

*Some questions for Jenny Medved from Mark Ormond, Curator of Exhibitions in August 2016*

*What draws you to your subject matter?* The raw, natural beauty of indigenous cultures and practices. The music, regalia, colors, dance and history is so alive, and after many generations of economic and political challenges- many are continuing to preserve their culture, growing stronger while teaching others of their ancestral ways. It's a beautiful experience to witness and be a part of.

*How have your discoveries about your own ancestors influenced your painting?* I come from North Georgia, where I have a long line of family history dating back to the Georgia gold rush and Cherokee and Choctaw removal- which makes it is hard to trace all of my ancestors. However, my family history plays a small part on why I paint what I do. My love for Native American and other Indigenous cultures have been based on instinct and respect- as well as personal reflections and experiences.

*Do need to be inspired by a person to paint them?* In my personal series of work, yes, definitely.

*How important is exact authenticity to your renderings?* Extremely important. I want my work to have nothing but pure authenticity, therefore if I make any changes at all- they are very small. I am not here to change anyone, only to humbly and respectfully record them onto paper.

*Please describe your process.* I photograph each model in their own environment, sometimes, taking hundreds of photos per shoot. I often spend several hours going through each photo before exporting a few into Photoshop to find which of my favorite compositions work best. I then erase the background, adding a gradient color to get a feel for how I will paint in the negative space. Because of the delicate nature of watercolor paper, I will often transfer the basic outline of my image onto my paper. However, at my easel, I spend much more time drawing in details and form until I am happy with the overall rendering. Once the drawing is complete, I tape my paper down to board, which helps prevent any buckling. In the past, I always started a portrait by painting in the eyes, completing them before moving onto the rest of the face and figure. However, now, I try to stay open to the organic nature of each painting, so I start with the shadows first- building up form and lighting. I paint by building up transparent layers of watercolor, as well as with a dry-brush technique, so my process rarely goes quickly. It may sometimes take me several weeks or more to complete a painting, depending on the size of the paper.

*How does the negative space of the paper factor in your compositional planning?* It is a very important aspect in my work. Because I leave the background open to the viewer to fill in what they want to see, the negative space has to frame my model's gesture and be a part of the overall form. With a little bit of color to add shadow and enhance each space, it all has to work together so the painting doesn't feel unbalanced.

*How does color function in your work?* Color- or even lack thereof, is very important. Depending on the mood of the painting- I may tone down my palette to get a warmer, nostalgic feel while brightening up other areas where I may want the viewer to focus on or a certain detail in my work.

*What was the most important thing you learned at Ringling?* Hard work and time management- without either, I don't think you will get very far.