



Sisters, Dreamers Mixed Media Collage 24x48"

Living the Dream

Jackie Reeves: Emerging From Motherhood to Artist

by Nicola Burnell

One of six sisters, with three daughters of her own, artist Jackie Reeves playfully explores the transitions of womanhood from one stage of life to another.

Blending inspiration with emotion, she captures women of all ages in moments of ordinary life. What makes this artist so intriguing is her ability to turn these simple moments into timeless works of extraordinary beauty.



Black Socks, Mixed Media Collage 18x30"

Black Socks, for example, evokes the sublime comfort of sinking into a luxurious chair. This colorful collage is created from torn newspaper, charcoal, paint and wallpaper samples.

Both Jackie's parents are architects, which heavily impacted her creative development. "I was influenced by that whole experience of mapping, drawing, doing the types of illustrations that come with drafting." This influence is reentering her most recent artwork.

Jackie works on a canvas of recycled rolls of vellum and old architecture paper, donated by her father, which, being transparent, create additional depth and layering to her pieces. "Originally, I was collaging with the drawings, cutting them up and putting them into paintings."

She is now working right on the paper, as seen in her collage *Sisters, Dreamers*. "It's a really great surface to paint and draw on. It gives me a surface that already has marks on it, which is a nice jumping off point for me. I like working with the paper that's not so pure and white sometimes."

A 1990 graduate from Concordia University, in Montreal, with a BFA in Design Art, Jackie explored many mediums in college, but had no formal training as a painter. When she moved to Cape Cod from Montreal, fifteen years ago, she

set up business as a mural painter, doing faux finishes on walls, stenciling and texturing.

Jackie lost a sister to cancer in 2008. "That was a big turning point for me," she reflects. When she was invited to move into studio space at the Old School House in Barnstable, in 2009, she was ready to commit to her art. Now sharing CHALKBOARD Studio with James Wolf and Richard Neal, she is focused on working on her art every day. "Life is short and I decided to just do it."

After fifteen years of working as a commercial artist, she is enjoying the freedom of working in her studio. "The exciting thing about being in the studio is you just don't know what you're going to make next. As a commercial artist that's so much fun – it's the opposite of the commercial world, where everything is planned and client-approved."

Jackie loved to draw in college and has had extensive figure work training. "It's essential," she says. A graduate level drawing class inspired her to focus more on drawing, which has become a major part of her technique. Using her father's paper has sparked some ideas about architecture and her own artistic roots.

She has a strong background in Art History and travelled to Europe after graduation, where she discovered some of Italy's architectural wonders. The stencil work that has found its way into her most recent paintings evoke the Renaissance period.

"I love repeat patterns, so I've been using stencils as a technique to applying patterns onto these drawings." The Blooming skirt in one of her latest pieces, **Stairs**, captures her innovative stenciling technique.



Stairs, Mixed Media

This painting also reveals why Jackie doesn't erase sketch marks from her work. "I'm all about movement," explains the artist who has always been intrigued by the drawings of the great masters. "What I love about drawing is that you feel more the hand of the artist. Paintings are so perfect and selective – but I love seeing the marks the artist made with the pencil."

She perceives sketch marks as the artist's handwriting, or a signature. "I find it fascinating. You really feel a sense of that individual. That's why I'm so attracted to drawing. It's writing, it's script, mark-making."

Stairs also contains free-form writing that is barely visible. "It doesn't connect. It's not meant to be read," she says. "It's just random thoughts around what I'm thinking about as I work on the piece."

These markings create an interesting collage of thought, process and creativity in motion. "I try not think about what I'm doing too much. It's the art of letting go in the studio, to not over-think while you work, but let things happen."

CHALKBOARD STUDIO
ART SHOW AND OPEN HOUSE

Reception: Friday February 18th 7-9PM
Open Studio - Saturday and Sunday February
19 & 20th 1-4pm
In the Old Schoolhouse,
3328 Rte 6A, Barnstable Village
(on the grounds of the UU Church).

Contact Jackie Reeves:

Jackie's art possesses a strong sense of movement as seen in her piece **Gatherers**, where her depiction of free-flowing figures overlap in an almost ethereal fashion.

"I just had an idea about women as gatherers and started making swirls and marks. Then heads started to appear, so I began to pull out these shapes and give them a little more form. It was very sculptural, almost like working with clay."



Gatherers, Mixed Media Collage 30x72

With the initial forms solidified, she then took photographs to get detailed information on the pose of an arm, or the twist of a torso. Her use of wallpaper to create the yellow bodice of the woman leaning over a baby is exquisite. Her curiosity for the delicate folds of fabric in the billowing skirts contrast with the stiff lines seen emerging from the architecture paper.

What inspired this gorgeous rendition of dresses and fabrics in her recent work? "It's something that just emerged on its own, without me really knowing what, or why. These dresses just keep appearing in my work," she muses. "I think it comes from my exposure to architecture, from seeing the murals on the walls. I'm still playing around with what the costuming means to me."

In **Self Portrait** we witness Jackie's willingness to take risks. She'd used two blinds as the canvas, but after realizing the head extended beyond the top of the blinds, she completed the portrait on an attached piece of material. It was a simple solution that turned into a very interesting composition.



Details of Self Portrait,
Mixed Media Collage

Jackie is currently enrolled as a graduate student at Massachusetts College of Art and Design in the low residency MFA program at the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown.

Working from her own studio with a mentor from Boston, Jackie is finding herself being drawn to the luxurious medium of oil paints. "Things are always moving from one thing to the next in the studio," she enthuses. "New ideas emerge out of a piece. It's just one happy accident after another that leads to the next thing."

You can view the artwork of Jackie Reeves at **STUDIO BRUSH** Rte. 6A Merchant Square, in Sandwich, and **GALLERY EHVA**, Shankpainter Road, in Provincetown.

Nicola Burnell is the Publisher and a contributing writer for this magazine. She teaches novel writing & creativity development classes, Reiki & Personal Empowerment workshops.

She lives in Harwich with her two sons and several pets. Visit her [blog](#) or [Email](#) her.

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