

Jan Dilenschneider

Emerging from a family of artists, Jan Dilenschneider has painted all her life. Yet, she never had a desire to exhibit or sell her work until the spring of 2013, when a friend simply insisted on buying two paintings.

Soon afterward her studio doors opened to the world. She was offered a solo show at the prestigious Galerie Pierre-Alain Challier in Paris' historic Le Marais district, which started a remarkable chain of events: Two additional annual solo gallery shows in Paris followed by a solo museum show at the Bellarmine Museum in Fairfield, Conn. that broke attendance records.

In addition to her participation in the Art Paris Art Fair, Dilenschneider will also be among the artists participating in a trip to Toledo, Spain, this fall under the auspices of the Springfield Museums in Springfield, Mass. The trip will include a visit to the El Greco Museum as well as an opportunity for plein air painting of the landscapes depicted in the works of El Greco and Goya.

On October 7, the Lyme Academy College of Fine Arts, part of the University of New Haven, will open an exhibition of her work at the Sill House Gallery on campus. The exhibit will run to November 12. Lyme is the birthplace of the American Impressionist movement. She will give a gallery talk during the run of her exhibition.

Since she started exhibiting her work three years ago, Jan Dilenschneider has sold more than fifty of her paintings, and developed a unique style of expressionistic painting. Though many art critics have compared her work to the Impressionists, she says that while she loves their color palette at heart she is an Expressionist. Her inspiration comes from the ever-changing landscape around her Connecticut home. Living by the sea, she is inspired by shore grasses bending in the breeze, blue skies reflected in the cool water and extraordinary trees silhouetted against green lawns.

Dilenschneider has developed a unique type of diptych that she calls "pairs," because they do not have to be hung – nor sold – together. They are painted at the same time and with the same palette, an exercise that keeps the gesture and color fresh. She goes back and forth between the canvases until she gets it just right.

In addition to strong gestures, Dilenschneider is also known for her unique color sense. She likes to see colors "sing" or "vibrate" together by juxtapositioning strong, clear or complimentary color schemes.

Dilenschneider's most recent work combines landscapes and abstract images. One can see in them her gradual merging of the abstract into the landscape canvases.

Recently she painted "Vertical Triptychs" for exhibition at the Art Paris Art Fair at the Grand Palais. The Fair is the leading event in the Spring art calendar of the French capital. It features art from the post-war period to the present day with 145 exhibitions representing 2,200 artists. The Grand Palais is a Beaux-Arts structure opened in 1900 to house the great artistic events of the city of Paris and is called "a monument dedicated by the Republic to the glory of French art."

Dilenschneider received her training at The Ohio State University, The National Academy of Design in New York, the North Shore Art League in Illinois, and the Silvermine Art Center in Connecticut.

Philanthropic work is also an essential part of her life. She is a member of the board of the Connecticut Arts Council and is also a board member of Family Centers, Inc. in Greenwich, Conn. and Catholic Charities. She has been honored with the Helen Gratz Rockefeller Award for Outstanding Volunteerism and the Family Champion Award from the Connecticut Council of Family Service Agencies. She has also been honored by the Catholic Academy of Bridgeport for her artwork and her service.

Dilenschneider established the Janet Hennessey Dilenschneider Scholar Rescue Award in the Arts, which is administered by the Institute of International Education (IIE), a world leader in the international exchange of people and ideas that oversees the Fulbright Scholars program and helps rescue artists from countries in turmoil. The program created with IIE recently relocated a Syrian artist and her family to New Jersey, where she is a professor at Montclair State University and has applied for political asylum.