

Issue 1
October 2016

One Million Project MAGAZINE



©

R. KOPAC 15

Artist
Renata Kopac



Artist
Renata Kopac



Artist
Renata Kopac



Renata Kopac

Who are you and what do you do?

I am a Lithuania-born artist and an art teacher. I have my own studio where I work on my paintings and I also teach art both privately and at primary school. I try to incorporate my passion for teaching and painting. My busy career and life do not stop me from developing as an artist.

Why did you join One Million Project and what inspired you to do so?

Jason Greenfield and I met at the creative networking event organised by the Lithuanian Embassy few years ago in London. Jason was interested in collaborating with some foreign/ European writers and artists. One Million Project inspired me and we started working together, some time later resulted in the finished book.

Why do you do what you do?

Painting is my passion. I paint for many reasons because it is a way I can connect with myself and express my feelings. I believe that it's a life skill worth developing and, like eve-

How do you work?

My process of painting is very long and it is never finished in one or two sessions, however intense they may be. I built my paintings layer by layer until it gets a sensory feeling of the texture. On average, it takes me anywhere from 2 to 4 months of work to complete one painting. Usually I work with just two or three brushes, also applying paint with my fingers or other materials, depending on the effect I'm trying to achieve. I begin with making a rough drawing on the canvas in thin paint to indicate main shapes and proportions.

Then I define the darkest point and the lightest point of the composition to set the tonal dynamics. I think in terms of the tonality. Essentially I am working with lots of layers using exclusively oils. Sometimes I can feel that I am getting lost in detail and almost start to ruin the painting then I force myself to stop and come back later and try to approach it differently. I try to explore the boundaries between abstraction and figuration. I believe

What's your background?

I am from Vilnius, a charming city with a great artist wide. Painting was my passion since I was little; I was attending secondary school with advanced art studies. I have completed studies at an Art School and have graduated with two Master degrees: one in Fine Art Education and another in Museum and Galleries Management. Teachers qualification gave me an opportunity to work in a secondary school, first in Vilnius and then in London. After graduating, I travelled to many different parts of the world, which made a great impact on me and the things I wanted to express in my works. It was beginning of the journey where my works were exploration of people, their feelings and relationship. I have finally settled in London 8 years ago and feel that this is a right place for me with lots of opportunities to see different art platforms, scenes and rich variety of art.

What's your strongest memory of your childhood?

My dad bought me a two-wheel bike when I was 7 years old, my first ever time riding a bike with no training. I wanted to make it from my friend's house to my house without stopping peddling my bike. She lived at the end of the road, and one had to make a sharp turn. I didn't hit the brakes once going down the long road. I wasn't able to turn left at those speeds and hit a drain on the opposite side of the street doing I think 1-2 flips before landing on the side walk. Nothing was broken but I have a pretty big scar on my right knee.

What's your most embarrassing moment?

Pushing doors that are built to be pulled and vice versa. It frustrates me that I have a 50/50 shot, yet I consistently guess wrong.

What jobs have you done other than being an artist?

I feel very fortunate that I had the opportunity in the past to work with pupils with disabilities and support them in their development. Over the past few years, I worked as art therapist supporting a number of children, some with learning difficulties while others with complex physical needs. Working with children who have

Name something you love, and why.

I love the sound that rain makes on a metal roof. It is believed introverts in general like the sense of isolation that rain offers, but this isn't the case with me. I like rain because it helps my mind to slow down and then focus things that are important. There is something mysterious about the rain. I love to be with a cup of tea, when it rains outside, observing people through the window.

What makes you angry?

I get angry when people are judgemental of someone or something, when people don't try to step in their shoes or get time to know the actual story. Criticism of others, intolerance towards people with disabilities makes me both upset and angry.

What superpower would you have and why?

What's the best piece of advice you've been given?

No one else will do it for you. A person who gave me this piece of advice meant to put your head down and work hard. Never wait for things to happen, make them happen for yourself and appreciate what you got in your life.

What has been a seminal experience?

There have been a couple that really marked a turning point. For the past few years I've been focusing on capturing different cultures. My Journey and Cultural Portraits Collections. With that series of work, I wanted to welcome the viewers to celebrate the uniqueness of various cultures, defined by different histories, values and the sense of beauty. These series of work are very important to me.

What work do you most enjoying doing?

As an artist, I am interested in sharing moments of everyday life. I love teaching it's endlessly inspiring to know that I can make some sort of difference in children's attitudes toward themselves and their lives. I pride myself on creating a warm, supportive environment and understanding how my students think and learn to ensure they experience a feeling of satisfaction and enjoyment from their work.

What themes do you pursue?

Happiness. Love. Sadness. Tragedy

What's your favourite art work?

The "Saint Jerome Writing" by Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, where Saint Jerome is absorbed in his translation of the Bible from Hebrew into Latin. This painting took my breath away when I first saw it. It won me over forever I guess. The Caravaggio had a remarkable talent in his style of painting it is easily recognizable for its realism, but the composition - it's beyond anything. The mysterious planes are focused directly into the viewer's space. It's so powerful.

Describe a real-life situation that inspired you?

We know that no two people see things exactly the same way. Ask ten people to describe the same view having seen it at the same time in the

Why art?

I want to somehow communicate my sense of the world - that way of understanding, engaging, experiencing the world - to somebody else. I want them to be transported into the world that I have created with my paintings.

What food, drink, song inspires you?

I like simple and healthy food. I don't have any song that inspires me while I am painting because I prefer to work in silence.

What do you dislike about your work?

I don't like pricing my work.

What do you like about your work?

The freedom. I just do it. I never know what my paintings will look like before I begin and this mystery is exactly what creates the excitement and curiosity I need to stay inspired. I rely on my intuition a lot and the concept of "working with what's working" to keep momentum as my paintings emerge naturally in their own time. I also embrace the freedom to change the course many times along the way, knowing each and every choice will be an important part of the finished painting.

What research to you do?

Studying other artists by reading, by visiting galleries and exhibitions. I'm also hugely inspired by color expression and am constantly collecting images on-line and in magazines for color inspiration. I love combining colors in unusual ways, and the act of simply playing with color, whether it's on canvas with paint

What is your dream project?

One where I can lose myself completely.

Name three artists you'd like to be compared to.

Gabriele Munter, Sonia Delenay and Elizabeth Peyton.

Professionally, what's your goal?

To expand the type of distribution channels where my art is available by increasing my advertising effectiveness, quality and awareness as well as getting my art into more galleries, exhibitions and art fairs.

My new challenge and goal is landscapes marked by technology and industry based on different metal constructions. The first impulse is to protest that there can be nothing beautiful in radar or water towers, motorways or shipyards. I encourage people to approach such things without prejudice, without looking only for confirmation of current habits of perception, and to make room for the recognition of alternative forms of beauty.

What's integral to the work of an artist?

For me an integral approach to art attempts to acknowledge and represent how all of the levels of being exist simultaneously. As an artist this means acknowledging that I am in a co - creative relationship not only with all who view my art but also with the present, modern day culture that the art exists within. On a deeper, more personal level, my efforts to live this integral vision means doing my best to acknowledge not only within my creative endeavors but within all aspects of life.

What role does the artist have in society?

There are many myths we like to believe about artists. They follow their own star, do their own thing, regardless of the circumstances or the consequences. Artists are true, heroic and selfish.

Being an artist in a society is not only about showing and selling and getting known; it's about understanding your purpose, your calling, and about presenting yourself and your work with unwavering confidence and conviction about who you are and what your art stands for. Having a firm grasp of why you're in this and what compels you to make art is key. Combined with a genuine willingness to experiment with new styles, subject matters and techniques, to continually evolve and advance in your practice, and to reach out to others in ever more creative ways- that is what it means not only survive, but also to thrive and prosper as an artist.

What is an artistic outlook on life?

Creativity matters more than ever.

What art do you most identify with?

Oil painting

Is the artistic life lonely? What do you do to counteract it?

I don't think artists must be lonely. I do think that artists are more susceptible, simply because, as a group, our emotions are much closer to the surface, and are amplified in ways others might not understand. I think that it's true that creation is a solitary profession, whether it's painting, writing, or music. Even when we collaborate with others, we are essentially working alone, inside our own heads. I personally need my time alone to create, but when the work is completed I like to spend time with people I love and care about, it can be anything from cup of coffee,

What do you dislike about the art world?

The art market and auction houses are always in need of rare inventory from the likes of Pablo Picasso, Mark Rothko, etc. However, because these artists are no longer living, their work is hard to come by and therefore, highly valuable to wealthy collectors and investors. This keeps the high-end market going and as a result, super-high prices. However, if the art world really wanted to shake things up at the middle and even lower ranges of the art market, it would focus more on where the real action and fun are - Contemporary Art with so many gifted and talented artists.

How has your practice changed over time?

Along with skills and technique, what I value most about what has improved is adaptability to change and business sense.

Should art be funded?

Absolutely.

What role does arts funding have?

As a working artist, it's not enough to produce art: you need to promote your art and sell. Funding has a crucial role in all processes. While your path to becoming an artist may be more about your inherent need to create, communicate your ideas, and leave your mark on the world, this won't help introduce your work to the art community. Making sure that your work reaches the right audience.