

create!



MAGAZINE

THE
**WOMEN'S
ISSUE**

Kathleen Beausoleil

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Kathleen Beausoleil lives and works in Fair Haven, NJ. Primarily working in oil paint, her works focus on what it means to be a social being. Kathleen Beausoleil received a 2022 Fellowship from the NJ Council of the Arts; was a member of The Drawing Center's Viewing Program; and has been an Artist in Residence at programs including the Cuttyhunk Island Artist Residency, Chalk Hill Artist Residency, Da Vinci Art Alliance and the Artist *Forests* Community Program sponsored by the Holter Museum of Art and Helena National Forest. She recently had her first solo show at the Monmouth Museum. Her work is in the permanent collection of the Missoula Art Museum and numerous private collections. She has also taught at the SUNY Empire State's Studio Semester program. She received her BFA cum laude at Syracuse University.



Interview with Kathleen Beausoleil

What sparked your love of art? When did your artistic journey begin?

I found a sense of belonging in the art room in high school and art books at my job at the library. My family did not go to museums; the art books at the library opened the doors of the art world to me, from Poussin to Manet and Gilbert and George. I was allowed to bring reference books home and would study them for hours!

What part of your life influences your work the most?

My art—painting—is how I communicate and engage with and make sense of the world. I am fascinated with how people organize. Human social interaction and the territorial drivers of crowd behavior is a rich subject to explore visually. People need other people to feel accepted and validated, yet we have a sense of self. Where does the line of “self” get lost and become part of a hive mind? I have learned so much about myself by painting the communities around me.

What materials are you drawn to and why?

I love paint, everything about it—the feel, color, smell and the history.

Paint has an element of chance; it's slippery and evolving. There is also so much to learn in terms of skill, techniques and color. I like having some nod to old techniques mixed with new.

I am reading another color theory book and constantly pushing my use of paint to get closer to what I am trying to express.

Tell us about a time that you would consider a turning point in your practice.

There have been many, but for me the pandemic, while awful and tragic, enabled me to be in the studio more than I had been in years.

How do you overcome a challenge, whether it's in the studio or in the business side of art?

The only thing you can change is yourself. When I am faced with a challenge, I try to reframe, be more objective and brutally honest with myself: is it a skill issue, communication, time management or wrong focus? I have struggled with all of these. I reach out to mentors for help and advice. I am blessed to have great mentors. ◆



ARTIST STATEMENT

The primary medium and subject /content of the paintings is oil on canvas or panel, which explores human social interaction and territorial drivers of crowd behavior. At the core is a fascination with how people organize. Often it is the spaces between people that define their relationships.

We consider ourselves as having conspicuously unique personalities. Yet, if one takes a closer look, it is clear that there exists a pack mentality programed into our social interaction, and territorial behavior. There is a sense of liberty in anonymity, a safety in getting lost in the crowd.

How people behave in public is very telling about the culture they live in. Observing these groups can help give us a better understanding of our place in our culture. Even our individual expressions only appear acceptable or distasteful within the context of a larger community of organized and accepted social norms. It is with this premise that observations for the subject are made with the realization that people need other people, their own people, to be happy, accepted and fulfilled. We also need other people to project our grievances and, at times, rally around a common enemy. It is a sense of belonging that people seek both in our microcosmic homelives and within our macrocosmic social lives.