

Dramatic hyperrealistic portraits

JESSE LANE

COLORED PENCIL
ARTIST

In 2020, Jesse's stunning figurative work "Undercurrents" won the world's highest honor for colored pencil, the CIPPY Award, at the Colored Pencil Society of America's International Exhibition. That year he also won the Boynes International Emerging Artist Award.

Jesse is represented by a top figurative art gallery, RJD Gallery. He works out of his studio in The Woodlands, Texas with his wife Kinsey, a talented artist, and their two whippets.

He teaches workshops online and throughout the United States and loves to share his passion for colored pencils. His website is jesselaneart.com.

Gravity . Colored pencil on bristol board

Jesse Lane has been called a pioneer. He is considered one of the best colored pencil artists in the world. He turns drawings into paintings.

Jesse's photorealistic portraits have appeared in numerous publications and have won many awards, including top prizes from the International Guild of Realism, the Salmagundi Club and the Colored Pencil Society of America.

But Jesse says he wasn't born an artist. In fact, when he was 14, his art teacher called him "the worst student" in her class. He attributes his success to determination and perseverance rather than talent. He hopes his story will be an inspiration to aspiring artists.

Born in Houston in 1990, Jesse's first teacher was his father Jerry, a former illustrator and underground cartoonist. Jesse earned a degree in visualization from Texas A&M University. He also studied art in Italy.

Jesse's dramatic portraits have been featured in publications such as American Art Collector, International Artist, Fine Art Connoisseur, Artist's Magazine, Southwest Art, The Washington Post and Huffington Post.

Even as a hyperrealistic portrait painter, my goal is not to focus on a person's outward appearance, but on their inner feelings and thoughts.

I believe I draw portraits of the inner soul, the truest version of one's self.

The subject of my work is our shared odyssey of personal struggle. This struggle is universal, but unique to each of us.

Often a better version of ourselves lies on the other side of our challenges. Struggles force us to grow, think and reflect. There is a certain hope and opportunity that comes with our challenges. I think in times of struggle we are on a journey - not to improve our situation, but to become a stronger

version of ourselves. That can either make us or break us. My characters are drawn in darkness, but the highlights are sources of hope... As if to say there is an end to the darkness around you.

I love discovering colors within colors that whisper their presence. Many hues shine through, like soft spots on an autumn leaf. Finding them is always a treasure hunt.

I especially enjoy the beautiful subtleties of skin tones.

Because flesh is so organic, there are many colors in it. I'm fascinated by that. Each color becomes richest in its own little area.

MY STORY

Through art I have found something within myself that has changed my life.

Growing up, I often felt alone.

In school, I struggled with the challenges of dyslexia. I desperately wanted to find a place in life where I didn't feel inferior.

For years, I suppressed my feelings. Then I realized they could be a source of inspiration. I began to create images of personal struggles and intimate emotions.

What had been hidden for so long was expressed and heard. For the

first time, I felt truly seen. I took my weakness and made it my strength. Along the way, I discovered that we all share these feelings.

When people see my portraits, they are surprised that I work in colored pencil. I love the precision and versatility. This medium can be as rich and nuanced as any other. One of my goals is to promote colored pencil in the fine art world.

At its best, I hope my work is both contemporary and timeless.

Face Reality . Colored pencil on bristol board



Jesse, what makes you choose a personality for your work: Admiration or fascination? What captivates your interest?

While drawing portraits of people, I really try to capture emotional experiences that can be shared. I strive to convey an uncanny mix of emotions that are bold yet mysterious.

The concepts for my work are first created in my head, and sometimes an idea keeps coming back to me. I don't always know what they mean at first. I just know that they communicate with me and I feel an inner connection to them.

They feel familiar enough to speak to me, yet mysterious enough to capture my interest.

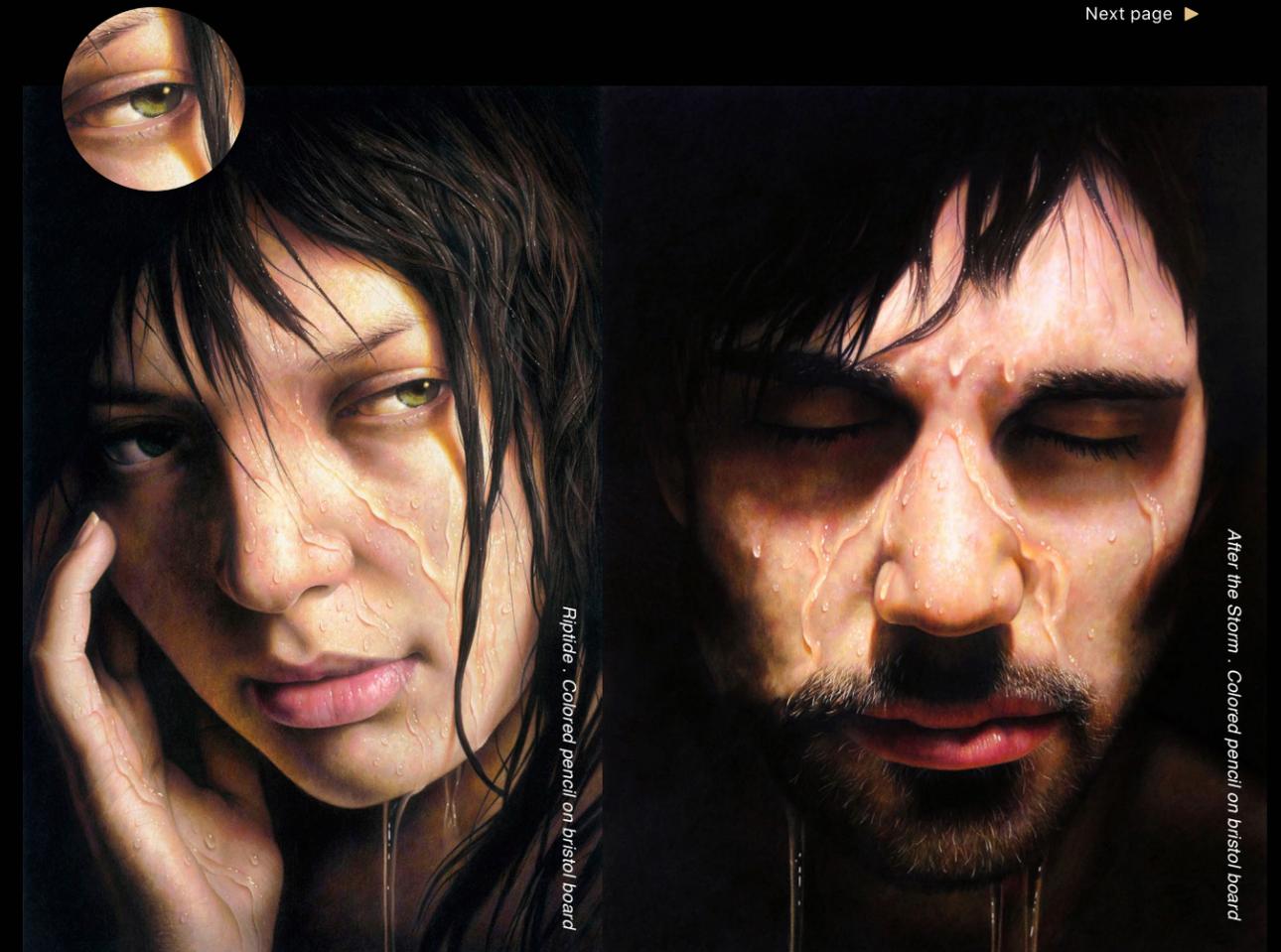
Each of my works takes me hundreds of hours to complete, some even over 1,000 hours. As I work, my mind begins to decipher the image. Only when I reach the end do I realize what it means and understand it better.

Lately, I've become fascinated with the underwater world. I see it as a place of magical solitude. The aquatic elements play with the emotional state of the people in the drawings. I call this complex of works EmOcean.

Tell us about your journey as an artist, how did it all start?

They say every journey begins with a single step. Fifteen years ago, I took my first step towards becoming an artist. As a child with dyslexia, I struggled with most things and wasn't particularly good at anything. My frustration with where I was in life led me to make art. I wanted to have something that didn't make me feel like a failure. In the beginning, I didn't even think I could improve. I had zero confidence in myself. I felt down and desperate enough to try anything. But for the first time in my life, I had a goal.

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Riptide . Colored pencil on bristol board

After the Storm . Colored pencil on bristol board



Hypnosis . Colored pencil on bristol board

Jesse Lane

As I pushed myself, I saw small but steady progress in each drawing, and I began to feel that I had found my place in this world. For me, that was the great treasure, even more than the art I was making.

Eventually, there even came a time when I considered myself an artist. I didn't think of myself as pursuing a career in art. I was just a kid with some colored pencils, searching for myself. In the beginning, there was a lot I couldn't control. I couldn't control my natural talent or my dyslexia, but I could always control how much I worked and how much

enthusiasm I drew with. In a way, art saved my life. I used to hold pencils in hands that shook with fear. Today, those same hands draw, but I now know that I am able to create work that redefines the colored pencil.

Colored pencils... What materials and techniques do you use?

I work exclusively with colored pencils on archival Bristol board. I lay down light layers of color with soft, controlled scribbles, starting with values first and adding colors and textures on top. Colored pencil can't be reworked the same way as

paint, so I create a plan in Photoshop and take lots of reference photos before committing to a body of work. As an art student, I also tried other mediums. Eventually, I decided to focus on what I do best: colored pencil.

It wasn't until later that I learned that most artists switch to paint when they want their work to be taken seriously. That said, I don't think you can "fit in" your way to the top. I chose to embrace what makes me unique rather than try to be something I'm not.



Witness . Colored pencil on bristol board



JESSE LANE

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What lies beneath the surface of love? Love is mystical. It makes us weightless. With it, we escape the gravity of the world and fall into the gravity of each other. It causes us to look deep within ourselves and someone else.

As magical as love is, it also means venturing outside, into the unknown, and taking risk. Over time, we can grow closer.

And in times of turbulence, this new person can be our greatest shelter. Our emotions deepen.

In a world of uncertainty, the currents of life push and pull us in many directions. We want to know we will always have the one thing that is most important... each other.



Drawing "Undercurrents" was a marathon that took over 1,000 hours. It started with a concept that I stewed over for quite a while. I did a little sketch and then met with the models for a photo shoot. I did a lot of close-ups for details.

Best of Show CIPPY Award, Colored Pencil
Society of America 28th International Exhibition



Resolve . Colored pencil on bristol board



Love is mystical. It makes us weightless. With it we escape the gravity of the world and fall into the gravity of the other.

Echoes . Colored pencil on bristol board

I cannot stop admiring "Undercurrents." Describe this work as you never have done before. Tell me how you paint these portraits.

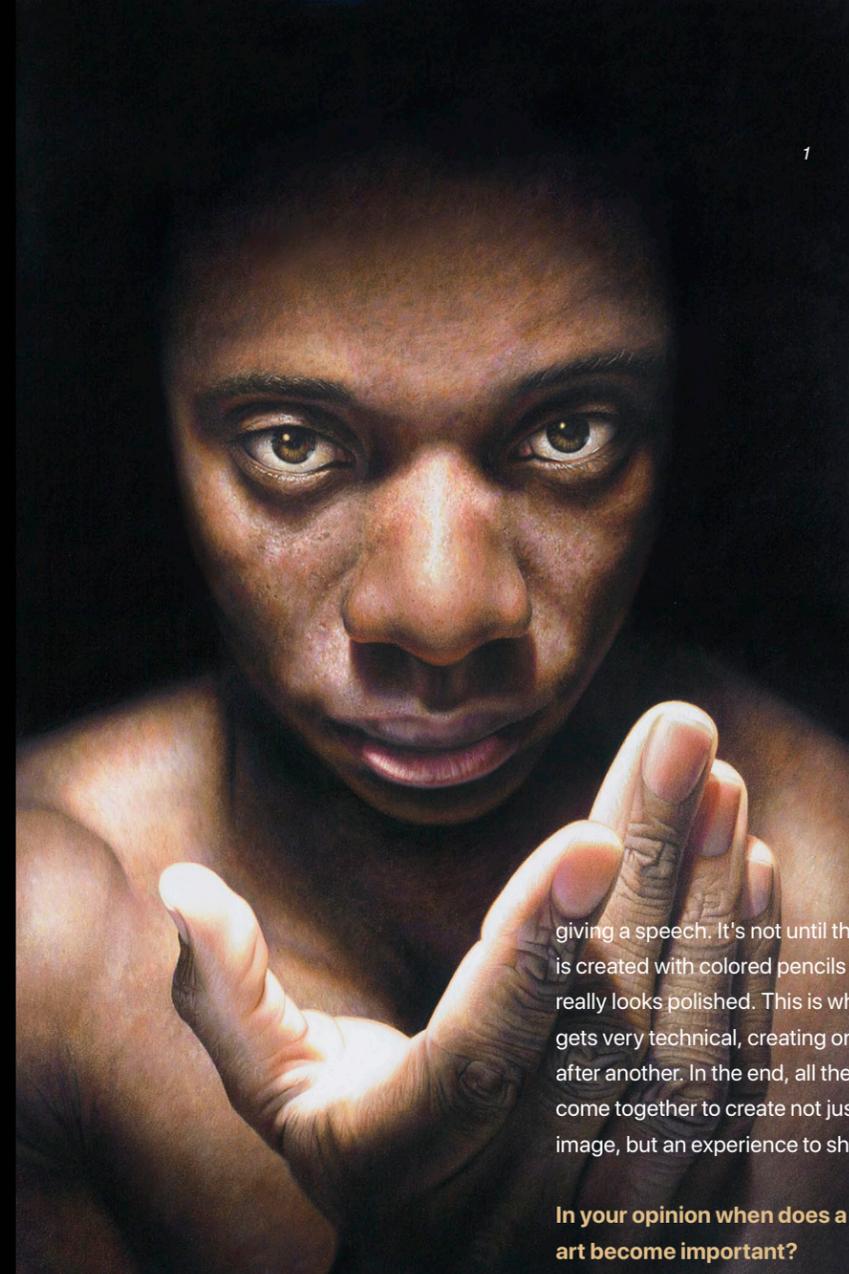
The theme of "Undercurrents" is love, and what lies beneath the surface of love. Love is mystical. It makes us weightless. With it we escape the gravity of the world and fall into the gravity of the other. As magical as love is, it also means venturing out, into the unknown, and taking risks. Over time, we can grow closer together. And in times of turmoil, this new person can be our greatest protection. Our feelings deepen. In a world of uncertainty, the currents of life push and pull us in many directions. We want to know that we will always have what matters most... each

other. Drawing "Undercurrents" was a marathon that took over 1,000 hours. It started with a concept that I stewed over for quite a while. I did a little sketch and then met with the models for a photo shoot. I did a lot of close-ups for details.

Then I made a rough image in Photoshop, developed the idea further, finalized the lighting, colors, bubble placement, hair, and flow. The biggest obstacle was the water elements, like the kelp. I started by painting a large green block of color in Photoshop, which I later turned into kelp strands. My Photoshop image was still rough, but it was enough to work with. The Photoshop image was a sketch for what I wanted to accomplish with the work, much like a speaker takes notes when



Insomnia . Colored pencil on bristol board

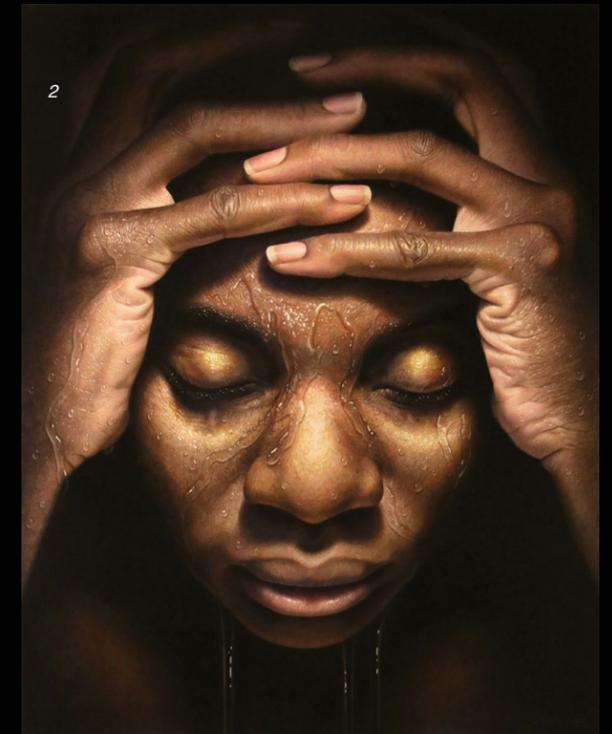


giving a speech. It's not until the work is created with colored pencils that it really looks polished. This is where it gets very technical, creating one detail after another. In the end, all these details come together to create not just an image, but an experience to share.

In your opinion when does a work of art become important?

It's a very philosophical question when you think about it, and it comes back to the age-old question, "What is art?"

Art becomes important when it has meaning for someone. That meaning can vary. Some art has a specific function, giving it meaning. Sometimes art is important because it is a way for the artist to express themselves. Art also has value because the viewer has an emotional connection with it. It can provide a sense of escape from the routine of daily life. Sometimes the value of a piece is simply that it helps the artist reach a new level - hundreds of seemingly insignificant drawings help improve the artist's craft.



1. Manifest 2. Labyrinth . Colored pencil on bristol board

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Where would you like to have a Solo Exhibition? What would be the ideal site or venue?

I had my first solo show at RJD Gallery. I hope to have another solo show there. The gallery recently moved from New York to Michigan and also plans to open a second location, which is still being determined. My ideal location would be Venice because it has such a rich history for figurative art and realism and it's on the water. It's also a very romantic place.

You are such a young and accomplished artist. Where do you see yourself in the far future?

Thank you. My hope is that I can help enable colored pencil as a fine-art medium. Most people don't know what

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He works at his home studio in The Woodlands, Texas, alongside his talented artist wife, Kinsey.

 [instagram.com/jesselaneart](https://www.instagram.com/jesselaneart)

it can do. I was told that if I wanted to become a professional artist, I would have to give up colored pencil and switch to paint. But I discovered that being a colored pencil artist could set me apart - and help my work stand out.

As for the future, I know I need to keep working with colored pencils. I know that emotion will always be a theme, even though the emotions I want to convey will change over time. I think I will always try to do something that I think is almost impossible with colored pencil.

That's what excites me.

Whatever the future holds for my work, it will come from within.

I think this is a pretty big question, but what makes you happy?

Gratitude is a key to happiness. Being a self-employed artist means constantly pushing yourself to do more and more. But there's also happiness in being grateful for what I already have.

Setting a goal and going after it can be exhilarating. Sometimes it's

not even about whether or not you reach the goal, it's about who you become on that journey - growing and seeing how much you can get out of yourself. Recently, I realized my biggest dream for my art: winning the highest prize in the world for colored pencil. And while winning was great, chasing it was the most rewarding part of it all. Happiness is knowing that I have overcome the obstacles and storms that have come my way, and that I have the strength to face those yet to come and become stronger because of it.



Flippie . Colored pencil on bristol board

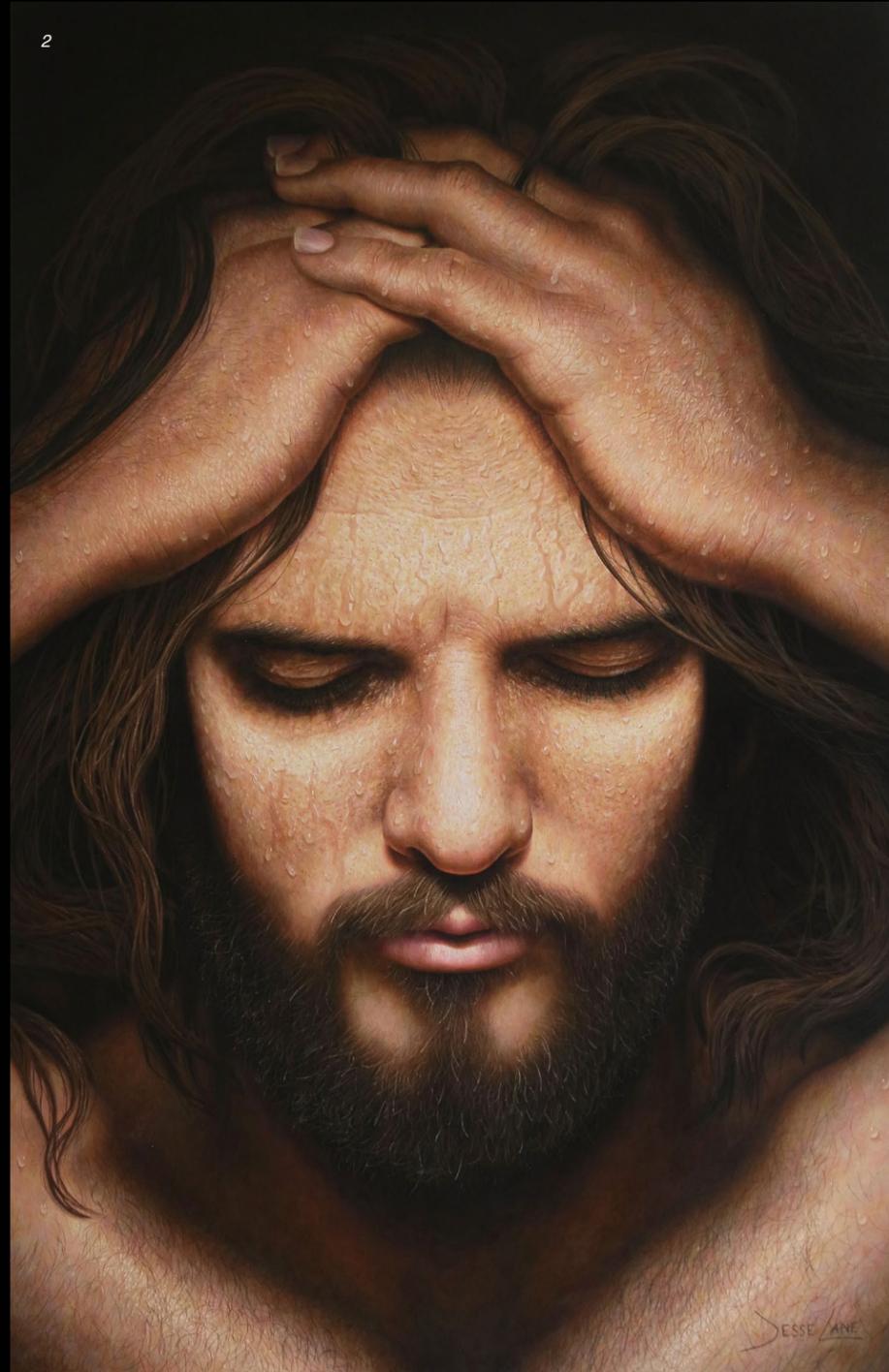
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"Abyss" was inspired by the feeling of being in love. The feelings of love engulf us. Love makes us feel weightless. It's magical. It means stepping outside ourselves into new territory and experiencing someone different from us. However, love is delicate. Our emotions can spiral. We realize that to love someone means being vulnerable. Even if we're careful, we can get hurt... so hurt it can feel as though we will never recover. As confusing as love is, it's something we live for. Whatever feelings we experience, they are often deep, like an abyss.



Abyss . Colored pencil on bristol board



1. Adrenaline 2. Gauntlet . Colored pencil on bristol board

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