

Mother,

Like



"This is someone resting, totally relaxed. I was interested in the flow of the body here. It's like a ripple or wave from the head to the feet."

Siesta (oil, 40 x 30) by Sandra Hulse



"I have three daughters, the youngest of whom was graduating high school. I was thinking about what I'd do with all the extra time."

Matching Thoughts (oil, 24 x 18) by Elizabeth Steving

Like

Daughter

With art to connect them, the bond between a mother and daughter is even stronger.

BY LISA WURSTER

Though making art is largely a solo endeavor, it helps to share the trials and tribulations with a fellow artist. And when that person is a family member, so much the better. As we discovered from three pairs of mother/daughter artists, making art a family affair has definite benefits.

Sandra Hulse & Elizabeth Steving

Sandra Hulse of San Angelo, Texas, grew up in an artistic community. Her mother and grandmother both were artists, so creativity virtually surrounded her. Her mother was a member of an active group of painters, and their creativity was contagious. As a child, Sandra recalls preferring her mother's extensive library of art books to children's storybooks.

Trained as a classical singer, Sandra turned to visual art when she married and had children. Inspired by artist Martha Mood, she decided to create fabric wall hangings. "Mood's wall hangings were unlike anything I'd ever seen—they looked like paintings," Sandra says. She took three years to teach herself the art form, deciding that if it didn't work out, she'd move on. Having since enjoyed commissions from private and corporate collections worldwide, it turns out she didn't have to.

While her children were growing up, Sandra continued to work on her wall-hangings in her home studio, so her daughter, Elizabeth Steving, also grew up in an art-rich environment. Elizabeth says she learned how to see "as an artist" from both her mother and grandmother.

"I spent hours by my grandmother's easel watching as she painted," Elizabeth says. She had assumed that all families were like hers, so it came as a surprise to her that her artistic upbringing fascinated those outside her family. As teenagers do, she decided to rebel: Because the rest of the family had cornered the market on visual art, she became a musician.

"Three children and one divorce later, music didn't seem like a very stable way to support my small children," she says, "so I set out, rather illogically, to become a painter. I just couldn't escape the artist's temperament I inherited."

A resident of San Antonio, Texas, Elizabeth studied at the Parsons School of Design, and for the first time she actually could teach her mother a thing or two. As a result, the two became closer, and they now travel together to research and collect material. They also display their artwork together at Artiques Studio (owned by Elizabeth) in San Antonio. Though they stop short of sharing the same working studio space, they do seek out and value each other's criticism.

"[Elizabeth] will say 'Come and see this painting I've done. I want your opinion—though I know it'll make me mad,'" laughs Sandra. "But I do the same thing to get her opinion of my work."

Elizabeth replies: "Everyone knows that the most honest person is a mother."

There was a time when Elizabeth would have made her mother stand 15 feet away from a painting when offering a critique so she'd see fewer mistakes. But Mom no longer watches from such a distance—a testament not only to Elizabeth's growth as an artist but also to their trust in each other. When asked how their work differs, Sandra says her daughter's is more detailed and innovative, even calling it "fearless."

"Elizabeth is a culmination of all our family's talents," Sandra says. "We're truly blessed to have this added dimension of art in our family."

Karen, Rebecca & Bonnie Latham

For Karen Latham and her daughters Rebecca, 25, and Bonnie, 21, painting is a learning process, and research is a major part. "It's half the fun of painting," Karen says. When the three artists head out to gather reference photos, they may take a combined 5,000 photographs in one photo shoot to study their subjects from every angle.

An avid wildlife and nature painter, Karen realized she had an artistic gift at age 10. The Hastings, Minn., resident studied both art and science, actually earning her degree in biology. Her philosophy is that the best artists never stop learning.

For Rebecca, fieldwork, whether during rain or shine, is her favorite part. "I have to drag myself back to my studio to paint, as I'd rather spend my time outside."

Like their mother, Bonnie and Rebecca are signature members of painting societies, including the Society of Animal Artists. They also have an impressive list of exhibits under their belts. This family of full-time artists run Latham Studios, where they license their designs and work on commissions, tasks that keep them quite busy.

Bonnie and Rebecca were home-schooled and began painting in their early teens, with their mother leading the painting classes. So the Lathams live, work and share a studio together, and painting occupies a great deal of their lives. Perhaps because of their emotional and physical closeness, it's sometimes difficult to tell their work apart. But Karen, being their mother, can see the differences.

Karen's daughters do have unique interests beyond wildlife and watercolor painting: Rebecca does sculpture and miniature paintings, often in traditional Flemish style. Bonnie paints the occasional portrait or landscape and also works in oils, graphite and ink.

Encouraged to appreciate both art and nature, Rebecca participates in wildlife fundraisers and spends much of her time observing and experiencing the great outdoors. Bonnie likes to bring the outdoors in, occasionally hauling moss, twigs and grass into the studio. She feels it's important not only to know your subject, but also to study its natural environment.

Though art is a family business for the Lathams, they each understand that their creations are more far-reaching than that. "The balance of nature is so delicate," Bonnie says, "I only hope that through my paintings more people will realize that unless we do our part, nature won't always be here for us to enjoy."



Research
"is half
the fun
of painting."

In the Light (watercolor, 9 x 17) by Karen Latham



"The balance of nature
is so delicate."

Lioness (watercolor, 5 x 7) by Bonnie Latham



"It is very important that the subject ... is studied
from every angle."

Blue Hyacinth Macaw (watercolor, 5 x 7) by Rebecca Latham

Dory & Laura Kanter

Dory Kanter teaches painting and journaling workshops, but she started as an artist by weaving textiles. Then she discovered watercolor and fell in love with it. She began exhibiting her work while her children were still young. The Portland, Ore., resident continues to weave, though now she weaves watercolor paintings instead of textiles.

Dory's daughter Laura was an active participant in her mother's art classes when she was young. If Dory was teaching her students how to make travel journals, Laura created right along with them. Not only did she follow her mother's lessons, she also followed in her footsteps by becoming a teacher herself.

Currently living in Shanghai, China, Laura, who is 23, teaches social studies at an international school, but she manages to weave journaling into her curriculum. She asks students to draw on their experiences to make illustrations and collages. And whenever she has a free moment, she works on her own journals.

"What fun it is to catch up with Laura by looking through her journal," says Dory. "Her pages are full of the spirit, color and mood of her experience living abroad. I'm thrilled that she can share highlights, mishaps and impressions with me through her art."

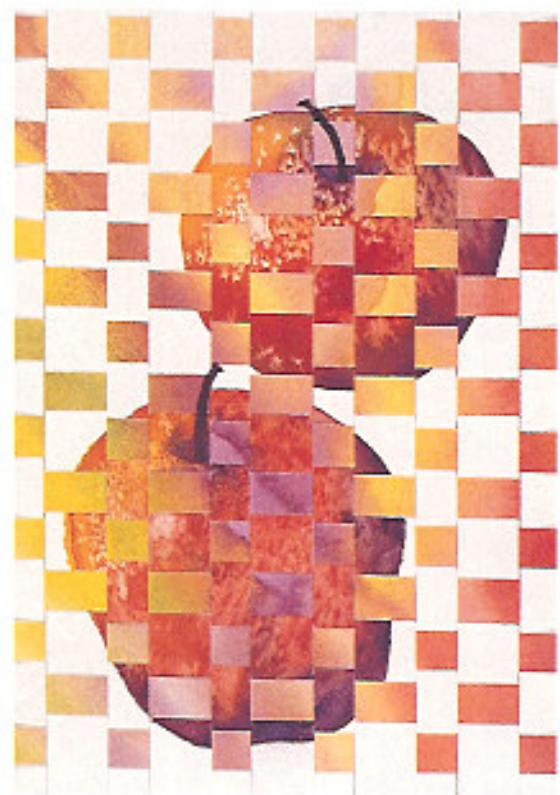
Dory often helps her daughter break free from creative blocks. When Laura becomes stuck in a creative pattern or perspective, her mother helps her make art that represents who she is without feeling the pressure to "create something deep or innovative."

"My mom and I share and steal ideas from our journals... Rather, I steal ideas from *her* journal," she says.

It could be that Mom's jump-right-in approach to art is what draws Laura in. Dory recently visited Laura in China, and the pair got to work almost immediately. First, they redecorated Laura's apartment. Then, inspired by Shanghai's art scene, they worked on collage panels. The papers strewn across the floor are testament to the fact that things often

get messy before they're finished. "We've made some mistakes," Laura says, "but I have high hopes for the outcome." ❧

Lisa Wurster is an assistant editor for *The Artist's Magazine*.



"I'm thrilled that [Laura] can share ... with me through her art."

Belle Mele Per Franca (watercolor, 10 x 7) by Dory Kanter

Try your own paper weaving project! (see the next page).



"My mom and I share ideas from our journals."

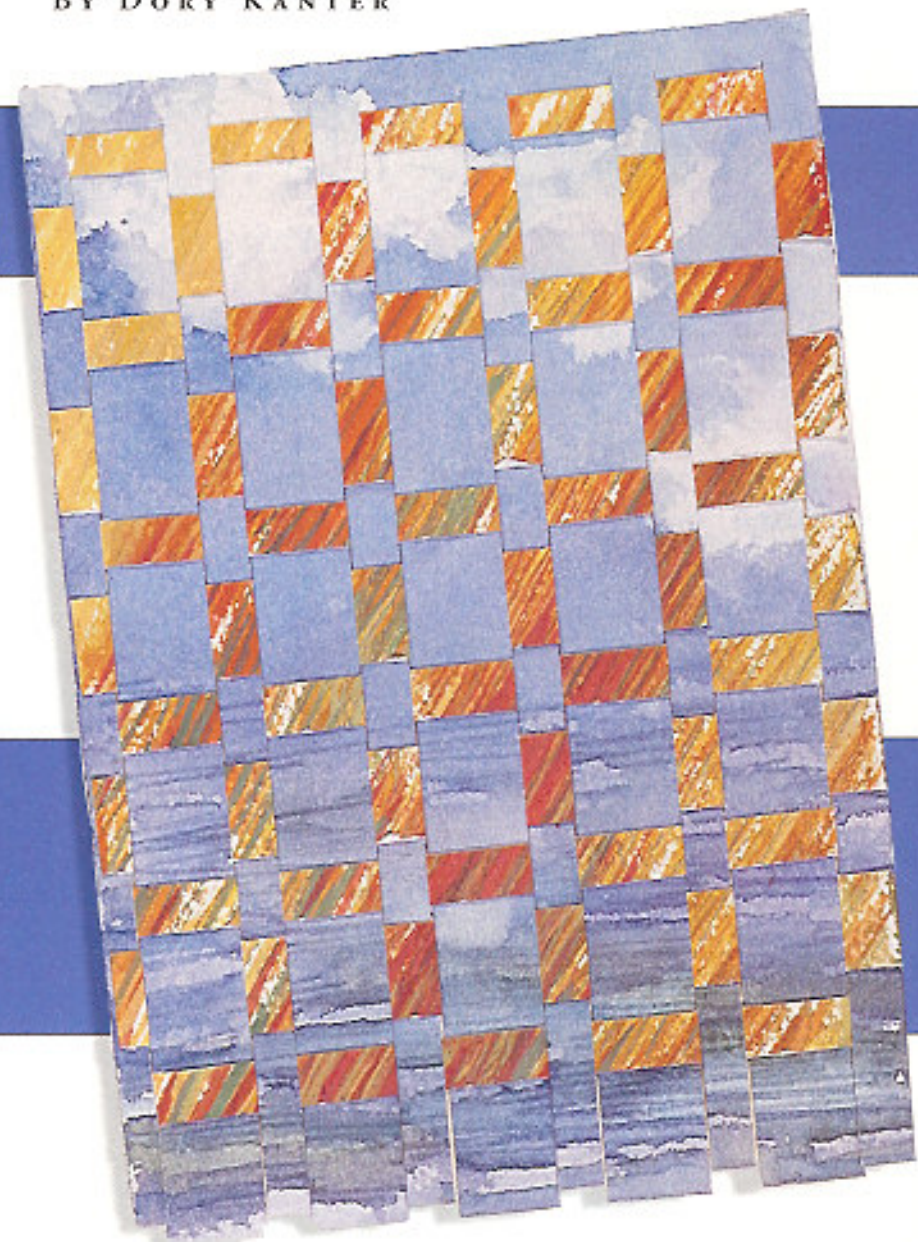
Hercules by Laura Kanter (5 x 8)

weave

orders

The final product is surprising when you combine two paintings into one.

BY DORY KANTER



Merge two paintings or photographs into a singularly fascinating construction. The end result is greater than the sum of its parts, and it's exciting to see how your woven image communicates emotion as much as visual meaning. The process is simple: Turn the page to see how I created *Sea Weave*, above (watercolor, 6 x 4).

supplies

- Watercolor paper
- Cutting board
- Watercolors
- Masking or drafting tape
- No. 2 round brush
- Scissors or craft knife
- Straightedge or ruler



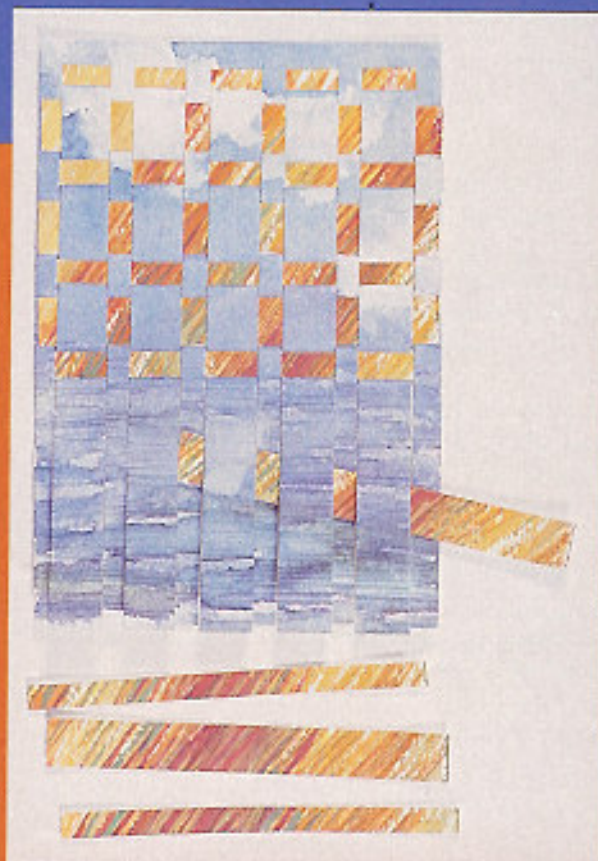
1 Paint Two Different Ways • Identify two aspects of your subject and paint each of them on a 4 x 6 piece of watercolor paper or a postcard. To create a beach theme, I painted sky, clouds and sea on one piece of watercolor paper. On the other, I indicated the colors and textures of beach grasses and flowers.



2 Cut vertical strips • Set the first image on a cutting board, stretch tape across the top $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch and secure it. Cut vertical slits, alternating between $\frac{1}{8}$ - and $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch widths. Start at the bottom and cut up to the lower edge of the tape, leaving the part underneath the tape uncut.



3 Cut horizontal strips • Use a craft knife and cutting board to cut the second image into horizontal strips, again alternating between $\frac{1}{8}$ - and $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch widths, keeping the strips in order.



4 Weave the strips • Weave each horizontal strip into the vertically cut painting. Alternate rows, beginning over and under, then working under and over. When you finish weaving, tape the edges of the back to keep the strips from unraveling.

Turn
the page
for another
great
idea!



weave a garden view

I created this page a few years back for my journal. I painted one blank watercolor postcard with greens to represent the foliage in my garden on a June day. On another postcard, I painted the colors of the late spring flowers budding and blossoming in my little garden patch. You can see that I didn't cut the strips evenly or in perfectly straight lines. I like this informal look—especially in my journal. Then I picked a flower from the garden that had inspired the original painting, and I tucked it underneath the paper weaving. It's pleasing to have a permanent reminder of a garden that grew years ago. *s*

Dory Kanter is the author of *Art Escapes: daily exercises & inspirations for discovering greater creativity & artistic confidence*, available from North Light Books.