



# INTO THE WILD





*Runners In The Wind*  
Pastel on Texas map collage

Artist Lisa Gleim pairs clever compositions with masterful realism of the untamed and predatory that inspire viewers to ponder on its mystical interactions with nature.

Words By: Sam Gibbons





*A Kodiak Moment*  
Pastel on maps 34 x 46 in.

Exceptional wildlife artists capture more than simply animals in the wilderness. They illustrate how animals interact with each other, their environment, and what transpired before and after their demonstrated moment. And only a few artists can capture these vibrant scenes in colorful pastels as the American artist Lisa Gleim.

When a pastel stick is not in hand, Lisa is in perpetual motion being a wife, a mother, and traveling to get inspiration. As a child, Gleim drew with crayons and colored pencils and dabbled in

watercolors here and there. "I'll never forget my first day at Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (PAFA)," recalls Gleim. "It started with a figure-painting class. I literally said to the instructor, 'I don't know what to do!'" Acting on her suggestion, I plunged in and started moving paint around the canvas. I felt like I was jumping into the deep end of the water with an anchor! During my first two years of training at PAFA, I did advance from drawing to painting. My favorite classes, however, were figure drawing and animal drawing, so I still worked in my original media. I plan to paint full-time as a portrait artist working in oils."



Lisa's plans changed when a classmate handed her a small set of pastels. She began experimenting and instantly fell in love with the medium, and her collection has grown exponentially ever since. "I was quickly fascinated by its smoothness; the broader marks it allows, compared with colored pencils; the layering I could create; and the richness of the pure pigments," explains Lisa. "Mixing paint to achieve the color I want isn't one of my strengths. This is why I have thousands of pastel sticks. Generally, I can instinctively pick out the color match I want. If it is not spot on, I

can create it through layering and mark making, beginning with harsher strokes and building it up."

After graduating from PAFA, Lisa studied portraiture with Cedric and Joannette Egeli in Maryland. Although the workshop mainly focused on charcoal drawings and oil paintings, Lisa was captivated by Joannette's pastel portraits of children, which significantly influenced her next direction - specializing in children's portraits and later pets.

*All Wet*  
Pastel on Montana map 20 x 22 in.







*One Must Be A Fox To Recognize A Trap*  
Pastel on geographical maps 21 x 31 in.

When taking on a portrait commission, Lisa worked in minimalist realism, focusing on the subject and not its surroundings. One day, when commissioned to paint a swimming dog based on photography provided by the client, it completely changed her outlook. “Wow! I found myself in heaven,” reflects Gleim. “By adding landscapes and water, I could greatly expand my work to include the other elements I’d enjoyed painting. Water, in particular, was exciting for me to work with because of how varying light and atmosphere affect the subject. A seascape on a sunny day is very different from the same view on a gray day. There’s such movement and so many streaks of colors in the water reflections. I think a sense of motion gives two-dimensional work added depth.”

After painting portraits for more than 15 years, Lisa believes she has finally found her muse,

nature’s finest animals. She paints on location as often as possible, her favorite destinations being the eastern coastal regions and western mountains. Her newest work includes wildlife with a backdrop of maps of national parks. Lisa skillfully drew each piece using layers of colorful pastel mark making, a juxtaposition from the subtle backgrounds of vintage maps and collectible memorabilia. At times, she will add delicate touches of gold or lustrous pearl, as seen in *One Must Be A Fox to Recognize A Trap*.

Artist Lisa Gleim has been increasingly recognized as a fine artist and recipient of numerous awards including Audubon Artists Gold Medal of Honor in Pastel. Her pastels are collected by individuals, corporations and museums, including the Booth Western Art Museum. ✈

[www.LisaGleimFineArt.com](http://www.LisaGleimFineArt.com)