

# OIL PAINTERS OF AMERICA

2021 NATIONAL SALON SHOW | JUNE 10 THROUGH AUGUST 7

AT THE QUINLAN VISUAL ARTS CENTER



## LEAH WIEDEMER

Every artist will tell you that they have loved to draw from the time they could hold a crayon. Leah will tell you that she is no different.

Remembering when her younger cousin won an art award in his elementary school Leah says it was then that she decided a real artist was some sort of phenom. Not something she was born to. It didn't stop her from drawing, but it did make her think a career in art was not in her future.

When Leah was about ten or eleven, her dad 'hired' her to do a panel cartoon for his newsletter that he wrote. It was for an outdoor hunting and fishing organization he belonged to. That was Leah's first art job and she loved it.

Jumping ahead several years, marriage and two children later Wiedemer took a watercolor class at the local art school. She was hooked and immediately and naively applied to a job hand painting designs on leather gift items. For some reason Leah says, "he gave me a chance and ended up hiring me". During this time Leah participated in a number of well established art festivals all over Florida. While the festivals were successful, the stress of dealing with wind, rain, and watercolors in the weather convinced her to go in another direction.

A couple of years later Wiedemer applied to and got a job as a mural artist. The work was physically demanding but she enjoyed it and learned a lot. Enough in fact to start her own mural company. Things were going great. Leah had a lot of clients due to word of mouth and several high end interior designers. In spite of that she eventually began to feel dissatisfied. Having learned a lot of tricks to paint quickly, and a lot about brush control, and color mixing she was ready to concentrate on just becoming a better artist. So Leah began to shift away from mural painting to explore other mediums and try to hone her skills. She was asked to illustrate a series of children's books which she thoroughly enjoyed. And eventually illustrated a wordless book by the same author warning children and their families about the dangers of child trafficking. Wiedemer tried her hand at pastels and sidewalk art and did a six week gig at Walt Disney World painting Disney characters on the sidewalk with soft pastels.

At last Leah decided to explore oil painting. She says that she muddled along on her own for a couple of years experimenting and trying to figure out how to handle this new medium. Then by taking online classes Wiedemer began to see some real progress. During this period she got a job as a decorative painter for a national restaurant chain.

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A downturn in circumstances lit an artistic fire in Leah where she threw herself into doing whatever she had to do to improve and become competitive.. So, Leah studied, practiced, and learned as much as she possibly could. Wiedemer continues to study and practice, and tried to improve. And she has seen progress. Leah has had paintings accepted in several national shows including the Oil Painters of America, American Impressionist Society, NOAPS, and Richeson Art competitions. She still paints for the restaurant chains, and works a print on demand business, as well as teaches the occasional class or workshop, but her focus and true love remains oil painting.