



Instructor Spotlight: Meet Elizabeth Higgins



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creative people and a designated space in which to paint have helped me reach my full potential as an artist,” she says.

Higgins is now a teaching artist herself, nurturing artists of all ages along their paths of self-expression and creative discovery—



reciprocating the encouragement that she received along her own journey. “Teaching always inspires me,” she says, “because it validates the joy that comes from creating. When I see my students happily painting, I am reminded of the happiness it brings me, and I am inspired to keep making art important in the lives of our youth.” With her young students, Higgins is “constantly amazed by their ability to create unfettered by judgment or thoughts of what makes art ‘good’ or ‘right.’”

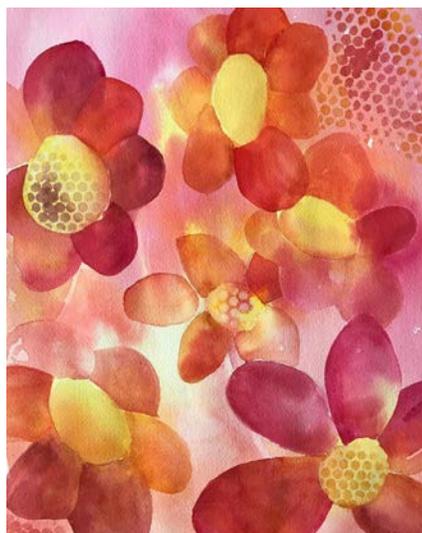
Higgins leads by example in her organic, fluid, and joyful process of inspiration. During one of her classes at the Walters last summer, a five-year-old student used primary colors to create a beautiful palette of greens and oranges. She says, “I took a picture of his colors, and replicated them with my own watercolor paints. A whole series of paintings evolved from his beautiful hues.”

Higgins’ advice for those starting on their own artistic journey: “Make art. Don’t think about why, and don’t tell yourself you can’t do it. We are all artists, we all have a creative voice, and you should rejoice in expressing it.”

When Elizabeth Higgins began taking watercolor classes at a community arts center six years ago, something stirred. “Almost immediately,” she says, “I knew that I had found my passion.” Even as someone who had always loved learning and who cherished new ideas, as someone already well acquainted with several art forms, including drawing, writing, photography and book arts—watercolor was different. It had something special about it that spoke deeply to Higgins.

So she followed the call and dove in, developing her new craft both by taking classes and by giving herself the space and permission to explore possibilities and potentials without judgment. “I was not afraid to paint as much as possible, and let mistakes happen as I learned and developed from them,” Higgins says. Crucial to her path was the influence of inspiring teaching artists, such as Ruth Armitage and Liz Walker, whose love of color and experimentation pushed and inspired Higgins to deepen into her own voice as an artist and to have greater confidence in her creative expression.

The classes, devotion, and self-care paid off; in 2013 Higgins was juried into Watercolor Society of Oregon. She also became a member of Oregon Society of Artists, Westside ArtShare and Village Gallery of Arts, a cooperative art gallery. In June 2017, Higgins’ connection to her craft took an even deeper dive as she became a member of an art collective in downtown Portland, obtaining her own studio space and becoming part of a community of artists. “The connection to other



Check out Elizabeth Higgins’ classes at the Walters:

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Let’s Paint: Explore Shape & Color

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