



Sue Barrasi

Compelled to create



Sunstrokes, oil, 16 x 20" (40 x 50 cm)

I am always inspired by flowers and how light can make them glow. To capture these golden beauties I aimed for bold brushwork and thick paint. I love losing edges, as I feel it creates a bit of mystery as well as unifies the painting. I suggested a subtle pattern in the background to contrast against the yellow shapes of the petals and to give some movement to the painting. The objects were placed to guide viewers into the blossoms, around the painting and back into the petals. I was conscious to lay each stroke down with intent and purpose.

There's a dance that unfolds when I'm able to silence the cacophony of everyday life. Painting is not just my passion; it is my addiction. My intent is to create serene yet compelling images, letting emotions guide my brush. Approaching the easel, I allow myself to become entranced by the beauty before me, breathing in the scene or still life, absorbing hues and moods. As I take time mixing and shifting paint into a harmonious string of color pools, a word will often come to mind as if distilled from all I'm taking in. That

word becomes my intention, my idea for the piece, resonating throughout the entire session, often influencing the title.

Beginning with a quick sketch, then a thin wash to lay in the composition (and moving a horizon if it enhances the design), I consider the focus and examine a direction for the viewer's eye to travel. Often inebriated by colors when painting at the margins of day or in north light, I brush strokes of energy across the canvas as I block in color shapes, adjusting values, edges

and form. My favorite step is loading up my palette knife to create texture and impasto areas, further exploring the potential of paint while pushing and pulling things in and out of space. Throughout the painting I am considering mood, atmosphere, balance and movement. Even a quiet little still life needs to breathe.

The benefits of painting, aside from the obsessive desire to create, is about reflecting the time one lives in and expressing emotions with the aim of sharing it for those who come after.



Persevere, oil, 20 x 24"
(50 x 60 cm)

I started this painting set up in north light and then put it aside for over a year. I eventually decided I wanted to add some movement so I added a bird's nest, eggshell and feathers, strategically placing them to have the viewer's eye travel around the painting into the point of interest. Eucalyptus leaves were also redesigned to follow this path. I no longer had the set up available so I incorporated these new items from memory. Adding these elements not only helped the composition but suddenly added a "story" to the painting. *Persevere* was juried into the *OPA National Juried Exhibition*.

I strive to show the beauty nature offers and the mesmerizing effects of light. Painting soothes my soul and helps me celebrate moments of inspiration,

reflection and regret, but it is my hope that my brushwork and tonal harmonies evoke emotions, breathing joy and awareness into others. 🎨

ABOUT THE ARTIST


Bronx native Sue Barrasi began painting with artist Lee Hochberg while in high school, subsequently earning a degree in illustration from the School of Visual Arts. She embarked on a brief career as an illustrator, where she was commissioned to do a series of postage stamps, book and magazine covers, ads and backdrops for theatrical productions. Under the guidance of William Heappes she worked as a graphic designer and was able to travel extensively in Europe, Central America and the United States, absorbing the masters, especially Claude Monet and Joaquin Sorolla, who remain her artistic heroes. Barrasi continued her training in painting and sculpture at the Art Students League where she had the incredible fortune to study with Sherrie McGraw, David Leffel and Gregg Kreutz. In 2014 she joined the Ridgewood Art Institute and studied with John Phillip Osborne whose collective impact on her sensibilities cannot be put into words. It is here she began to explore the prismatic palette which she continues to study today.

Barrasi has won numerous awards and accolades, artist grants and residencies. In 2022 Barrasi's landscape painting received the prestigious Alden Bryan Memorial Award. She maintains active membership in the Oil Painters of America and the National Oil and Acrylic Painters Society, is a resident member of the Salmagundi Club, Signature member of the American

Artists Professional League and is a lifetime member of the Art Students League. She serves as juror for local and national exhibitions and her works hang in private collections throughout the United States and abroad.

When not painting plein air or in her New York studio, she teaches oil painting and continues to compete in regional and international competitions. Barrasi is represented by Gruber Gallery and Sugarlift Gallery in New York, Geary Gallery in Connecticut, Artful Deposit in New Jersey and Ballard's Fine Art Gallery in Wyoming.

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