



LINDA RYAN - BIOGRAPHY

Linda Ryan has loved west coast beaches for most of her life, in San Diego with her family, at the many bays and coves she's frequented since landing in the San Francisco Bay Area, or walking the headlands and coastline for hours on end during her recent Artist in Residence program in Mendocino. She finds experiencing waves battering or lapping at rock formations, tidepools and cliffs of the west coast to be endlessly fascinating and soothes a deep inner need for visual movement.

Artmaking has been a lifelong fascination for Ryan as well. When she was given a set of drawing pencils at an early age, she became a capable realist within a year. As a young adult, Ryan studied with photorealist Robert Steiner. And, while she achieved excellence in rendering and drew constantly, Ryan always felt there was something lacking. She did not recognize, then, that she was not feeding her need to explore and share the experience of energy and movement with others.

In 1999, Ryan began college art courses with the late Bill Paskewitz, who was known for his keen eye and critical teaching style. Painting, and learning about art, became everything for Ryan, then. Driven to push herself to her limits, she attacked art studies with a passion, cross-referencing a dozen books over each new art movement and putting the new-found knowledge to work on canvas.

She then dove into her own self-studies. Constantly painting and exploring acrylic gel mediums, she quickly moved away from exacting realism. She began to find an emerging artistic voice underscored by the previously missing expression of energy, sense of movement, and of life expressed through bold, fluid strokes.

After the events of nine-eleven, Ryan began exploring abstract figurative as a way to bring viewers an experience of the power of connection to humanity. This evolved into a series of large abstract dancers. She became known and collected for both in her region.

Finally, she tried a new medium called Liquitex Pouring Medium. When she glimpsed the potential for movement and light refraction she had been attempting to achieve with gels, she spent two years experimenting, testing, and learning to master her own technique in painting by pouring with generally transparent pigments on small boards.

Working this way requires an ability to work quickly and boldly, a thorough knowledge of the pigments and paints used and a good visual memory, as the medium itself has almost the opacity of Elmer's Glue, and lower layers are difficult to see. It also requires letting go of a degree of control. Ryan was beginning to achieve the fluidity and movement she needed, as well as achieving the sense of light refracted through fused glass she had been trying to create for years.

She had not yet worked on a large scale with pour painting, and was still creating the abstract figuratives she had been known for. Life had different plans.

In late 2014, with an upcoming solo show looming, Ryan's painting hand ended up in a cast. She took this as a challenge and ordered boxes of large cradled boards and gallons of pouring medium and set out to create.

The Flow paintings, as she calls them, became a series of bold, colorful abstractions based on creating movement, then halting it to dry when the composition is complete – oftentimes layering them to achieve even more depth and luminosity.

Ryan's second series in pour painting are abstracted underwater scenes. Their resinous luminosity catches the eye with a sense of swimming, diving and snorkeling beneath the ocean surface, still leaving much to the imagination.

A stay at a collector's Bed and Breakfast in Mendocino resulted in a fascination with the plentiful rock formations and the sea striking them. She tried to paint them there, but the results were frustrating and thin. She kept trying at home in her studio with better results but she was still deeply unsatisfied.

She applied for and was granted entrance to an Artist in Residence program at the Mendocino Art Center, and moved in on October 1, 2017.

From then until she left the program in late April of 2018, she immersed herself in her work and spent hours walking the coastline and headlands, absorbing the experience of the movement of the surf on the rocks so that she could then share the experience more deeply. The result of almost 7 months' work there are the California Coast Rock paintings, imbued with the sense of movement and live energy that has been her art calling card. Her working title for the series is "Surfacing", as she feels that she has spent her life getting to this level.
