

SPOTLIGHT

Every month, I feature an artist whose work and philosophy deserve to be in the spotlight.

In Conversation with Amy Stewart

Artists name their paintings, how do you pick your titles?

I think it depends on the series I'm working on at the time. My earlier series Grounding Chaos was about grief and so the titles went through the process of grief. Reimagine is about the environment and just trying to change the way we see things, so some of the names reflect that. My Sometimes Blue series, which is my newer one, is about happiness and sadness, and so the titles reflect that series.

If I needed to pick out your work in a crowded gallery, what would I look for?

You'd see three elements. There's a very large brush stroke. There is more of a translucent, transparent ...shape. They are usually bold colours. There's always a line. The line is morphing into something from a gold line to something with lots of colour right now. And thicker lines. So, they stand out for sure because they're quite bold.

Catherine: They are bold and I think that line, absolutely, is a defining feature for your work. I know if I was looking at your work I'd see that line and know that was Amy Stewart.

What influences your work?

Right now my environment: buildings, shapes, mountains, interior design. I'm drawn to colours and basically walking out my door and looking at the skyline.

When did you know that you wanted to paint full-time?

It happened naturally after the birth of my daughter. Before that I was in victim services for children and youth and I worked with at risk youth for many years. Once I was pregnant I started to feel that I couldn't go back to my job. During my job I painted the whole time for stress relief for myself and self-care. So I decided I would paint when my daughter was a baby and I kept painting and painting and painting. And then I decided I was going to take a leap-of-faith and try to go out on my own and paint full-time.

You recently did an Art Pop Up Shop on Granville Island. Tell me about that?

Well Granville Island - it has always been a goal for me to have a studio down here and to sell my work in Granville Island. So when the opportunity came up to have a shop and at the same time the opportunity came up to have a studio here, I said yes to both because it was part of a dream. I have two close friends that are also artists and we decided our work looks quite nice together and we thought we'd show for a month in Granville Island.