

Artist Interviews

Lori Lukasewich

Lori Lukasewich was born and raised in Calgary. After high school she attended the Alberta College of Art and Design in Calgary, majoring in textiles but, due to family matters, never completed her courses. Despite leaving her academic studies, however, she dove into painting on her own and in 1984 committed to art full time. She had her first exhibition in 1987 and has shown her work consistently since then.

Describing herself as a self-taught painter, Lukasewich's early works were very complex 'abstract' constructions. While successful with these, after about 15 years working in this style she 'hit a wall' and found that, in order to move forward, she had to develop a 'new' practice. As she describes this change in her art practice:

I didn't expect to be a realist but I got seduced by what happens when it takes a long time to look at something. The seduction of long-seeing is akin to meditation, a very powerful thing for me.

Lukasewich has been pursuing a contemporary realist style for the last 20 years. At the beginning of this practice she approached her subject matter rather arbitrarily, painting flowers, fruit, dishes and such things just to see what she could do. Later, however, she developed a series of works based around 'kitschy' porcelain ornaments that her mother owned. When her mother passed away Lukasewich began painting these objects as a way to deal with her grief and found that these objects 'worked their whimsical magic' on her. As Lukasewich describes it:

I began to see these objects, which had outlived the people I loved, as something more than what I thought: they were soothing little openings for life's hard times.

Through this series Lukasewich explored human connections to these kinds of objects and strove for a synthesis of how to reconcile grief and materiality.

For Lukasewich it is important that, through her art, she provides something that is of value. As she states:

It is hugely important to me that the effect I have on people is opening them a little in a positive way. If a person is 'gently arrested' and open to some small intangible lightness, then I am successful. I want to give the viewer a brief respite from daily life and I believe these little things help us survive our lives.

Integral to this aim is the recognition of 'beauty'. As expressed by the artist:

Beauty is our real home; that is where we're most whole and comfortable. My life work is to continue to persist to allow people a moment away from daily turmoil and connect them to the wholeness that beauty brings us.

In her work Lukasewich dangles an object and the experience of the painting in front of the viewer in order to attract their attention and create a space for personal interaction. As she sees

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it, her 'job' is to affect people in that moment and space and provide something that is both meaningful and uplifting.



Lori Lukasevich
Glass/Scent/Metal, Nature of Reality Suite 1,
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Oil and Alkyd on canvas
Collection of the artist