



# Transferring Emotion into Art



An Interview with Janet Jensen, J.Jarie Gallery

**EDITORS' NOTE** Designer Janet Jensen ([www.jjariegallery.com](http://www.jjariegallery.com)), just concluded one of the most successful selling experiences in the history of Saks Fifth Avenue. Her business model, driven by elegant design that can be found nowhere else, is consciously aimed at delivering superior value to the customer and modest commission to the sales person. Jensen's design work and her involvement in a long distance international



Janet Jensen

company has been a base of support for families of more than 1,500 people. Leveraging her success, Jensen has also launched a foundation to provide scholarships to deserving students without the means to go to college. In 15 years, she has supported 300 young men and woman, and has participated on the board of numerous philanthropic and nonprofit organizations. Jensen studied art and psychology at Coe College in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

## Would you provide an overview of the creation of your branding and design enterprise?

The message that is spoken from the heart and created by the hand is not forgotten. It lives in the experience of the receiver, treasured as a priceless gift.

J.Jarie expressions are such gifts. As unique as fingerprints, they are handmade notes of truth, encased in beauty.

These original works of art are designed to elevate the time-honored craft of personal correspondence to the place of admiration it deserves. Our vision is to create the canvas on which timeless human connections are drawn. We hope that the exchanges these notes inspire move both the giver and the receiver beyond words. Ultimately, that's where all that matters is understood.

### What is the market for this product?

The affluent, although I have had people from every walk of life purchase my product to send a powerful, expressive gift.

### How do you attract attention to your brand?

We have a few small stores that represent us, although it has been word-of-mouth and eyeballs at not-for-profit events that have really brought us business.

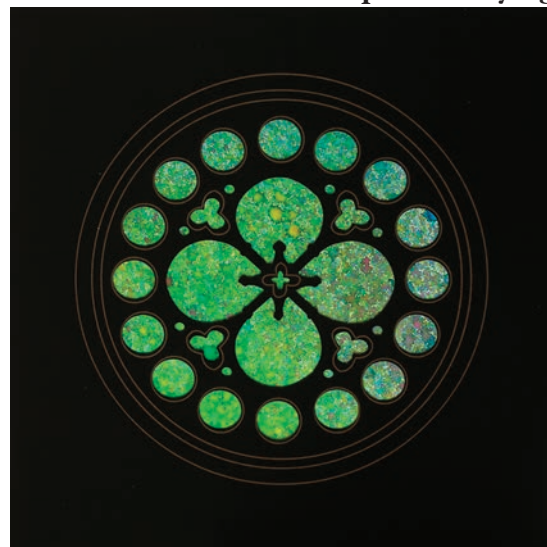
The Web site will go live in January. With the Internet, our exposure will grow tremendously. As a brand that has literally been built from the ground up, we are excited about the possibilities.

### Is there an appreciation of the impact that a paper card can have in a technologically obsessed world?

I believe that a cherished inspiration of art with the handwritten note is far more powerful than the homogenized e-mail. The art of

a card that touches the heartstrings is a gift that keeps on giving.

### What does it mean for persons trying



A few of Janet Jensen's inspirational cards

### to establish their own brand?

One's personal feelings and achievements can often be depicted by a creatively designed card and/or stationary piece. It leaves an imprint of feelings and a history and tradition with the receiver. We do know that symbols, letters, color, texture, and design can speak volumes to the human experience, and that is what life is all about: telling a story so that another can experience some part of you.

### Where does your creativity come from?

From the need to send a message in a way that I have not seen in my experience of the world. Much art and human emotion

has been conveyed on paper. I keep looking for and feeling for a unique experience. It is individualized, based on the work needed. I oftentimes refer to myself as a "wordologist" or "symbolist" – I want to inspire people.

### What is your work process?

It has morphed into many different sequences as the brand has grown. I have other designers I motivate on a regular basis, and that is a totally different process. For me personally, I set aside an hour each morning to think through what I would like to share with the world philosophically. I feel privileged to share.

### From start to finish, how much does the product evolve and change?

Usually, a great deal. During the creation period of a line, the twists and turns taken to develop the emotion wanted are numerous. It depends on the medium we use. Print and laser are two different animals. We tend to stay away from print unless the customer requests it. Both evolve, although with the laser, the process seems to take a bit more time, as the machine itself takes significantly longer to process the piece than in print, and often what you see on the computer screen does not end up as planned.

### Along with your artistic creativity, how important is it to have the knowledge to manage the business?

The business often squelches the artist part, because you are always debating cost. It makes a big difference in the way I look at a piece, for better or for worst. Time is a cost and artists have a tendency not to let something go until it is perfect. I am guilty of this. There is no such thing as perfect.

### How did your passion for helping needy students come about?

My upbringing motivated me to get my education and give back. In fact, that was a mantra in our home.

### Do you ever take time to appreciate your successes or are you always looking ahead?

There are moments of appreciation. The thought process with the works at J.Jarie's has really brought home my successes, and has helped me continue to develop within myself.

I will always look ahead, since there is much more to accomplish, if not one life at a time, tribally. ●