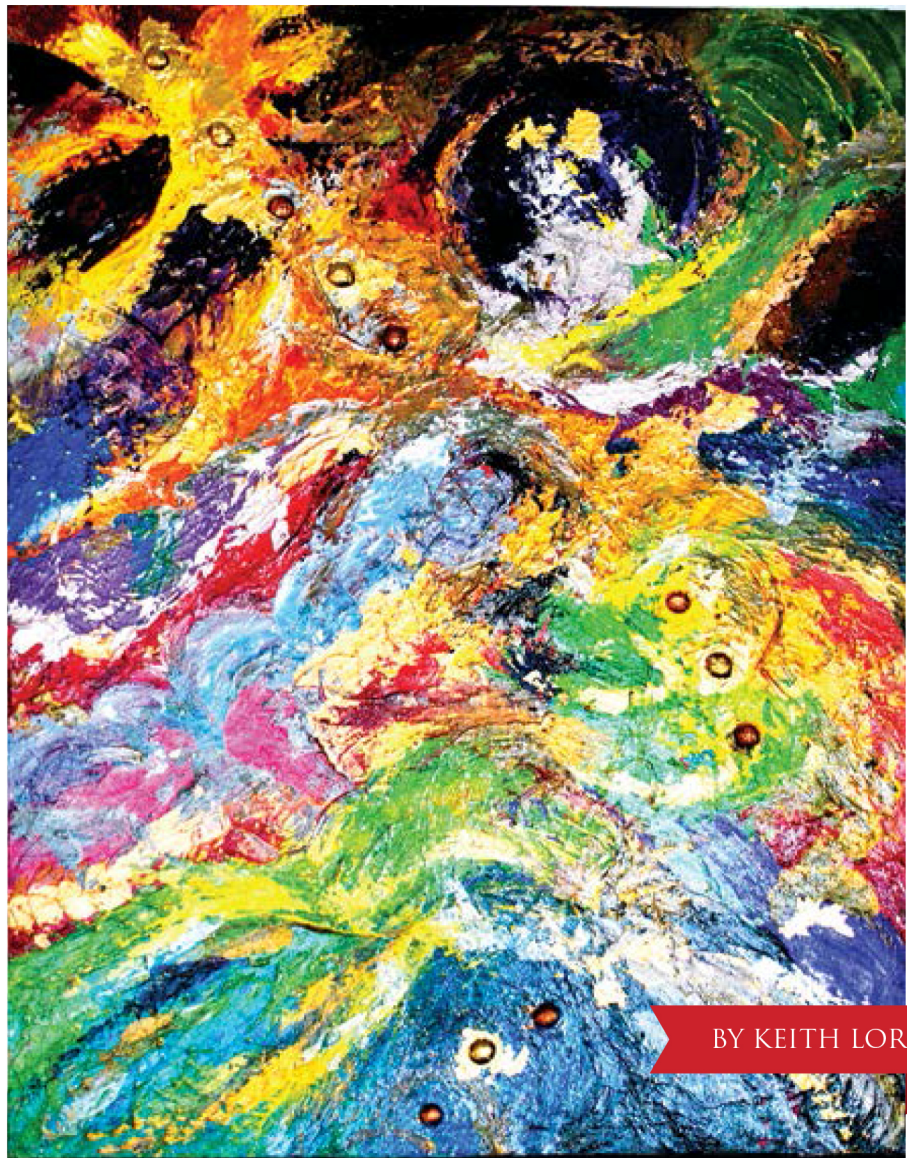


Convergence, by Nia Tavlariides Stratos



BY KEITH LORIA

Photos by Stephanie Stratos

ALWAYS *an Artist*

"I always say that I don't think you become an artist, you are born one, said Nia Tavlariides Stratos."

Stratos is a mixed media artist based in Washington, D.C., who found her love for art early in life and was thankfully allowed to express herself in her home.

"My parents were awesome about letting me do that," said Stratos. "I had mushrooms on my wall one year and lime green checkers another. I was always creating from very young."

In fact, Stratos sold her very first painting when she was just eight years old.

"I used to enter contests and submit to lots of different places, and as I grew older, I expanded to juried exhibitions and things like that," said Stratos. "I always took every art course I could and worked on my art whenever I could."

While attending Woodrow Wilson High School, Stratos received a scholarship to study art at the Smithsonian – she chose print making as her focus. She also elected to study metal shop instead of home-economics, because she wanted to explore sculpture and metal in her art.

"I was an entrepreneur from very early on. I would design jewelry and sell it to my friends and I used to draw album covers," said Stratos. "I always loved to create and share my talent and eventually, learned to make money at it."

Stratos attended the University of Maryland and studied art and design. During that time, she did a variety of different jobs that were design-oriented, including working as a make-up artist, holding jewelry trunk shows and being a director and fashion stylist at different publications. Eventually, she entered the advertising field.

"I did fall in love with that kind of work because it was extremely creative," she said. "There was a lot of strategy required and after working for two small firms, I started my own firm, which I had for many years. That was a different kind of art, creating an image to sell a product."

It was about 10 years ago when Stratos went back to painting and made the decision to try and pursue it professionally. She knew that it could be a "now or never" point in her life. She quickly got her work in a couple of galleries and submitted work around the area.

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Nia Tavlariides Stratos



ask me when I know I am done, it is just an instinct," she said. "I paint feverishly, feeling each movement and step away to 'feel' my results. The artwork is complete when I have nothing left to say and can happen in an instant."

Stratos loves to paint to music and applies the paint in rhythm to what she is hearing. She has various techniques of application but never limits herself to specific tools or materials.

"I work with all my senses. I am inspired by the simplest things and rarely have 'Artists Block,'" she said. "Color excites and inspires me. I love to transform the images in my head to paper, canvas or other surfaces."

The artist believes that she is greatly influenced by her Greek heritage and a great deal of her work incorporates a Greek title and a Greek feel in her work.

Stratos' work can currently be seen in "Color of Joy: An International Perspective," on display at Ronald

Evolution, by Nia Tavlariides Stratos



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Reagan Washington National Airport until May 30. The exhibit, part of the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority Arts Program, also features Christine Kiley.

Nearly 60 works of art border the pedestrian walkway, in the airport's Gallery Walk art corridor which is near the underground walkway connecting Terminal A with the parking garages.

The "Color of Joy—An International Perspective" showcases art from around the world in many artistic styles: abstraction, expressionism, impressionism and collage. Stratos says it is presented as geometric forms, florals, landscapes and compositions arranged and grouped according to color.

"I work in a lot of mixed-media, work on canvas, work on paper and I incorporate a lot into the product—pieces of glass, wire, metal," said Stratos. "I love to work with iridescent pigment. Many times people look at my art and cannot believe that the same person did all of it."

Stratos is also represented by the Aaron Gallery, with locations in downtown D.C. and Chevy Chase, Md.

For more on the artist, visit www.niastratosfineart.com.

AUTHOR: Keith Loria is a freelance writer who writes regularly about sports, business, entertainment, and the arts. When he's not writing, the Oakton work-at-home dad can be found playing with his daughters Jordan and Cassidy.