



Roaming Through the Dark Side with Laura West



New York artist Laura West

From the moment I laid my eyes on West's painting "The Road," I was in love. The deepening violet sky above a nightmarish field with a stoic young girl piercingly staring me in the face. Her pale skin mirroring the glowering clouds hovering over her. And impasto! Oh, glorious impasto! My secret weakness – West's arrow hit the part of my heart where my love for [Van Gogh](#) is stored. And so, out came the praise. 😊

And West's other pictures? More rich, delicious brushwork– dark imagery–ominous figures–I ask you, what's not to love, babes?

West's submissions to the Fear and Obsession contest included "The Road" (pictured below) and "Businessman," and while they both undoubtedly express both of these themes, one can see how pretty much all of her paintings play on these themes as well. Her work glows with this foreboding feeling that something horrible is about to happen (or is happening in the case of "The Businessman's Wife). Much like a well-crafted horror film, her paintings make the viewer feel this horror in an exciting and subtle way, and doesn't bludgeon us with non-sense imagery theatrics. But rather, she gives us just a taste, just enough of a peek into these eerie realms of juicy color and dream-like possibilities to satisfy our craving for the unreal.

Another aspect of West's work that leaps out at me is her attention to humanize the figures and make us feel as if they all have actual lives and stories to tell themselves, instead of being mere models or puppets in a show the artist is trying to make us believe is real. She often accomplishes this nifty feat by paying careful attention to the rendering of the figure's eyes and pose, which can tell you more about an individual than words themselves.

And now, tigers, let us join the dark side for a spell and hear what New York artist Laura West has to say about her creative goodness.



The Road

Tell me about your work and the themes/subjects you like to explore.

I love to explore the dark side. Even if I tried really hard to make a painting of a rainbow... somehow, somehow, it will come out a bit distorted without me ever intending of making it that way. I guess artists go through phases since new experiences bring about new ways of looking. Maybe I'm just going through a dark phase at this moment, who knows? But, I really enjoy thought provoking work that stirs up the mind and leaves viewers questioning the world around them. I hope to do that with my own work. I love color. I love shock.

Strange images excite me as do bold statements and visuals. As far as themes and subjects go, well, I've been told that the breakdown of nature is a recurring theme in my work. But, I don't really like putting up barriers just yet!



Under the Influence

Walk me through your creative process.

My creative process starts with an itch. I may get a distinct visual or have a mood of a painting in mind for days. Then everything sort of comes together and I start to realize that the initial itch to create this work happened because of something that has been on my mind subconsciously. It doesn't go away until it's pulled forward.



Baba Jshenya

What are your influences?

My influences come from everywhere. Mainly from life experiences and frustrations. I like to be really self aware and understand why I act in certain ways or feel certain things. It helps with my work when I'm honest with myself and can be that way with any interaction I have.

My dad has taught me from an early age to analyze and observe people. Being aware of what's going on around me helps to create new ideas for my work and the honesty/sensitivity just makes a painting much more affective even if the artist is vulnerable while creating it. So, the people around me, my own emotions, and political happenings are immediate influences.

And the support of my parents, of course.



Businessman

How has living in New York City influenced your development as an artist?

New York City has had a huge impact on my development as an artist. It is the most vibrant city with such diversity. Hopefully, the boldness of it reflects in what I put out. I always see new people and every corner has something exciting lurking around. I try to keep the energy high in my work just like the city does for me every day. There is never a dull moment in the city that never sleeps. It's all about keeping your eye open, not texting while walking down the street and actually soaking in the moment around you. I don't think I'll ever leave New York City, it's so inspiring.



The Businessman's Wife

Besides art, do you have any other passions or interests?

Besides art, I definitely have other passions. I actually studied screenwriting in college and now love writing children's books. There are no barriers there and your imagination can just take off! I've also been involved in music since I was about two years old (growing up in a musical family). I write songs as a release. It's more of a physical thing to sing and play. I don't think I could survive without art, writing and music. I wouldn't feel whole. Let's see, other interests: I have an enormous weakness for animals. So, yeah, show me a cute photo of a cat or a dog and I'm instant putty. But, art is my driving force especially when I'm down. Art is art whichever way you express it and the medium of choice is just a vessel. The most important thing though... is having something to say and not being scared to say it, feel it or show it. Be true.

Did you enjoy Laura's artistic exploits and this awesome interview? Then let us know by leaving a thick and juicy comment of your own, tiger. For more Laura West, visit her website here: www.lgwest.com