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FYI: Joanne Mehl quotes

Portraiture and work process:

"I started doing portrait work professionally because I loved it and was exceptionally well prepared for it. Maybe it's encoded in our DNA, this fascination with faces, especially the faces of those that we love. I love painting beautiful faces. I love painting interesting and flawed faces. Our lives are written on our faces. The beautiful, fresh-faced young woman whose life is ahead of her, full of possibility. The innocence of childhood. The relationship between mother and child, between child and beloved pet. I love painting them all. Because life is about love and loving, and those that we love."

"I love photos and treasure them, but they're mementos. My goal as an artist is to distill and express the personality of a loved one, to create a singular image that truly honors them. That's the difference between a memento and a family heirloom."

"While I also offer live sittings, most paintings begin with a lengthy photo shoot after I've consulted with the client. We talk about the subject, their personality, and the scope and goals of the painting. My impression of the subject's personality during the photo shoot, and the painting's compositional needs, help me in selecting a few photos that serve as a starting point for the painting."

"I love to explore the subtleties of relationships with color and texture. I often spend 8 to 10 weeks on a painting, just refining and refining. The final result is impressionistic, but it sure isn't easy to get there."

How she got started:

Joanne recalls, "I thank the Art Center of Pasadena for preparing me well, as well as my mother's love and inspiration. She was a stubborn dreamer who overcame great difficulties."

On her 1990's divorce:

Joanne remembers, "That was a hard time. It's easy to lose faith in yourself and your judgment when that happens. And the financial pressure to be successful was cranked up at the same time, thank god for the friends and clients that stuck by me!"