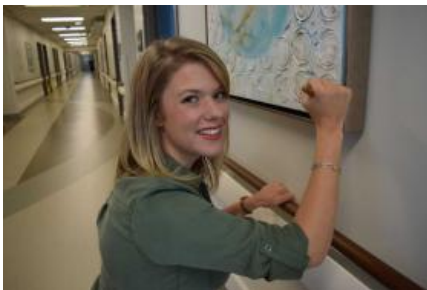


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# Hospital features 18 paintings from local artist

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LOG CABIN STAFF WRITER



Kristen Abbott signs one of her paintings hanging in Baptist Health Medical Center in Conway. Abbott has 18 works featured in the hospital.

Kristen Abbott, mom and full-time artist, is living her dream jobs.

The Conway native and University of Central Arkansas graduate began painting at a young age. She spent countless hours at the Conway Art Gallery, Art on the Green, where owner Nina Baker became her earliest mentor.

"I learned so much from her," Abbott said.

Abbott said she now recognizes that those years of growth, coupled with her college education and

afterschool job at a contemporary art gallery, exposed her to thinking outside the box and looking at pieces from a different perspective.

"I think that still informs my abstract work to this day," she said. "I had to continually evolve over the years to come up with my own voice, my own style of painting. That happened through years of painting."

Abbott said she describes herself as an abstract, intuitive painter, starting with an idea that's not "necessarily concrete." Inspired by found objects such as vintage maps or postcards, Abbott enjoys scouring antique shops to find objects that "intrigue her."

"To me, that's mostly what inspires my work," she said. "It's a process of addition and subtraction of color for me. I just keep building one layer on top of each other until I feel like it gets to a point where it all makes sense together as a whole."

Abbott said she tends to use blues, greens and patina brown "earthy colors" with lots of textures, sometimes adding in metallic colors and using patterns to draw viewers into her art work.

"[It's] introspective," she said. "When I say I want to draw the viewer into an experience I want them to see something different in it as they stand and look."

The painting style and color scheme is what eventually drew representatives at Witsell-Evans-Rasco Architects to recommend using Abbott's artwork in the new Baptist Health Medical Center in Conway. Today, Abbott has 18 original pieces lining the halls of the new hospital.

Abbott said that type of recognition and selection is "something that you dream about happening."

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hospital and the architects.

“That’s my favorite way to work,” she said. “It just has more power to me, more impact. The bigger I can go ... it just feels like it sets the tone for the room. I think that when you walk in and see a large scale painting [it] makes such a statement.”

Abbott, who now lives in Denver, Colorado, with her husband and daughter, said it’s only been in the past five years that she’s developed her own voice that is recognizable as “Kristen Abbott art.”

“That’s taken years,” she said. “Looking back on [all those] experiences has been really fun to see how my art has changed over the past 10 years, 15 years. I would say I’ve been painting as long as I can remember. I think it’ll be really cool to see what it looks like 15 years from now.”

Abbott said painting is her source of income and learning how to juggle being an artist, mom and wife has been interesting.

“It’s a challenge, but it’s one I’m super excited to do because I love both of those roles,” she said. “I love being a mom.”

Carving out time to create is a daily task, but one that she believes makes her work a profession instead of a hobby.

“It’s something that is a consistent part of who I am in my every day,” she said. “It’s something I’ll continue to do no matter what.”

Abbott said her daughter shares her love for colors and painting.

“I love that she’s already developing those skills,” she said. “I love that my daughter gets to see me doing something that I love. That she knows I love her more than anything, but that I’m also going to continue my passions as an individual outside of being a mom. I am a professional and this is also part of who I am.”

*(Staff writer Hilary Andrews can be reached by email at [hilary.andrews@thecabin.net](mailto:hilary.andrews@thecabin.net) or by phone at 505-1215. To comment on this and other stories in the Log Cabin, log on to [www.thecabin.net](http://www.thecabin.net). Send us your news at [www.thecabin.net/submit](http://www.thecabin.net/submit))*

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