

## Four Canadian Artists with Passion, Perseverance and More *(excerpt)*

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Women pursuing an artistic career face both opportunities and challenges as they nurture their creativity. Perseverance is a must. These four Western Canadian artists have successfully channeled their passion for art into a rewarding way of life.



### **Kimberly Kiel**

After a decade of running her own financial planning business, Kimberly Kiel decided it was time for a change. She sold her practice and signed up for a painting class “for something to do” while she determined what her next step was going to be.

Fast forward 15 years.

“Being willing to act upon unexpected and timely opportunities, spending many hours in the studio, applying the business practices I’d acquired over the previous years and being the recipient of much help and encouragement equals this artistic life,” explains Kiel, who now specializes in impressionistic art with a contemporary edge.

“I am able to apply my creativity to every aspect of life and see everything through an artistic lens – in the studio, in our outdoor space, in our home, as a wife and mom, as a participant in our larger community.

“Having my studio in our home affords me incredible flexibility to have the time to be the mom I want to be to my boys while still being the artist I want to be.”

Being an artist isn’t as romantic as people like to believe, Kiel points out. She treats it the same as any 9-to-5 job. “When my boys board the bus, I head up the stairs to the studio and start work. My time there ends when the bus comes home.

“It works well for me and I love it,” she says.

Serendipity and saying “yes” to opportunities have benefitted every aspect of Kiel’s life.

“It is the willingness to ‘cliff dive’ into the unknown, the willingness to take risks, the willingness to ignore those voices that said ‘don’t’ that shapes my life daily,” she says.

In her studio, “happy accidents” often lead to wonderful results in a painting. It’s the result of saying ‘yes’ to something on the canvas that wasn’t actually supposed to happen, Kiel explains.

Saying “yes” to opportunities led to Kiel becoming a professional artist – despite having no formal art education or training to back up that decision. Her life as an artist is the result of “saying ‘yes’ to crazy ideas and then doing what it takes to make them happen.”

Walking away from a financial practice with no concrete next step was challenging, Kiel admits. “It was certainly a daunting idea.”

Putting her art – and herself – out there involved many steps forward, as well as some backwards. Applying the business ideologies Kiel had used in her previous career to her art business helped. So did the encouragement of the important people in her life.

“Being willing to stick to my ‘crazy’ idea, recognize opportunities as they presented themselves and do what it took to follow through was key,” Kiel says.

“I love my life and feel that the trajectory it took – all the ups, downs and sideways –brought me to where I am today. Every step had a purpose and every line on my face tells a story. I wouldn’t change any of that.”

Being a woman of integrity is what she would like to be known for, Kiel says. “Being genuine and authentic and helping to lift up those around me.”

“I would love to be known for being of service to the world around me and hopefully leaving it a bit more ‘beautiful’ for having been here. “

Writer: Irene Seiberling

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