

Santa Fe Artists: Inspiring Students from Around the World

by [Luke Fannin](#)

As we gear up for [DIY Santa Fe: A Creative Tourism Journey](#), coming March 1 - 31, 2014, we're taking the opportunity to share some firsthand accounts from students who have taken classes with Santa Fe Creative Tourism artists. We hope their stories of creativity, openness, and inspiration are just what you need to hear to get involved this year. Find a workshop for you at santafecreativetourism.org/new-calendar/.

If you've ever visited Santa Fe, you know we're more than just a little proud of our rich and diverse cultural arts tradition. That heritage is at the very core of our city's identity, and the great community of artists, art advocates, and art lovers who call Santa Fe home work hard to foster and maintain it. Those efforts result in thousands of new visitors from all over the United States and even around the world coming to experience Santa Fe every year.

Last year, one such visitor was Cinzia Hochstrasser, a 34-year-old amateur artist and tourism professional from Lugano, Switzerland, who spent a month in Santa Fe in the summer of 2013 taking workshops with Linda Storm, Andrea Cermanski, Julianne Poldi, and Nancy Reyner. Though she has always been a creative and artistic individual, Ms. Hochstrasser only took up painting as a hobby in 2008, and it quickly became an obsession. After starting in watercolor, she transitioned to oils, which had been her primary medium until her time here in Santa Fe. "I mostly paint people, faces, emotions and expressions," says Hochstrasser. "I love to paint the faces of different people, races, and genders." (You can see more of Ms. Hochstrasser's work at her art blog, [Cinzia's Art Show](#).)

After a few years of painting, Ms. Hochstrasser decided she needed to challenge herself a bit more--to "break out of her comfort zone," as she put it, and try some new things artistically. Around the same time her employer granted her the opportunity "to follow and accomplish a dream," a bonus of sorts given to employees of a certain tenure. Hochstrasser chose to use the opportunity to pursue her goals as an artist. "My ambition was to be able to get a glimpse of an artist's life and spend a period of time painting and working with them," she says.

Though she initially sought artist mentors in San Francisco and Los Angeles, an American friend turned Ms. Hochstrasser on to Santa Fe. After a bit of research, she "fell in love with the suggestion and the place right away." Hochstrasser soon discovered [Santa Fe Creative Tourism](#), where she was able to plan her entire trip. "The only difficulty," she recalls, "was that I had to choose from such a long list of artists." Cinzia didn't have much in the way of selection criteria going in, but she did want to get away from the kind of work she was accustomed to doing, so she focused primarily on abstract artists working in acrylic, leading her to those artists mentioned above.

Cinzia learned a great deal from each of her teachers in Santa Fe--from abstract expression with Reyner and Poldi, to encaustics with Cermanski, and even painting miniatures with Storm.

“Linda showed me that you just have to go with the flow--what you want to do, you have to do, and can do. I had three days with her, and I think those three days were more like two artists painting together, having fun painting and creating without any limits or set techniques.”

“I loved all of my workshops in Santa Fe,” says Hochstrasser. “Each of the artists showed me something different, different methods and techniques, different ways of teaching, different ways to paint and see art. After my experience in Santa Fe, I have developed even further as a painter. I still love to paint people, but I discovered the world of the abstract, and acrylic and encaustic painting, too. I’ve not yet decided what I enjoy more...”

Cinzia’s open-minded approach to her workshop experience in Santa Fe allowed her to learn and grow in some unexpected ways. “To tell you the truth, I did not plan to use the workshops solely to improve my techniques or process (which they truly did, too!),” she says. “I believe I wanted to see what “art” was for these artists, what it meant for them. I felt the need to see and sense what they felt when they were painting, what it gave to them and what they could give to others with their art and paintings, to see their passion and happiness in creating.”

“This experience,” Ms. Hochstrasser continues, “gave me the opportunity to have a direct connection and glimpse of an artist’s life, and it gave me a needed shove in the right direction: I wanted to invest more of my time and my passion into art and my painting, and now I do! In the end, even after a really full month of workshops, my passion for art did not dwindle at all. I came back home with so many ideas, pictures, and sketches which I’m still trying to put and into my paintings. I think my Santa Fe teachers have allowed me to reach the most important objective of all: the passion and love for arts and painting and the diversity of skills and techniques to achieve it.”

DIY Santa Fe: A Creative Tourism Journey is a project of the City of Santa Fe Arts Commission’s Creative Tourism program, which offers over 250 creative experiences throughout the year. In 2005, UNESCO named Santa Fe to the Creative Cities Network, the first American city to be so honored. DIY Santa Fe features hundreds of immersive, hands-on arts experiences in and around Santa Fe during the month of March, and includes exclusive partner deals with some of the region’s finest accommodations and dining establishments.