

Inside The Artist's Studio



Editor's Note: A few years ago we offered a look into a few artist's studios. It was interesting, but we got busy and I didn't have time to keep up with that feature. This month, Murray Sease of La Petite Gallerie in Bluffton, SC, sent us an article about one of her fellow gallery artists. And she plans to visit several more during 2024. La Petite Gallerie is located on Calhoun Street, Bluffton, SC, 29910. For more info visit (lapetitegallerie.com).

Studio Visit: An Artist's Eden

The next artist studio visit in this series takes me past green pastures and sandy paddocks with lovely homes for horses and their owners. It is in the equestrian side of the Rose Hill community in Bluffton, and indeed an artist's paradise with peaceful scenery in every direction. There are expansive views of the Colleton River and wooded views of its estuaries tucked in here and there. The home studio I'm visiting today is on a quiet cul-de-sac with a long driveway. The artist I am visiting takes full advantage of her location, regularly painting the gorgeous marsh views behind her house.

There is an abundance of wildlife – deer and long legged wading birds visit often – providing even more inspiration for this talented person.

The artist is Lauren Arsenault, known for her colorful and impressionistic paintings in acrylic and watercolor. The local people, landscape, flora and fauna, marsh, ocean, and historic architecture are her subjects. Her loose and free brushstrokes are the goal of many aspiring painters which is fantastic because Lauren loves to teach! She offers art lessons in the garden at La Petite Gallerie or in her students' homes or studio spaces. In fact the whole lowcountry is really Lauren's studio – she is an avid plein air painter enjoying the great outdoors as her muse.

When I arrived at Lauren's home studio, I was greeted enthusiastically by Milo the Boykin Spaniel. He is a delightful bundle of wagging, wiggling happiness. After lots of Milo pats, walking through the welcoming entry is almost like entering an elegant but friendly art gallery. The walls are filled with art with deep meaning for Lauren – some gifts from her parents, some work

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by her daughters, but most collected more recently from local artists that she admires. There is a nude by Doug Corkern which she treasures. Stunning black and white photography and drawings related to our local fishing and oystering culture are in her dining room. It opens to her kitchen with a wonderful black and white mosaic fish over the doorway leading to the mudroom and back door. Paintings by artists she knows fit perfectly in spaces elsewhere throughout the house, and found objects and sculptures grace tables and outside walls.

Opening from the entry and dining room, the first studio space I see is in a corner of the huge windowed wall of the living room overlooking the backyard. Twice a day at high tide the creek comes right up to the lawn edge just a few feet from the decks.

The views are stunning and ever-changing with the tides and seasons. Lauren has an easel and a huge drafting desk here with brushes and paper at the ready for watercolor painting.

The other side of the entry opens to the main studio exclusively devoted to creating art. Facing a wooded view through windows, two large easels have works in progress on them. One is a lovely floral mixed media and the other a wading bird showing Lauren's energetic brush strokes in acrylic. It features one of her typical color schemes in subtle blues and grays. A cozy desk area in one corner is where the business side of art is done. Shelves and a tall rack hold canvases, frames, and art supplies of all sorts. Opening a closet door reveals huge

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