

Welcome to Arc Studios News! This newsletter features events and activities of artists, nonprofit professionals and micro business owners that are part of the creative community at Arc Studios & Gallery 1246 Folsom Street San Francisco.



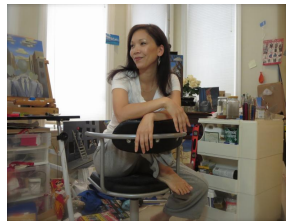
Arc Studios News July 2017

This month Arc Studio News features artist J.L. King who works out of studio #101.

A Conversation with J.L. King

by Sherri Cornett

Second generation San Francisco artist J.L. King remembers the smells of turpentine and paint while growing up with her artist parents. She didn't intend to pursue an art career - she equated that with hardship and poverty. She wanted to be happy and being an artist did not seem the road to happiness. But, she remembers always being creative. Around 2005, she began taking classes to learn techniques - as an "enthusiast", still not a career artist. In 2014, her path changed. She had accumulated skills that led to her investing more time into art making and, after a few exhibitions to toughen herself up, she began, ironically, she says, to feel happy as an artist, one who could not stop making art.



SC: J.L. or Jen, as you are called more casually, you have obviously overcome your initial reluctance to become an artist. Congratulations on the number of exhibitions you have been in over the last few years! Would you tell me what inspires you to keep making art? Where do your ideas come from?

JLK: I love idioms. I am inspired by words, phrases, science, entomology, nature, old photos and simple objects, to which most people do not give a second glance. I am also attracted to surrealism and trompe l'oeil styles of painting. I have added my own sensitivity to these styles to get the look I want.

I am slightly embarrassed to reveal how simple my process is. The images and scenes come in quiet moments. Almost fleeting. I capture them quickly on a sticky note, napkin, scraps of paper. I gather photos, make clay figures, and pose friends and family for reference. Sometimes it is just a word I like. Some spin off of previous work. With all of them, it is something I have seen in my mind that I want to see in real form. I strive to make it as realistic as possible so that I feel like I am experiencing it. When it is done, I feel relief. Like a compulsion satisfied. This is probably why I don't spend much time sketching.

All of the ideas, the bits of paper go into my sketchbook. I can't keep up with all of them that I want to actually create. Thanks goodness! I have yet to hit a dry spell. My sketchbook keeps me motivated.

SC: I imagine your sketchbooks are intriguing pieces of art in and of themselves, with all of those bits and pieces of inspiration tucked inside. Do your final images and scenes have a particular focus or theme?

JLK: Common threads are struggle, peculiarity and, especially, transformation. Viewers will often see some element or subject changing from one thing to another. For example, in the image of the piece I gave you for this article, titled "Along Those Lines", you can see the tree is transforming into a soft, fluid-like fabric.

SC: I enjoyed seeing your tag line on your website, "Provoking Curiosity, Introspection, and Speculation with a Touch of Levity". Is this the kind of reaction you tend to get from you work?

JLK: So far, I am hearing what I had intended viewers to get from my work. Their stories are often more sophisticated than mine. Industrialization and the collapse of the United States government were seen in my "Peg Cubed" piece. I was told that my "Ascension and Slow Drip" piece reminded one of climbing the corporate ladder. And, the honoring of the aging woman was an interpretation of my "Some Form of Apophenia" piece. I know that I feel a certain way when I view my work, but the fully developed descriptions, the full fledged stories comes later. People often ask if their interpretations are correct, and my answer is "yes", as are any other

perspectives. These responses have value to me. Every positive move in my art career has been propelled, in some way, by these responses.

SC: Are there other parts of your life that influence your art?

JLK: I remember strongly my feelings when we moved to the EastBay when I was young. I felt so out of place. Now I have a family and do what I can to balance out my day job that feeds, clothes and houses us. Maintaining an art practice, providing for the needs of my family without anyone suffering too much. It keeps me sane to some degree.

SC: Would you tell me a bit about how else you are connected to the art community?

JLK: I am a member of the Women's Caucus for Art and Artspan. My very first true exhibition was through Artspan's Open Studios. That organization has opened a ton of doors for me. And now I am in my first year at Arc Gallery & Studios. I have gained so much by having a studio there. I really value the exhibits at Arc. I am not always comfortable talking about my art, but the monthly opportunities to open my studio to visitors gives me plenty of practice.

*J.L. King lives in the Potrero Hill neighborhood of San Francisco. www.jlkingart.com
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J.L. King, *Along Those Lines*