

PG LOCAL ARTIST INTERVIEW

Lynde Mott

This month, we speak with Lynde Mott, a long time member of the local fine arts community.

Learn more about Lynde's creative pursuits, how she's transformed her home into a unique work of art, and how her passion has led her into new opportunities as a children's book illustrator.

Where are you from, Lynde?

I was an "Air Force brat" growing up. As a family, we moved around quite often, as you can imagine. I've lived in Nebraska, South Korea, Kaysville (Utah), New York, Orem (Utah), and other areas in between. I've been here in Pleasant Grove for the past 20 years and I've been very happy.

One of the places where I most loved living was Plattsburgh, New York. It is a small town located in upstate New York, and it's an absolute gem that has entrenched a Colonial or Yankee mystique in me. I love 19th century history, and Plattsburgh is rich in such history, retaining some of the culture and architecture of that time. I am grateful for the opportunity to spend some time there where I was able to soak it all in.



What are some of your earliest memories of the arts?

One of the earliest memories in art relates to the importance of observation skills. In kindergarten I was working on a drawing of a cow. My cow masterpiece had large horns as well as an udder. My teacher reviewed my artwork, and kindly mentioned that boy cows usually have horns while girl cows would generally have udders. This caused me to pause and

think, and I realized how important that distinction was. It hadn't occurred to me at the time of creating my drawing, but my creation wasn't a true representation of what a cow would look like in real life. While there aren't strict rules for art as a whole, I have come to realize over the years how much more accurate and interesting artistic works can be when they mimic real life.

I've always perceived that being a good visual artist isn't necessarily about being good drawing; it's about good observation skills. Anyone can learn to draw, but your ability to observe and create based on your observations can lead to much more meaningful works of art.

Where did the arts take you as you grew up?

I often get asked if my parents were artists. People want to know where my interest in fine arts came from, and much of the time they imagine that I come from an artistic family.

My father was in the military and my mother was a teacher. While they weren't directly involved in the arts, they were very aware of my growing interest in the arts and they were very supportive. Many Christmas mornings and birthdays included art materials of various mediums to help me grow my interests and skills in the arts. They did whatever they could to support me in my interests, which I am very grateful for.

My mother once gave me a large sheet of butcher paper that I hung on my bedroom wall. I spent a considerable amount of time filling out that wall of paper with my artwork as my own person mural.

In high school I was involved in the arts in various ways. I was involved in the school orchestra where I played the violin. After some time I transitioned to the cello, and later moved into the upright bass to play in the jazz band. I wasn't bored; on the contrary, I wanted to soak in as much as I could.

At that time in my life, music became three-dimensional - almost as a new medium of art. Over the course of a few years, I was able to switch between different instruments, each of which has their own musical focus or melody. Switched between instruments gave me the unique opportunity to play one particular song every year during high school, but on a different instrument each year. I learned the same song on the violin, then in a later year on the cello, and a later year finally on the upright bass. As I had learned the parts for multiple instruments, each with their own melody or harmony lines, I was able to experience a depth to that particular song that many other students likely didn't feel. While playing one instrument, I was hearing and understanding the other instruments' parts, and I could feel how they all played together in building a greater whole. It was exquisite! Music is a form of art that I feel very connected to as well.

At the same time that I was taking music in high school, I had the advantage of a strong fine arts program in my school. I spent a considerable amount of time improving my skills in the fine arts through various opportunities. I was enchanted with bouncing across multiple artistic interests, and it played an important part in my youth.

After high school, I was impressed to make a decision whether I wanted to pursue music or fine arts. I decided to move into fine arts, as it was less evanescent - music pursuits and interest felt like they would come and go during my life, but fine arts would be something that would never waver. As I had a deep passion for art, it felt like it could be a more permanent or long-term part of my life.

I began my education at BYU in the arts program, but fairly quickly moved into an illustration and design program. While there, I had a special opportunity to work with spiritual artist Greg Olsen. While the college experience as a whole was almost like being thrown to the wolves

every day, with constant critiques of everything you do in many different classes and emphases, my experience with Greg was overwhelmingly enlightening and positive. He regularly gave encouragement in my artistic pursuits, he helped to provide a stronger background in fine arts, and he became a wonderful mentor in my career.

I also was able to work directly with Carma de Jong Andersen with an emphasis in historical clothing. She came into my life when I had a deep desire in painting historically accurate church artwork, and I wanted the clothing in my works to be realistic for the 1800s. Working with Carma in researching costume design from that era, and even sewing costumes, helped me to improve my own paintings with the details in mind.

These mentorships changed my professional trajectory, and I am so grateful for the mentorship of these great individuals during my education and beyond.



What are your preferred art mediums?

I would say that my style is based on a combination of abstract impressionism with classical realism, all based on patterns.

I was recently talking with a friend about the idea of artistic realism compared to a more abstract approach. I tend to enjoy mixing the two in creating art pieces that fit my personality.

There is a painting called “The Kiss” which was painted by Gustav Klimt. In this painting, he combines figurative elements with more abstract shapes and ideas, and it really appeals to me. And there’s a pattern element to this painting in the quilt that envelopes the characters. Gustav Klimt is a painter that I really admire, and in a similar way much of my works is “pattern on pattern”. I tend to approach a painting as a quilter approaches a quilt - patterns on patterns. It’s a process that involves piecing the artwork together, a little at a time, with a vision of the combined patterns and results in mind. With much of my work, I initially focus on

the general artwork tones, mood and ideas, while slowly bringing in the realism as the piece comes together.

I liken art mediums to a musical analogy of “symphony music” work and “chamber music” work (derived from my experience in a string orchestra); a symphony orchestra is generally much larger, with concerts taking place in grand concert halls, whereas a chamber orchestra is a much smaller scale, with concerts taking place in smaller, more intimate settings.

My artistic “symphony work” is founded upon my classical training and typically based on oil paints, which lead to large works. My “chamber work” is more decorative, such as murals in my home, and I use whatever the project requires. These materials could include various types of paint, decoupage or other 3D elements, watercolors, or whatever other materials the project requires to come to life. I like to keep my options open when it comes to art mediums.

Something else that has brought me great joy is bringing art into my own home. From floor to ceiling, I’ve incorporated art into my home in a way that inspires me. From the murals on the walls and the floors, the pops of colors in every corner, and the exciting ceiling ornamentals, my home is like I’ve turned myself inside out - it’s my personality on visual display. It brings me great joy.



How does art affect your own perspectives in life?

I’ve come to call my experience with art a “blessed unrest”. I have a complicated relationship with my artwork. I love making art, and it brings great enjoyment to my life. But at the same time, I occasionally find it difficult to enjoy the process. I do feel a compulsion to work on my art projects, because it’s often less painful than not pursuing the projects at all. Creating great artwork isn’t always easy, and it’s certainly not always an enjoyable process.

I heard a saying once that relates to my experience: “Don’t follow your bliss, follow your blisters.” I find that intriguing and it encapsulates my personal experience. We aren’t necessarily defined by what makes us happy. We are defined by what we are able to endure, as those are the greater moments of growth in our lives.

I’m willing to endure the inevitable suffering that is inherent in creating a valuable art piece, as it’s my life calling. While it can often be a challenging pursuit, I love finding the sparks of contentment and creativity that keeps me going. I’ve experienced little joy greater than bringing something complex to life which previously only existed in my mind.

What has been the most memorable experience in working in the arts?

Music is beautiful, but even the most beautiful song eventually comes to an end. With art, there is no end to the artistic experience.

One of the most memorable experiences that I've had in my artistic career was when I was called to be an art specialist for a church youth conference. I was approached to complete several paintings of scripture characters for use on display during the event. I was asked to create simple drawings that wouldn't take a considerable amount of time (out of respect to my time), but of course I wanted to take the project to a greater level! I created life-sized, detailed paintings of a number of key individuals in the Bible. The project took me around 4 months to complete. These paintings were large, they were detailed, and I felt that they really fulfilled the measure of their creation once they were displayed as a part of this conference. So many people were able to connect with these paintings due to the realism, and it was such a rewarding experience.



What are some of the works that you are involved in now?

I recently wrote a children's book and I am now working to complete the illustrations as a part of that project. With my experience and interests in quilts, I'm writing a book about a grandmother that is wrapping a large quilt around a child and is pointing out all the many patches on the quilt and explaining the experiences connected to the patchwork. It speaks of how we each have a unique identify, yet how we are all tied together with our own ancestors, as well as humanity in general.

Aside from that project, I've also been fortunate in having my artwork permanently placed in various local schools in the valley as either paintings or large murals. Next time you are in one of the schools, watch out for artwork - they were a blast to create!

Finally, I have enjoyed a friendly partnership with Altus Fine Arts in American Fork, where my artistic reproductions are currently held and are made available to the community. They've been a great support to me in helping others to be introduced to my artwork and even purchase my work to enjoy in their own homes or businesses.

Where can people learn more about your work?

I have a website that includes more information about my experience and artwork. You can see samples of some of my favorite works of art there, or you can connect with me on Facebook, Instagram or YouTube. I love meeting members of our local community - feel free to connect.

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