

A Passion for Art Instruction

Accomplished Hendersonville portrait artist offers classes, DVDs and more to students of all ages.

*by Christine Pilkinton
Community contributor*

My interest and passion for art began at a very young age as I was noticed early on for having an above-average ability in drawing. My journey in fine art education was not the traditional college and art school route. It included study with over a dozen master artists in the U.S. and abroad.

I consider these divine opportunities to learn from men and women whose lineage can be traced back three to five generations, to such masters as Sargent, Eakins, Henri, Repin and Serov, among others. I take seriously the passing down of these timeless teachings, to students of all ages. I work primarily as a portrait and figurative artist and instructor in the

classical atelier tradition. My training has included study of other venues since portrait painting requires backgrounds, which may include still life and landscape. I am passionate about making this kind of classical instruction affordable and accessible to all who desire to learn.

My classes include easel-to-easel instruction in oil, pastel, and charcoal in spacious north light with artists of all levels. Weekly demonstrations, slide-shows, open studio sessions, working from life with models, still life arrangements and garden painting sessions are part of this classical training.

I am passionate about making classical instruction affordable and accessible to all who desire to learn.

I also teach weekly classes at Studio G (Walton Ferry) in Hendersonville and occasional workshops and fundraisers for the Hendersonville Arts Council at historic Monthaven Mansion.



Top, Hendersonville resident Meg Flannagan, age 9; center, student Ronda Soldana; and right, pastel work by Christine Pilkinton.
Photos by Christine Pilkinton

Inspiration and instruction

Working together with my husband Mark who is a graphic artist, musician and videographer, we have created a new series of instructional DVDs for artists. "Color, Keeping it Simple" and "The Art of Pastel" are both available on my website.

In addition, I have created more than 40 instructional and inspirational art videos, which are available for free on my YouTube Channel (Christine Pilkinton Studio).

Community, studio work

I currently serve as president on the board of directors of Monthaven Art Society, which has more than 100 members and offers free educational programs, exhibits and workshops in Sumner County.

Along with my passion to teach, I work with clients on a regular basis on portrait and figurative commissions. In this article I have focused primarily on the study and teaching of art; however, it is my passion for the face and figure translated in paint on a canvas that fuels this teaching and continued study.

I am currently represented by All About Art Gallery in Hendersonville where you may see a sample of my pastel portraits. I keep a regular flow of portrait and figurative commissions along with various art shows and festivals through the year.

Visit my website at PortraitCreations.com to see a full portfolio of my work, detailed class information, updated art shows.

Learn more

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Finding Joy in Art

Learning from the Masters

Hendersonville artist has worked with artists reknown in the United States and worldwide. She now works to pass along that knowledge to her students.

by *Christine Pilkinton*
Community contributor

My work with internationally known portrait artist and master pastel artist Daniel E. Greene began in 1994. Serving as assistant and class coordinator for his Nashville workshops, I was able to accumulate more than 225 hours under his instruction in New York and Nashville.

While at his North Salem studio in 1999, I was fortunate to model for a pastel demo during the workshop and purchased the painting, which now hangs in my collection. It is one of my treasured possessions as his portraits are \$25,000 to \$100,000.

I am also proud to be in the direct lineage of the following old masters through Daniel Greene, who studied with Robert Brachman, who had studied with George Bellows and Robert Henri who was a colleague and student of Thomas Eakins. All these men taught at the New York Art Students League between 1888-1955.

In 2008 I was introduced to Igor Babailov and began working with this acclaimed Russian artist who now resides in Franklin, Tenn.

I modeled for one of the workshops with Igor in which he completed three portrait demos of me, one in pencil, pastel and oil during a three-day workshop in Nashville.

Igor was recently bestowed the highest honor in the arts by the historically acclaimed Russian Academy of Arts (established in 1757) and was elected into its roster of Academicians.

In recent years, previous recipients of this honor included designer Pierre Cardin, HRH Princess Chantal of France and the great American artist Andrew Wyeth. I feel honored to be among his list of clientele' which includes the official portraits of world leaders such as Pope John Paul II, Pope Benedict XVI, George W. Bush, Hillary Clinton, Vlad.



Pastel portrait of Christine Pilkinton by Daniel Greene

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mir Putin and Nelson Mandela.

I consider Igor a friend and colleague and continue to work with him, organizing such things as guest speaker engagements for Monthaven Art Society, coordinating and sharing models between his workshops and mine and arranging for my own students to visit his studio and hear him speak.

I have been compelled through the past 25 years of study, to take notes and write down some of the teachings

and personal anecdotes of these many masters that I have been privileged to study with, now over a dozen classically trained artists. Several of them already deemed Living Masters. I consider it part of the gift I have been given with these experiences, to pass this passion and knowledge on to students of all ages. It is never too late in life to learn how to draw and paint, nor it is ever too late to have this passion and joy ignited in your spirit!

Artistic statement

Magnetic pull...

I am drawn like a magnet to the human face in museums. I am propelled as if by an invisible force to the beautiful color filled portraits and figures.

To take a piece of pastel paper and an hour later to have a rosy cheeked, wide-eyed beautiful baby's face smiling back at me, well that's close to the very heart of the Creator! Art is a co-creative process.

Divine Opportunity...

In addition to my passion for painting, I have been blessed with opportunities to study with over a dozen Master artists these past 20 years in Spain, New York, Chicago, Nashville, Maine and various other places.

Passion...

I have butterflies of excitement in my stomach every time I begin a painting. I have learned to hang on through the middle, the hardest part, until I arrive safely on the other side. While artists are often described as, 'starving', my spirit is nurtured by this profession.

As much as painting, I love the excitement bubbling in a young student as she arrives in my studio for class, exclaiming that she's waited all week for this time. Then seeing her white canvas spring to life with a cool running stream or a bright red apple that you could reach out for a bite of. I love that!