

Joann Leonard

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I've always wished I had a clearly identifiable style or that I could do most of my work in a specific medium. But no, it seems I'm most fulfilled when I work back and forth in various styles and media.

I like to work on a collage, assemblage or a fiber piece and then be able to drop it, and switch to a detailed drawing. My art has excitement for me when one thing feeds on and plays off another. I like to toss the rules out the window and look for a way to answer the question that begins with "What if..."

It's a joyous opportunity to accomplish works using materials that ordinarily might be discarded, plunked in the recycle bin or toted to Goodwill. I try to use whatever materials I have on hand and continually try out new techniques in new ways. I like the 'on the edge' feeling this creates. I most enjoy the actual process of making the art, applying the paint, stitching the fabric, gluing the paper or assembling the pieces.

I am a self-taught artist. I take lessons with artists I admire but I can claim that the mistakes I make are all my own. I believe there can be advantages in not receiving formal art training. Since I never learned what I can't do, I always assume I can do it.



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In the 1980s, after a career in radio and public affairs, Joann and her husband Joe started a printing business as a second career. During this time Joann expanded the business to include the then-new field of desktop publishing. Self-taught in computer aided design, Joann's desktop publishing and graphic design business grew. In the early 1990s she sold the printing business, continuing with graphic design.



A love of nature and an interest in botanical art led Joann to enter the docent program with the National Park Service and work to establish a program in botanical art, focusing on native California plants at Franklin Canyon Park in the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area.

A desire to push past photographic realism achieved with traditional media led her to explore a variety of materials and techniques, from ancient to cutting edge. Joann cites curiosity and a fascination with the processes used in making art to encourage her work in monotype, collage, assemblage and fiber arts.

Joann studied with renowned artists Anne Marie Evans and Jennie Phillips. Joann's botanical drawings and paintings have been exhibited at the Los Angeles Arboretum, Burbank Art Center and the Botanical Artists Guild show at the Manhattan Beach Art Center. Joann is an active member of LA Experimental Artists and Collage Artists of America. Her work has been shown most recently at VIVA Art Center, and Bravo in Pasadena, CA.

She lives in Los Angeles with her husband Joe and two cats, Alpha and Beta.



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