

Lorna Wallace

Artist

An Art Collector Turned Successful Painter

by David Phillips

Not finding what she was looking for as an art collector, Lorna Wallace took matters into her own hands and began to create the missing art herself. In just a few years, marketing her paintings and prints through the internet and using the Fine Art Registry to protect her work as well as help sell and add value to it, she's become a successful and popular painter in her own right with many international collectors seeking her pieces.



Collector to artist

"If someone had told me four years ago that I was going to be a full time artist I would have looked at them like they had three heads," says Lorna Wallace in her Chandler, Arizona studio. "I got very lucky and was able to find a niche and a market for my work."

Lorna had been collecting fine art for years. There was a certain type of art that she was looking for. She searched and searched. When finally she realized it wasn't out there she decided to create it herself. That was in 2002. Now she is a well known, successful and listed artist with over 400 paintings to her name, all of which have sold, and she's so busy selling limited edition prints that she doesn't have enough time to paint as much as she'd like.



What was she looking for that she couldn't find in the work of some of her favorite artists: Picasso, Paul Klee, Wilhem DeKooning, Walter Keane, Marie Laurencin, Andy Warhol? "I loved art and I loved designer wear and I never saw anything out there as far as art goes that combined the two," she explains. "I did a lot of different research and looked at a lot of different art work and then I thought, You know what, I'll give it a try. I don't think it's too common for an art collector to decide they want to try their own artistic hand and actually attempt to market it. I truly began to paint what I wanted to collect that I just couldn't find in the market."

Her paintings are mostly of glamour girls. They are parodies of the designer look: Chanel, Dior, Versace and so on. "It's all a parody," explains Lorna. "Every glamour girl I paint has a different mood or expression that I'm trying to convey and I'm usually trying to convey in the title as well. Not just in the painting. It's all in good fun. Here are these women—and I'm one of them—I love designer wear and I love my labels and I'm out there parodying that whole...whatever mood you're in you're in some designer piece."

She calls it glam art and says there's pop culture in everything she does. She's the first to admit that her paintings are simple. The lines are simple and the colors are simple. But they have a charm and a message that communicates, mostly to women but she has male clients as well, and the demand is higher than the supply, even after just a few years.

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The internet

After working for a Fortune 500 company as an operations manager for most of her career, Lorna was ready for a change. The timing couldn't have been better. "If it weren't for the internet, I wouldn't be where I am today," she says. She markets 99% of her work through various internet sites. "The internet has TOTALLY leveled the playing field in the art world. You no longer have to be subjected to a jury to determine whether or not your work can be seen. As a collector, I've never liked that whole concept. Who are these people anyway that try and determine what should and shouldn't be shown? Art is a personal thing and just because it may not speak to a handful of people on a art jury, doesn't mean that it won't or shouldn't have an audience."



Having an audience has certainly been no problem for Lorna. She started selling her oil and acrylic paintings for \$10 each to test the market. That was 4 years ago. She now sells her original paintings for as much as \$1500 each and the price continues to rise as they become more sought after. Of her 400 or so original paintings she has sold all but a handful and her limited edition print series of 250 titled, signed and numbered prints are also selling fast.

The Fine Art Registry

"Fine Art Registry to me is my web site, it's my portfolio and that's how I want to keep it. I can't imagine why I'd ever want to create another web site."

Lorna's viewpoint is not just that of an artist. She also sees her work through the eyes of an experienced collector, something which most artists are not, at least when they start. "Whether I'm creating, marketing or just simply talking about art with peers or collectors, I'm always wearing both the artist and collector hat. For me they're intertwined and I wouldn't want it any other way."

So words like "provenance" and "authenticity" probably mean more to her than they do to most artists. "If you can trace a piece of artwork back to the artist it's going to be worth tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars more than it would have if you can't," she says. "The provenance is critical. That is the biggest plus and bonus and that service [Fine Art Registry] is worth its weight in gold to me."

She tags and registers all of her paintings and her limited edition prints on FAR. The FAR web site is the record of her work and always will be, down through the centuries. Because she had already sold some of her pieces before FAR was there, she made a point of purchasing tags and sending them to her clients so that they could tag and register each piece. She also does her best to keep up with electronic transfer of ownership.

Through FAR, because her collection was all there in one place for all to see, Lorna received many commissions, to the point where she no longer accepts them on the whole because she prefers to create what she wants to and she has no problem selling all that she paints. She also sells many of her limited edition prints directly from the FAR web site galleries.

Part of her reason for tagging and registering her work is out of consideration for her clients. "I realize when people buy my artwork that they're investing in my art and I appreciate that and I want to take care of them long term whether they realize it or not. No matter who's buying it I appreciate it and I take that extra step in providing that service for them. To me that's one of the biggest pluses of FAR. It's just being able to establish that provenance for my client while I'm still living."

Copyright and imitation is another issue that Lorna finds FAR has been helpful with. "That's another great thing about Fine Art Registry," explains the artist. "When you register a piece, you basically date stamp when it was created. I have used Fine Art Registry to make a point and send the link to certain artists when their work begins to resemble mine."



Then there is theft and loss. Lorna markets most of her work on the internet and she mails the paintings or prints to her clients. A couple of times the package hasn't made it to its destination." I've had it happen twice. It's very rare, but it's nice to be able to mark it as 'stolen' on Fine Art Registry. This becomes a strong deterrent in that respect." Once or twice someone's check has bounced and again, she's been able to label the painting "stolen" giving the name and address of the person who stole it. "At that point in time, it's the only recourse I have but at least it's something... on record."

Summary

Her unique perspective of collector and artist probably gives Lorna the clearest view possible of the value of the Fine Art Registry.

To her it has been and is an integral part of her very rapid and visible success as an artist. Not only she and her clients but the whole art world gains from the order and stability that the Fine Art Registry system provides.

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