Leslie Kraff Bio

One day when my son was four, he decided to experiment with paint. He was industrious and quite focused. When he was done, he held up the paper to show me, and with a child’s beaming smile, exclaimed. “My eyes don’t believe what my hands can do.”

I paint because of that magic. I am always amazed as I witness the transformation of a blank canvas as it morphs into a form with line and color. I have used many mediums: watercolor, pastels, gouache, acrylic etc. however, my current love is oil paints. I love the vibrancy and the textural quality of the paint.

I find inspiration everywhere. A tree, a mailbox, a flower, a mooring rope, a boat. Sometimes it’s simply the juxtaposition of color and shape that I find in our everyday environment. I can only paint when I feel a strong energetic connection to an image. Then the mystery of creativity takes over. My art records where I’ve been, how I felt, and what I thought.

I have always had a pencil, charcoal, crayon or paintbrush near me as I grew up. As an adult, I have studied at the Corcoran, the Yellow Barn, and the Compass Atelier as well as with many local and national artists.

My connection to nature is visible in many of my works. My work as a psychotherapist informs much of the subjects I chose.

Currently, I am creating a series exploring trees as a metaphor illustrating the interconnection of all living things. They are very evocative for me. I have often wondered why so much of our vocabulary is connected to the life of a tree. They all have distinct personalities not unlike people: they reach up to a limitless sky, they are firmly rooted in the ground, they go out on a limb. (we talk about family trees more than ever before!) Their moods and struggles echo our own.

If any of my works bring you a greater awareness, a new way of thinking or seeing, a sense of recognition, or a smile, I have been successful. For me each new creation brings unexpected challenges. Each canvas pushes and changes me. That is part of the joy of being an artist.