



Featured Artist  
Julie Higgins

Pastels

# Symbolic, Sensual Pastels by Julie Higgins | Artsy Shark

Vibrant and sensual, Julie Higgins' pastel paintings reflect her spiritual journey and concern for our planet. Visit her [website](#) to see more.



"Promise to the Moon" Soft Pastel, 15" x 22"

I have been called a sensual expressionist.

I am inspired by nature, travel, the figure, and dreams, all of which feed an ongoing narrative in my work. A trip to Australia in the late eighties, where I experienced Aboriginal art and the Dreamtime storytelling in it, greatly shifted my art process and life as have many adventures since then.





"Symbolic Journey" Soft Pastel, 22" x 15"

I love bold color, repeating patterns and symmetry. While growing up, I watched my mother, who was an incredible seamstress, work with patterns and colorful fabric. Her process and love of color has influenced the way I work.



"Two Rivers One Heart" Soft Pastel, 18" x 22"



"Guardians of the Heart" Soft Pastel, 15" x 22"

I often begin with a thumbnail sketch that I transfer onto paper to enlarge the image, and then I work out further details from my original sketch. It's much like creating a pattern. I then transfer that image onto the final surface and begin to apply my color.



"Recovery of the Heart" Soft Pastel, 15" x 22"



"Fig Queen Bee" Soft Pastel, 15" x 22"

It is very satisfying to work with the bright pure pigments that soft pastels offer. I can blend with my fingers or tools, layering in the colors, using the range of hard to soft sticks of pastels. This provides the hands-on tactile feel I so enjoyed when I used to work with clay. I also work with acrylics from time to time. I find it both challenging and stimulating to shift my process, medium and the surface I normally use.



"Prayer for the Planet" Soft Pastel, 15" x 22"





"Sacred Salmon" Soft Pastel, 15" x 22"

My imagery is often set in fertile fields or vineyards, paying homage to my Kansas roots and upbringing along with my time in Skagit Valley, Washington, and northern California. These narratives are a spiritual journey for me. The storytelling that comes full circle with the viewers' response and their experience of a piece is often far more interesting than my own. These can become seeds planted where new images come forth. A series is formulated and one painting leads into the next.



"Contemplating the Cosmos" Soft Pastel, 7" x 22"

My concerns for the planet influence my work and imagery. Goddess-like figures are often featured holding the Earth in a protective or nurturing embrace. For me, it's like a prayer that holds all life in a sacred space. This focus has encouraged me to participate in a group of local artists called the Mendocino Eco Artists. We exhibit to support local eco organizations, promote education and awareness.



"Full Moon New Moon Healing" Soft Pastel, 15" x 22"

I have shown my work through the years in many alternative venues, galleries and museum shows. Since 1998, one of my main venues has been "the girl & the fig restaurants" in Sonoma and Glen Ellen, California. I am their "artist in residence." This has given me tremendous exposure and opportunities.

For the past thirty-plus years I have lived on the coast of Mendocino in northern California. We have a lively art scene and a natural beauty that continues to provide endless inspiration.

Featured Artist Julie Higgins invites you to follow her on [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#).