



A woman with long dark hair, wearing a wide-brimmed straw hat with a black band, a dark blue long-sleeved top, and a long, flowing maroon skirt, is walking away from the camera on a sandy beach. She is carrying a brown suitcase in her right hand and a pair of brown sandals in her left. The background is a soft-focus view of the ocean and a distant shoreline under a hazy sky.

# Ocean Diaries

BY EVE DEVORE

I like to think of my art as shaping a fleeting moment into something tangible. Always with paintbrushes, bits of charcoal, or pencils in my hands, I grew up trying to seize the essence of life around me. I've been painting as long as I can remember, and art has always helped me to better understand my connection to the world. My very first masterpiece was on the lacquered door of my mom's vanity, scribbled with a sharp nail — it wasn't well-received, but art is subjective, right?

Born in Ukraine, a daughter of engineers, I followed their advice and received my master's in electrical engineering, leaving art as only a hobby, but the burning desire to create never left my mind. Once I moved to New York, I finally took the opportunity to pursue art as my full-time career. It was a big breath of fresh air, a jump from a cliff, and a deep dive, well worth taking.

Most of the time I work from my home studio, but about two years ago I was going through a challenging period as a creator. Everything I was making felt too rigid, too limiting, and I craved the freedom of creating things just for myself. Some call it burnout, but I like to think of it as growth — when the place you're at becomes too comfortable, it's time for a change. What started as a spontaneous escape to a secluded beach with a box full of paints has become a series of plein air paintings I call Ocean Diaries, and has grown into an essential practice, reviving my creativity. >

I have a favorite place — a quiet and serene beach with a vast bed of sand stretching as far as the eye can see. Looking at my art, people may think of me as a marinist; however, I see these paintings as my feelings, wrapped in waves and the movements of the water, the sun reflecting off the white frothy caps, and the calls of lonesome seagulls gliding on the ever-changing trade winds. *If I don't paint outside at least once a week, I start feeling undone, especially during the summer.*

My setup is quite simple. My wooden plein air box is a microcosm of my home studio, filled with watercolors, colored pencils, pastels, paintbrushes, and a special hand-embroidered cotton cloth gifted to me by a friend. The box doubles as an easel, to which I attach paper using Washi tape. I use a butcher tray as a palette and over time it has acquired its own artistic flair with different colors and brushstrokes mixed with sand and bits of seashells. I often bring a wide straw hat, a bed sheet to sit on, freshly brewed coffee, and an apple in case hunger hits me; that's pretty much all I need to lose myself in the process of painting for hours. I use the incoming tides to keep time — when the waves start crawling dangerously close, I start packing and take it as a signal that it's time to finish my plein air session. ▸



## How to Capture the Ocean in Paint

- I'm a big fan of granulation in watercolors. It adds texture and movement to the painting.
- My favorite shades of blue watercolors are Verditer Blue, Cerulean Blue, Indanthrone Blue, and Manganese Blue (all by Daniel Smith).
- I almost never use blue colors out of the tube; I mix them with a bit of Burnt Sienna, Yellow Ochre, or Burnt Umber to add interest and achieve the particular shade I'm looking for.
- I love to mix ocean greens by playing with Phthalo Green, yellows, and reds; it creates less synthetic hues than premade greens may offer.
- My secret weapon for the most beautiful ocean foam is Titanium White casein paint! I love the way it interacts with wet watercolor.
- Most of my painting is done wet-on-wet, so I always nicely saturate the paper and keep a spray bottle nearby to add more moisture if needed.





Painting outdoors has also inspired me to make my own watercolors from the rocks and shells I find at the beach. The fact that I integrate a part of the place I am painting into the painting creates a deeper connection in my art.

Plein air painting has taught me to focus on the process instead of obsessing over the final result, which removes the fear of making a mistake. It is the time when I truly allow myself to intuitively lay down my paint with gestural brushstrokes. Most importantly, it has made me braver as an artist, breathing the spirit of curiosity into my creative growth.

Eve Devore is an artist living in Brooklyn, New York. Her work ranges from whimsical owl paintings, full of color and intricate details, to figurative nudes and abstract pieces, where she embraces the spontaneous nature of one of her favorite mediums — watercolor. To learn more, visit [evedevore.com](http://evedevore.com) and Instagram (@eve\_devore).

Photography by Vlad Baranenko.



# My Artistic Outdoor Atelier

BY WENDY MCMONIGLE, WM DESIGN HOUSE

For many, creating is a difficult task — to me, it has always come naturally. One of my sources of inspiration has always been my creative space.

Whether it's decorating, gardening, or crafting, I just love to bring beautiful elements together to create something special. I guess it's in my blood. As a young child in rural Pennsylvania, I would go "foraging" in the woods with my mother and grandmother for natural treasures we could use for decorating and crafting. My mother was a floral designer, so we always had freshly cut flowers from the garden around the house.

My mother inspired me to follow my dreams of a career in design. I've been a designer for many years. It's a career that has taken me around the world in search of beautiful and unique design elements. I've enjoyed inviting others to share my vision for a more beautiful home life through in-person and online classes on DIY projects for inside and outside your home.

We live in a historical home in California that was built in 1898 and is a historic landmark. We loved the idea of restoring and preserving unique buildings and beautiful structures of the past. Originally we had a utility shed in our side yard that was packed with storage items. When I needed a space that I could use for my studio, we tore down the shed and rebuilt it to be a functional, warm, and inviting creative space.

Since we started from scratch, I had the opportunity to use old and imperfect partially painted barn wood and multiple paned windows and doors for the entire structure. I used old chair spindles that were cut and graduated to fill the open transom above the French door entry. I even used vintage garden tools as door pulls for the entry into my space. ▸









My studio has no built-in cabinets, so storage was an issue. I hung a wooden ladder to house baskets and wreaths. Old tool cabinets store my smaller supplies. A vintage chicken coop allows workspace above and storage below to hold floral containers. We purchased a very large (and heavy) butcher block table as another worktop space, with drawers and an area below for old wood crates that offer additional storage. I even found an old pie safe that I use as a floating cabinet.

I have decorated the inside of the space with handmade birdhouses, vintage scales, glass floral frogs, old garden tools, and unusual floral containers; this environment creates a unique atmosphere for inspiration in which to work. *From wreaths and floral arrangements to vintage art, this space resonates creativity.* Having many windows and doors, the ability to bring the outside in has added to the ambience of my studio.

My studio furniture and fixtures all came from estate sales and thrift stores, making these items very economical. There's nothing like getting up at 3 a.m. to get in line for a table or cabinet that we spotted on a website and I couldn't live without! We have gathered items from all around the U.S., as far away as Texas and New York, to create my space. >







## 5 Tips for Keeping Flowers Fresh Longer

1. When you first bring home your flowers, clean them. Remove all of the packaging, rubber bands, excess foliage on the stem, and a few of the outer petals if needed. Make a small cut on the bottom of the stem and place it in fresh water.
2. Always trim the stems on an angle, and use Quick Dip while arranging to extend the life of the blooms (this product is available on Amazon).
3. You never want any foliage or leaves in the water, so it is a must to remove the foliage on the stem from the waterline down.
4. If you're using hydrangeas, soak the heads of the flowers in water for five minutes.
5. Change the water in your arrangement daily.





This studio is my perfect place for making floral arrangements, wreaths, and home decor items, as well as serving as inspiration for developing future classes to share my ideas on creating with vintage items and foraged materials found in nature. *Nothing pleases me more than crafting something new from something old and sharing that with my friends.* This idea was the seed that developed into my in-person and online classes, through which I show others how they can easily be creative too. Many of my friends, old and new, never imagined how creative they could be until they stepped outside their comfort zone to try something new. From holiday wreaths to painting and finishing gourds, my students are always asking when the next class will be and what we will be making.

To learn more about Wendy McMonigle and WM Design House, visit [wmdesignhouse.com](http://wmdesignhouse.com), Instagram (@wmdesignhouse), and Pinterest ([wendymcmonigle/wmdesignhouse](https://www.pinterest.com/wendymcmonigle/wmdesignhouse)).

Photography by Melinda Roth of Melinda Roth Photography ([melindarothphotography.com](http://melindarothphotography.com), @melindarothphotography).





# INSPIRED BY *Paradise*

BY TANIA WURSIG

If you told me 10–15 years ago that I would be living and painting in Tahiti three months each year, I would have said, “You’re nuts!” Well this, fortunately, turned out to be true. In 2011, with a professional career spanning almost two decades, I was offered a fully sponsored three-month artist’s residency on the French Polynesian island of Tahiti. Ever since, I have returned annually to explore the islands, paint, gather inspiration, and conduct international painting workshops and art classes for locals. I also exhibit each year in downtown Pape’ete, where I am represented by the prominent Galerie Winkler. My exposure to the Polynesian people and culture has changed the course of my inspiration, my career, and my life most profoundly. Living with and experiencing the Tahitians’ way of life has opened my eyes and reconnected my heart to the importance of nature and connection to place and culture.

Born in Sydney, Australia, my passion for art and love of nature have always been paramount. As a young child, painting and drawing was how I played. My mother was a prominent fiber artist who always encouraged my “art play.” My maternal grandmother also helped pave my creative journey; a somewhat eccentric character, she was a yoga teacher and nature lover who lived mostly off the foods she grew in her wild garden, which she nurtured like a work of art.

Growing up on Sydney’s northern beaches instilled in me a need to be close to nature and the ocean. When I was accepted into Sydney College of Arts, I was forced to move to the inner-city harbor suburbs of Balmain and Rozelle, shifting several times before finally settling in my current home and studio, where I have been based now for 30 years. Despite being very much inner-city, the Balmain/Rozelle peninsula is surrounded by Sydney’s extensive harbor waters and numerous foreshore parks, making for an easy escape to nature. ▸

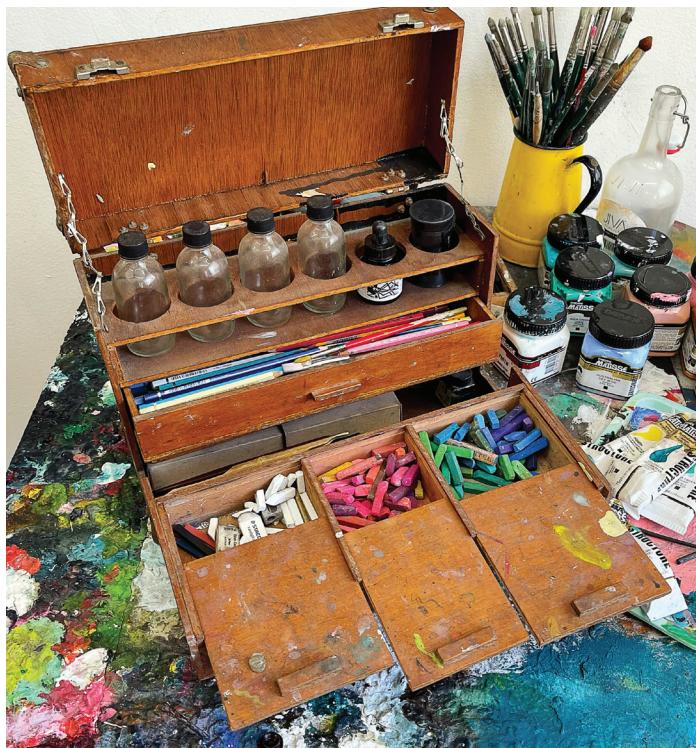


*Photo by Audrey Svaboda*



I am fortunate to have two studio spaces: one in Sydney and one on the island of Tahiti. Due to COVID-19, this last year was the first time in a decade that I didn't spend three months in my Tahiti studio, but all my materials are there waiting for me.

My Sydney studio is located on the bustling Darling Street strip of Rozelle, popular for its numerous bars, restaurants, and cafes. The iconic Sydney terrace has three floors, a French Patisserie on the street level, my large open-plan loft-style home is on the top floor, and my studio is on the middle floor. Large and light-filled, with concrete floors, high ceilings, and southeast-facing windows, my studio is spacious enough to combine an adequate working area, up to eight students with easels, and a small exhibition space.



Like my home, the studio has a very eclectic feel that reflects my unique island-bohemian style. I like to create vignettes around my space to complement the works I hang on the exhibiting walls. *As a collector at heart, both my home and studio are full of objects and various ephemera I have accumulated on my travels around the world, in particular from the islands of Tahiti.* One of my most prized possessions, which I keep as a talisman in my studio, is my tiki; I found this hand-carved piece whilst traveling through the Marquesas, on the island of Nuku Hiva. Carved by a local artist, it is adorned with ancient Marquesan designs that symbolize flow, protection, and good fortune.

My Tahiti studio is located on the sixth floor of the Sofitel resort just outside of Pape'ete. A shared studio and exhibition space, it is vast and open with two large balconies boasting postcard views over tropical gardens and a turquoise lagoon, to the island of Moorea beyond. Whilst on residency, this space accommodates my local workshops and packaged international art retreats, aptly named Painting in Paradise. These retreats include accommodation, as well as cultural and site specific tours, which I am hoping to recommence in early 2022. ▸





Photo by Audrey Svaboda

## My Studio *Must-Haves*

Music is a must when I am working. I get bored easily, so my "Discover Weekly" on Spotify is a highlight for new tune discoveries — the louder, the better.

I love my headphones, as I feel like I am in my own universe with my work, with no external noise distractions.

I cannot live without my two palette tables on wheels. I can move them around to suit where I am painting, and one has a shelf for storage so I am not always looking for the paints and paintbrushes I need.

Being a figurative and portrait artist, I work mostly from photographs I take of my subjects, so my iPad has totally changed the way I paint. I can zoom in on details that are difficult to discern from the first sittings. I don't go anywhere without it.

Time-lapse video is like my invisible boss. I first started playing with these videos as a way of creating social media content, which I still do, but the extra bonus is that while it's running, I feel like I am being watched and it makes me "perform." It has become a motivational tool, especially when I have to work long hours to meet deadlines.

I have a special relationship with my observation chair. "Distance is your friend" is something I always say to my students. It is the only way to get perspective, see your mistakes, observe proportions, etc. At the end of a long day painting, this chair is my best friend. She has convenient wide, flat-topped arms that I can comfortably rest my glass of wine on.

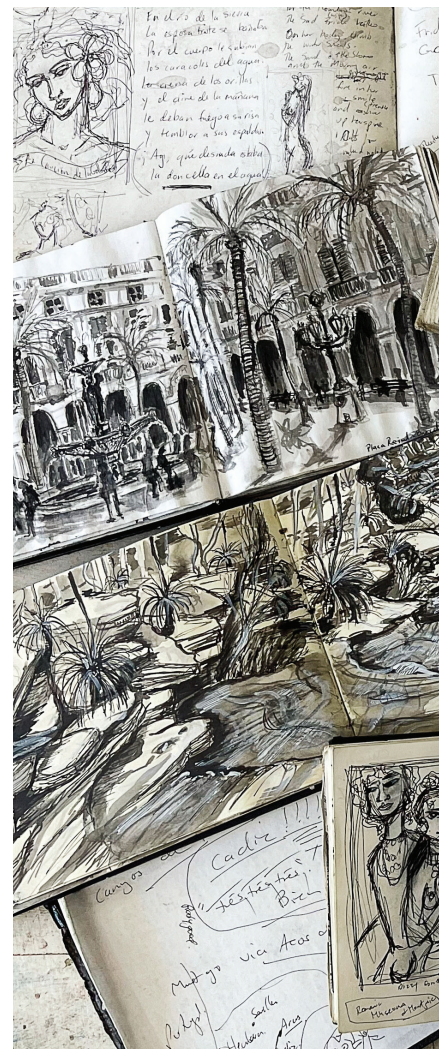




Photo by Audrey Svaboda





I haven't always had the privilege to jump between two studios. In my early days, I used to set up a studio wherever I could find space. All I needed was my sketchbook and my "studio in a box," which is my most valuable companion: a 1940s wooden medicine box. When opened, the box neatly houses six bottles of ink, a long drawer for paintbrushes and pencils, and three separate compartments with sliding lids containing charcoal and pastels. This case has been with me for 30 years and has traveled the world by my side.



Tania Wursig is a figurative painter whose work is predominantly a celebration of life and culture, with an exotic flavor and flamboyant color palette. Her paintings are imbued with strong cultural influences that span from the Gypsy caves of Granada, as seen in earlier works, to the islands of Polynesia, specifically Tahiti. To learn more, visit [taniawursig.com](http://taniawursig.com) and Instagram (@taniawursig).

Photography by Audrey Svaboda and Tania Wursig.