

Bringing The Blank Canvas To Life

An Interview with Jan Dilenschneider



Jan Dilenschneider with His Eminence, Cardinal Timothy Dolan, Archbishop of the Archdiocese of New York, discussing her painting Come To The Light (36 x 48 inches, oil on canvas) at the opening of her art show at The Sunshine Gallery at the Sheen Center for Thought and Culture, located on Bleecker Street in New York City

How do you describe your work?

My work is best described as bold, and I hope strong. I like to use strong gestural lines to define the subject and wonderful colors. Sometimes I decide on a “misty” delicate look if it suits the subject like clouds. Other times I like clear definition of shapes and colors for trees and hills. Most of all, the fun is in developing new shapes and creative designs like my “big leaf” paintings. There is an abstract freshness in them that many like.

Color defines my work, and it is extremely important to the success of any work. It is not which color is used; it is how it plays off, modifies and changes the other colors. An example is ultramarine blue next to a deep cadmium – one sparks the other and the relationship is more luminous. I like to say colors should “sing together.” Some artists say “color gets all the glory” but “value contrast” does all the work.

Will you highlight your process?

My process is simple, but also complex. I look around me to see something that might inspire me. The visual inspiration is a spark, and it goes to my “creative brain.” It pulls in past artwork you see in a museum and in galleries. Your “creative brain” does the magic for you. The outcome is your own approach to the canvas. Usually, it is wonderful. Sometimes you want to work on it a little more, but it is all yours.

To do the creative work, one starts with the gesture lines, then the composition, then the colors. The strength can make or break the work of art. Many say gesture is the passion in a painting and the colors are the joy in a painting.



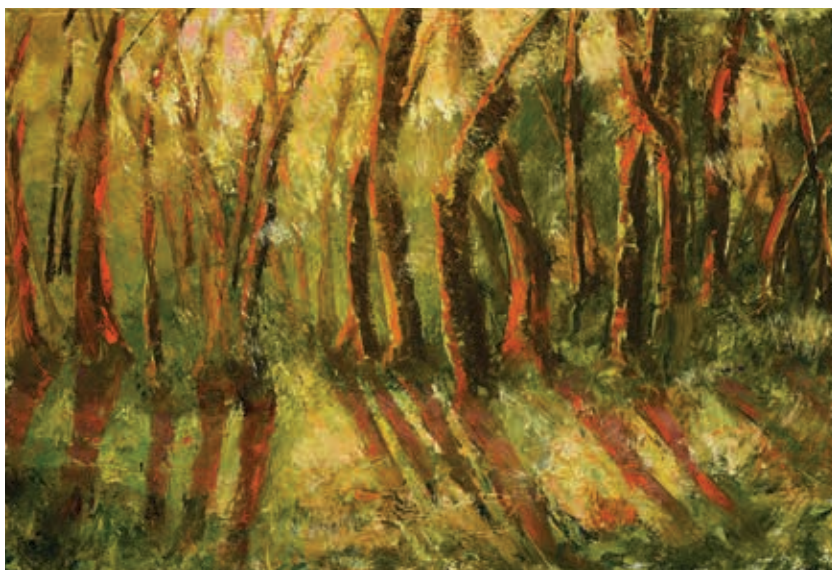
*Luminous Light 24 x 24 inches, oil on canvas (above);
Rose-Veined Leaves 40 x 30 inches, oil on canvas (top)*

Will you discuss your career journey?

I think I have artist turpentine in my veins. My mother and sister were artists. They taught me their techniques and encouraged me to take art classes through college. It was obvious. And my journey has evolved and continues today, always experimenting with new techniques and colors and objects. I take great joy from my regular art classes and being part of the Silvermine Arts Center community. An artist is constantly working to refine their brush strokes and bring the blank canvas to life.

When did you know that you wanted to be a painter?

While in college, one of my art class professors took me aside and asked if I wanted to pursue art. I said yes, yes and yes, and that started my future as a painter.



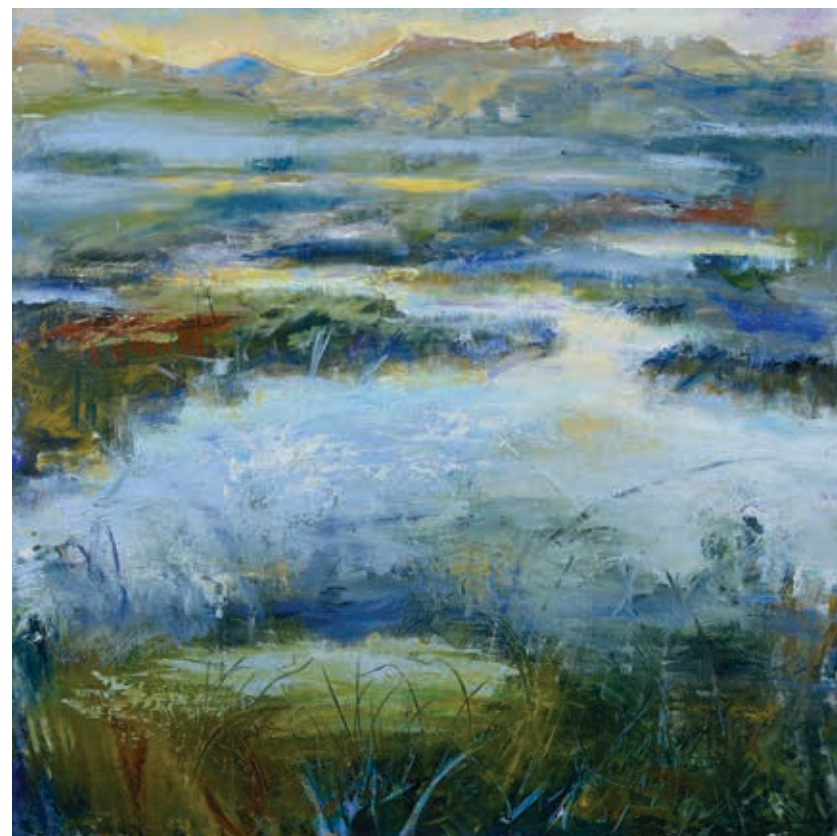
Will you provide an overview of your new gallery at the Sheen Center for Thought and Culture, The Sunrise Gallery?

It is a great honor for me to serve as a resident artist at the Sheen Center for Thought and Culture, located on Bleecker Street in New York City. The gallery there is named The Sunrise Gallery, because one morning I saw the most incredible sunrise from my window and I had to capture it on canvas. That painting is prominently hanging in The Sunrise Gallery.

It was a privilege to have His Eminence, Cardinal Timothy Dolan come to the opening of The Sunrise Gallery and bless it. I plan to rotate the paintings rather frequently and several will be available for sale.

When you reflect on your career, what are you most proud of?

My journey as an artist has been filled with many wonderful moments. My first solo art show in Paris in the Marais near the Picasso Museum was a moment I will never forget. It was at the Galerie Pierre-Alain Challier, and we continued on for five additional solo shows in France. It was the result of one of these solo shows that the U.S. Ambassador to France invited me to hang two of my "Big Leaf" paintings at the Embassy as part of the Art in the Embassy program. There were also two group shows,



one in Monaco and the one in Paris at the "Grand Palais" that were very special.

I have been very fortunate and blessed to be accepted in the art world – Paris, Monaco, Avignon, and in the United States (New York, Connecticut).

What advice do you offer to young people interested in pursuing a career as a painter?

Become inquisitive. Ask what makes a work successful. Go to all the art shows that you are able to attend. When you look at a beautiful painting of trees, water or a sunset, look "deeply." Imagine you are painting it – which colors, what brush strokes, what design will you use?

Most of all, observe what is around you and the marvelous images you see in your "creative brain" to help you paint. Then believe in yourself. Go for it. Make it your own statement to the art world. ●



Allee to Provence 40 x 30 inches, oil on canvas (above);
Golden Light Through the Trees 36 x 24 inches, oil on canvas (top left)



Flowers in the Meadow 30 x 24 inches, oil on canvas (above);
Misty Distance 36 x 36 inches, oil on canvas (top right)