

Melissa Cole

Artist Statement

I paint because I can lose myself entirely in the process. Over the last ten years I have discovered that with the most mundane ingredients—acrylic, canvas, copper, clay and wood— I am able to create something that vibrates with its own raw energy. My creations make people stop their mad hurtle through life to pause, breathe and enjoy an experience. I relish that!

Because of my past adventures as a naturalist guide and my marriage to a wildlife photographer, I've been lucky enough to snorkel with salmon, smooch baby gray whales and swim with tiger sharks. I derive much of the inspiration for my vividly colored, heavily textured and patterned acrylic paintings from these amazing encounters. I am also influenced by a childhood spent in India, extensive travels abroad as an adult, and by my background in zoology.

For as long as I can remember, I have been attracted to unusual color combinations and intricate ethnic patterns. These I have seen in textiles, ceramics, paintings, sculptures, and stained glass from Mexico to Africa. I am especially drawn to universal patterns found in the artwork of almost every culture. In each of my pieces one will find dotted designs, a distinct border pattern and an abundance of texture. I frequently use mixed media, a fusion of different elements, to add tactile dimensionality and visual interest to my work.

My subject matter encompasses flora, fauna and female figures. Rather than a rendering in perfect biological detail I strive to capture a sense of movement and "personality". Although it is almost always nature that draws me in, I enjoy exploring mythology through figurative paintings and the melding of strength and sensuality within the female form. No matter what I paint, my style is consistent.