

# Malden Artist Lisa L. Sears: Art is a Journey



"Set a Course" (colored pencil and paper)



"Junk Drawer" (mixed media – photograph, acrylic on paper, oil pastel, newspaper clippings, found wood, nails and glue on board)

By Pam Wehbi

Texas-raised visual artist Lisa L. Sears of Malden likes to keep her work "open ended." That is not to say that her pieces are unfinished. Rather, they enable the viewer to enter the scene and make a personal

discovery. That's the beauty of art's subjectivity — and Sears as a visual storyteller.

Sears' stories on canvas are about a journey and often feature a boat used symbolically. "The boat can be the personification of change or a journey or even a mental shift," she

explains. "It's about a positive change — moving through something. It might help viewers on a path of thinking."

Sometimes Sears mixes vessels, such as the boat (vessel on water) and a vase (vessel on land) to direct her story. "Like in the beginning of a play, all



Lisa L. Sears with two works on canvas

the parts are laid out before you, and then they start coming together. I'm setting the scene." Viewers then can imagine themselves in the art and interpret it as they wish.

Her scenes usually include recurring characters. "In a way, I'm often drawing the same person or same people — my identical twin sisters." The idea of two who are the same yet different fascinated her from an artistic point of view. "I like the idea of identity, and how something looks is in the reality of it." More often, however, she uses hands rather than faces or bodies so as not to indicate gender or race. They show up in works that she creates in acrylics, watercolors, pastels, pencil and mixed media.

"I love to draw on paper and then paint," Sears says. "I like seeing the lines of the pencil or brushwork come together. It helps my brain think to have the penciling — holding the implement in my hand." Recently, Sears began incorporating her old photographs into her mixed media projects. "People think of a photo as a concrete relay of reality," she explains. "I like mess-

ing around with that. I also like the idea that I took a piece of art and manipulated and changed it into something new."

It was the desire to try something new that brought Sears to Massachusetts 20 years ago. After earning a BFA in studio art from the School of Visual Arts, University of North Texas, she realized that, despite having a treasured degree, her fellow grads were working as baristas and in bookstores. "I did the Dr. Doolittle thing where you open up the atlas and put a pin somewhere," she says. "I was looking to go somewhere new. I like the idea of seasons and history, and loved the idea of being closer to Europe." Massachusetts earned the pin.

Her journey as an artist continues to take her down new paths. In November she hopes to participate in a juried multimedia event in Malden of works inspired by "Pictures at an Exhibition," a suite of 10 movements for piano by Modest Mussorgsky.

For more information about Lisa L. Sears or to contact her, visit <https://www.facebook.com/LisaLSearsArt>.