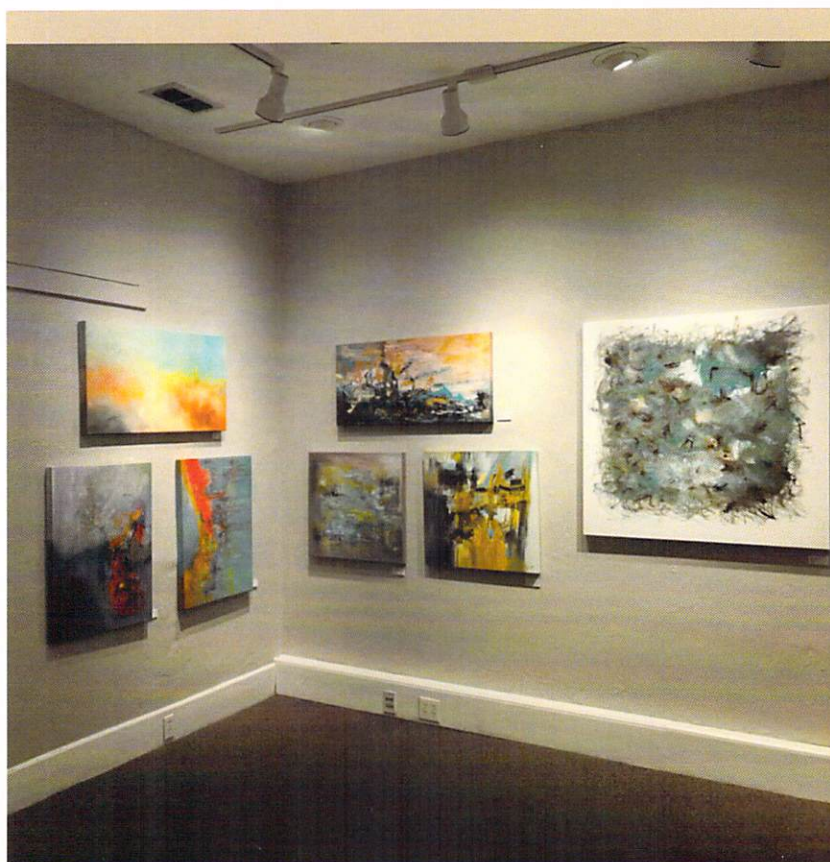
So, I close with this quote to remind us that all art forms have a value and place in our society.

"Art is a nation's most precious heritage. For it is in our works of art that we reveal to ourselves and to others the inner vision which guides us as a nation. And where there is no vision, the people perish."

– Lyndon Johnson, on signing into existence the National Endowment on the Arts

Whether it is a painting, music, literature, or dance; let's all take time out to enjoy and appreciate these gifts.

Dream. Believe. Create. Succeed.



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