

## Lisa Gleim

One of the earliest and most vivid memories of Lisa Gleim's childhood was that of having her portrait painted. Lisa followed her dream right out of high school when she enrolled at the Atlanta College of Art. When that school did not suit her, she visited the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (The PAFA) in Philadelphia, PA, where, she said, serious students and older emerging artists were being trained in a more classical manner. At just twenty-one, Lisa was accepted into the school and graduated four years later, in 1996.

Though she had studied portraiture to some extent at The PAFA, it was not viewed as an art form worthy of serious career consideration. For two

months in 1997 and again in 1998, the young graduate studied with Cedric and Joannette Egeli, and it was here that Lisa's portrait work underwent a transformation, improving dramatically. Lisa was struck by the fresh color and light she saw in the Egelis' work. "Their color style was not taught at The PAFA," she explained. "The skin they painted just glowed and it looked so natural." Striving to understand the color theory and mixing method they employed, Lisa carefully observed and asked questions of those students who had studied with the Egelis at the Cape Cod School of Art. At their suggestion, Lisa studied *Painting the Impressionist Landscape*, a book by Cape Cod School of Art's owner, Lois Griffel, former student of Henry Hensche, founder of the school and the man who taught color theory and methodology to the Egelis. Well-known portrait artist, Margaret C. Baumgaertner, also a student at the Cape Cod School of Art and the Egelis, offered a workshop in 2000 that stressed the portrait in outdoor light. It was here, Lisa feels, that she was able to weave into understanding all the threads of color theory she had been gathering for several years. She is planning on taking another workshop with Ms. Baumgaertner in the summer of 2005.

Influenced by such great painters as John Singer Sargent, Cecilia Beaux, and



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Mary Cassatt, Lisa strives for a blend of realism and impressionism in her portraits, attempting to capture equally the absorbed and reflected color in a subject's skin as well as a good likeness. She poses her models in natural light, never artificial, and seeks to find color in the shadows and the higher values. Having seen Cedric Egeli's early work from his days as a student at the Art Students' League and his later accomplishments when she studied with him, Lisa's goal is to continually grow as an artist. She is open to challenges that will enhance her style and bring new dimensions to her art.

The winner of numerous awards and acceptances into many regional and national juried exhibitions, Lisa has received commissions to paint children as well as adults, and would like to increase her market share of corporate clients. When Lisa lost her fourteen year old golden retriever, Bonnie, in 2001, she painted her portrait to help ease the pain of her loss. Thus began another market for Lisa's portraiture, one that has led to numerous pet portrait commissions for the artist and fundraising successes for local animal organizations. She has donated work to several



Emma, pastel, 22"x28"

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Humane and Dog Rescue Societies in and around Atlanta and recently became a member of the Artist's Registry of the American Kennel Club's Museum of the Dog. In the January, 2005 PSA Drawings Only Exhibition in Kennesaw, Lisa's charcoal dog portrait, *Anticipation*, won a much-deserved Members' Choice Award.

Joining the Portrait Society of Atlanta in 2000, Lisa first began her volunteer service assisting with exhibitions and now serves on the Board as Director of Exhibitions and is the Fundraising Chairperson. Her admission into three PSA exhibitions by 2002 qualified Lisa for juried status (she has since been accepted into three more) and in 2004, she applied for and was selected as a Member of Merit, a prestigious honor.

Painting in her well-lit-but-too-small home studio affords Lisa the luxury of painting at whatever time her muse dictates, sometimes well into the night, but it also magnifies the solitary aspect of working as an artist. She misses the days in Philadelphia when she shared a 2,500 foot studio with fellow student and friend, Stephanie, and the two served as sounding boards and critics for each other. Although Lisa's husband and strongest supporter, Bill Jonas, has a keen eye, the internet and digital cameras have been a boon to the continued friendship and artistic feed-

back between Lisa and her friend.

While Lisa paints landscapes, too, this past year brought the completion of fifty-six (56) portraits in various sizes and in charcoal, pastel or oil. For her oil work, Lisa sketches on a blank white canvas with vine charcoal, then blocks in opaque tonal values and background color to cover the entire canvas immediately. She then begins to sculpt the form in paint, gradually building to the details in the face, at which time she may add damar varnish to her linseed oil and turpentine medium. Lisa tends to leave all other areas "loose and painterly," allowing the facial detail to command the viewer's attention.

With the business side of her career tutored by her father, Lisa keeps business cards and a portfolio with her at all times, in her purse, her car, her camera bag, and her husband's car. Knowing that referrals are the primary source of commissions, the artist is not shy about handing her cards to everyone she meets, using 4x5" and 5x7" postcards instead of the standard business card. She explains, "Marketing research has shown that a business card with an image on it is more likely to be retained or passed



*Meg Thompson, charcoal, 22"x28"*

on. I took this one step further and use a large format so that my work speaks for itself." Though she works with several independent representatives in Atlanta, Charlotte, New York City, and Philadelphia, she is not working with any of the national portrait brokers. "I don't want to raise my prices to include their commissions right now."

Lisa's advice to other portrait artists is to draw from life, studying and truly understanding anatomy. "Your painting may be stunning, but if your drawing is flat or out of proportion, it won't matter," Lisa warns. She also suggests that it is very important to continue studying, to take advantage of classes and workshops whenever possible, believing that an artist's education is never-ending.

As testimony to Lisa's dedication and perseverance as a full-time artist, her resume and list of exhibitions and awards is impressive. Visit her website at [www.lisagleim.com](http://www.lisagleim.com) to read them and also to view an equally impressive gallery of Lisa's people and pet portraits! ■



*Drew & Tessa, pastel, 30"x40"*