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## Meet Lauren Siry of 1805 Gallery in Little Italy



Today we'd like to introduce you to Lauren Siry.

**Thanks for sharing your story with us Lauren. So, let's start at the beginning and we can move on from there.**

Creating art has always been an important outlet for me. I love that art provides new perspectives on how we relate to the world. It can connect to all fields of science, history, sociology, and philosophy, all of which I try to explore in my art practice.

After joining a high school figure drawing class I realized that I wanted to pursue art seriously so I began studying painting and drawing at pre-college programs in San Francisco and Boston. Art has been an excellent way for me to connect to a diverse network of individuals. I would meet people from all over the world forming relationships with them as I sketched their portrait.

After I received my Bachelors of Fine Arts degree from Tufts University and the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, I returned to San Diego determined to continue my art practice. It was really difficult to find a full-time position in the art field so I decided to open up my own space in 2012. I located a 115 sq ft space in Little Italy and transformed it into 1805 Gallery. Despite the limited square footage, I used the space as my art studio and started organizing art shows that featured other local artists.

For a few years, I was balancing 1805 Gallery and a full-time position at Lux Art Institute in Encinitas until I decided to pursue my Masters in Contemporary Art at Sotheby's Institute of Art in London. I specialized in contemporary art history, curating, and strategic management for the art world. Although London offered a vibrant and international art scene, the weather was not ideal. I chased the sun back to San Diego to expand 1805 Gallery and to develop an artist network in a more favorable climate.

**We're always bombarded by how great it is to pursue your passion, etc - but we've spoken with enough people to know that it's not always easy. Overall, would you say things have been easy for you?**

After graduating college it was difficult to find stability as a practicing artist and due to a lack of funding for the arts, there were few full-time positions available at art institutions. I found myself juggling multiple jobs and projects that left little time for my art practice.

While I am fortunate to be able to focus on the arts full-time now, many artists I know have multiple jobs and work on their art in the evenings. The lack of exhibition opportunities and financial support in San Diego forces many of these artists to relocate to cities like Los Angeles or San Francisco.

If we want to live in a thriving cultural community then we need to support the arts by investing in original artwork or attending art exhibitions. You can locate exhibitions and events through websites like Art Guide San Diego or event listings through San Diego City Beat.

ICE Gallery at Bread & Salt, Helmuth Projects, Nah Nah, San Diego Art Institute and The Artist Odyssey are just a few spaces and organizations that host events highlighting contemporary artists. Get out there to support your local artists, meet interesting people, share ideas and invest in original works of art that speak to you!

**So, as you know, we're impressed with 1805 Gallery - tell our readers more, for example what you're most proud of as a company and what sets you apart from others.**

1805 Gallery is an artist studio and exhibition space that features emerging and mid-career artists who explore unique concepts through painting, drawing, sculpture, installations and digital work. The gallery was well known for its intimate size, but I am thrilled to announce that it has recently expanded to accommodate larger exhibitions, workshops, artist talks and residency projects.

The artist residency program stands out as a unique feature in San Diego because the street-level space is like a glass box. When an artist is working on a project you can watch the artwork evolve through the windows. For Ry Beloin's residency project, visitors were invited to the gallery to share stories as she sculpted their portraits in clay.

While Ry opened the gallery doors for visitors, Melissa Walter, a graphic designer and science illustrator for NASA, sealed them shut for her thread installation that explored the scientific concept of dark energy, only to be viewed from the outside of the gallery. The residency program at 1805 Gallery grants rare access to the artist's studio practice which breaks down the barrier between the artist and audience. It is a chance for people to experience contemporary art in a new way while giving artists the artistic freedom to experiment and explore their ideas in a public setting.

I am proud that I can provide opportunities for diverse artists to develop their art practice while producing exciting experiences and events for collectors to acquire meaningful works of art. To reach a larger audience and expand exhibition programming I launched Art Above, a rooftop art

exhibition series featuring original works of art, installations, and performances at the Porto Vista Hotel in Little Italy.

I also offer curatorial services that include curating, researching, acquiring, commissioning, and framing works of art for personal and professional spaces. I specialize in private collections, hotel art collections, curating art exhibitions and events for galleries, museums, and organizations.

**So, what's next? Any big plans?**

I think it is really important for artists and businesses to collaborate in order to develop a financially supportive arts network so I am reaching out to local businesses to fund artistic projects that will enrich their business and engage their customers.

I am working on implementing an arts program at the Porto Vista Hotel that will showcase contemporary artists throughout the building. At the moment my watercolor and ink painting series about the Greek myth of Icarus is on view and available within each hotel guest room, but as I develop the art program I would like to bring in a variety of original works from local artists to make available to guests.

I plan to activate all areas of the hotel with creative projects by focusing on unusual and unlikely spaces for art. At the next Art Above I will be launching Conveyor, a new exhibition series that activates the hotel's elevators as exhibition sites. I will be working with the Porto Vista Hotel to commission artists to produce installations within each elevator. These projects are ways to engage spaces creatively and generate energy within the community.

My goal is to establish relationships between businesses, artists, and audiences while expanding these exhibition series to various locations in San Diego and beyond.

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