

MacRosie Art Center
Studio Residency Application 2025

Marija Leilynn Artistry

S T A T E M E N T

My artistic practice cycles through oil painting landscapes, photojournalism, and creative writing. I rotate through these seasonally, with the slower mediums of painting and writing taking precedence through the autumn, winter, and beginning of spring, and photojournalism over the summer. I am seeking a studio space to have a concentrated area I can make my own to create work I am proud of and which can help springboard me into more opportunities to share with my community. I currently live in a small cabin with friends and don't have much room to create so as a full time artist, I would be using the studio often to primarily paint current and new professional projects as well as to write. If I take residence over the summer, I will use the studio for a quiet editing space as well as to paint any commissions I receive. For writing, I am working on collecting poems and photographs into a magazine / memoir book of sorts, which requires lots of reading, organization, and revision work. I would occasionally use the space to do ground work on my business (web design, printmaking, book design, client connections...etc) and a photoshoot or two depending on light, space, and residency guidelines. I would ideally have access to wifi for any laptop work or self-teaching I would want to do. I typically need access to a paint sink, garbage can, a surface by the window where I can set up my art supplies (I can provide this if it isn't already provided), and a surface for computer work. Any furniture that's available would be helpful to me I'm sure! I am excited to learn more about what MAC studios offer for resources and would use anything that I find helpful to achieve my goals in the time of the residency.

— MARIJA LEILYNN ARTISTRY —

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BIOGRAPHY

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Marija Leilynn is a classic, detailed and versatile artist who seeks to document authentic life and inspire thoughtfulness for what's beyond. She often incorporates her faith and what she believes as spiritual truths into her concepts. She works from the heart, dedicated to being intentional with every aspect of what she creates. She works with oil painting and photojournalism as visual mediums, both of which are supplemented by a consistent practice of poetry.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Writing

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-Publications include:

“they tell me chapel is mandatory”, “kiln” poems / Inkstone, Fall 2021

“Gospel of Fathers” prose poem, “dating while abstinent” / Inkstone, Spring 2022

“the wanderer’s prayer”, “what i mean when i say healing” poems / Inkstone, Fall 2022

“The Boy and The Stump”, children’s short story / Inkstone, Fall 2022

“What My Longing Does”, “REPENTANCE.” poems / Inkstone, Spring 2023

“When I Pray for You”, “REPENTANCE”, and “Homemaking” published as digital features in *Ekstasis Magazine*, fall 2023 - spring 2024

Awards

-Poem titled “they tell me chapel is mandatory” won first place in the University of Northwestern’s Fine Art Writing Competition, judged by Jackie Lea Sommers, award-winning author of “Truest” in the spring of 2022. “What My Longing Does” won first place the following year in the same contest.

-In July, 2023, I self-published and released my first poetry chapbook collection titled *sometimes, patience* on Amazon.com

Painting

-Self taught how to oil paint during 2020 and have since been commissioned by over 10 people.

-Held a showing at Dunn Brothers Coffee for first showcase of 14 original landscapes

-Hosted work in Wisconsin’s *Coffee Talk* and *Lux Coffee Company* including prints, original work, as well as poetry books.

Photography

- Designed a personal website, contract, and questionnaire from scratch to contribute to my own brand and attract clients looking for wedding and/or portrait photography.
- Created personal presets on Adobe Lightroom Classic and edited galleries for clients.
- Communicated frequently with clients to answer any questions and to create genuine connections.
- Coordinated bookings with clients.
- Created content for social media to market my business.
- Shot plenty of weddings, family shoots, couples portraits, and editorial portraits over the years 2018-present.
- Minnesota and Grand Rapids own *Wild Horses* band photographer for three consecutive years.
- Shot photos for multiple Airbnb/VRBO owners (4 in total).

COMMISSIONS

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Variety of commissions ranging from sizes 5x7-9x12 from the years 2020 to present. Largest commission work was an 18x24 imaginative landscape on a canvas panel. Commissions completed total up to 12 roughly.

PROFESSIONAL HISTORY

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Marija Leilynn Artistry began as a professional practice in 2018 after Leilynn graduated high school in 2018. Vowing to never go to college, she began to explore photography professionally, and that year shot her first wedding. Every summer after, she shot at least four weddings, maintaining intentionality with her craft and her clients. In 2020, Leilynn began oil painting out of curiosity and seemed to naturally pick it up. She reached out to her community to have motivation for her projects and began commission work right away. In 2021, she went back to college for creative writing and spent two and a half years falling in love with literature and poetry. By the time of her finishing college with her BA in writing, Leilynn rebranded what was once photography-focused to Marija Leilynn Artistry, incorporating all elements of passion into her business. In spring of 2024, Leilynn went full time and divided her artistic focuses into the different seasons to continue pursuing an intentional and authentic craft to share with others.

EDUCATION

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University of Northwestern—St. Paul, MN

Bachelor's Degree in Writing with minor in Theology | GPA: 3.7/4.0 Dean's List: Spring 2021–Spring 2023

—Graduated Spring 2023

Courses:

Editing and Proofreading

Grant Writing

Freelance Content Writing

Social Media Marketing

Intro to Layout

Poetry

Advanced Poetry

Fiction

Advanced Fiction

Christianity and Writing

Autobiographical Writing

Writer's Style

Writing of Place

Structure of English Grammar

I am self taught in photography, videography, website design, and painting.

-Began photography in the spring of 2018

-Began painting in the spring of 2020

18" x 24"

The title of this piece is meant to suggest a spiritual engagement period before complete unity between the triune Bridegroom and the Bride of Christ (the people of God). It was originally a commissioned piece and took about 60 hours total to complete and was composed from imagination. The willow tree at the center is a symbol for Christ, sorrowful yet rejoicing, shading nearby sheep as the sun just crests the horizon. In the distance is a glassy sea, which is fed by a slow and gentle stream coming from the high valley. Every element was intentionally thought and acts as an anticipatory symbol for the wedding feast depicted in the biblical book of Revelation.



“Amen Means”

Oil on canvas panel

9” x 12”

“Amen Means” is meant to evoke stillness and peace while understanding the reality that to become still and feel at peace requires effort. It takes effort to go to the pond and sit, to let go and breathe. It was painted from an image taken a few years back by the artist. It is a part of a collection of paintings and poems released in April, 2023. This painting specifically is titled after a poem in Marija Leilynn’s poetry collection, *Sometimes, Patience*, titled “When I Pray for You”.



“The Meeting Place”

Oil on canvas panel

8” x 10”

“The Meeting Place” is the first imaginative work by Marija Leilynn using oil paints. It was an impromptu, creative, and experimental landscape with no use of photo references. It was inspired by the scripture passage which states, “Come to me, all you who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28). During a period of dark anxiety and confusion, Leilynn was reminded consistency of the passage along with the phrase, “meet me there”, and a few months later, experiencing peace, painted this landscape.



“Someday, Again”

Oil on canvas panel

9” x 12”

This piece is a painting of an image taken by Leilynn during a one month solo road trip on the Pacific Northwest in July of 2021. The location acted as a restful, contemplative pinpoint to her time, and inspired imagery in her poem “what friendship makes of me”, which is also where she got the title for this painting. The poem and the painting speak to the changes of life, namely friendships, and the importance of letting go.



“Untitled”

Part of online gallery titled “Eliana, the pianist”

Digital Photography

Eliana graduated college as a music teacher and a pianist and hired Leilynn to capture that story artistically. The grand piano pictured is the piano that Eliana would perform with at her graduation recital with a piece that she composed. Leilynn leans toward organic imagery, so the lighting shown here is natural to the environment. She directed the subject to compliment the composition of the piano, showcasing the details of the instrument and the softness of the subject to tell a story of passion, grace, and time.

For more photography samples, go to www.marleilynn.com/photos

POETRY

HOMEMAKING

Consider, O Lord, how You pluck agates from shore, hold a pipe
in Your teeth and make gray above me.

Consider each shored mineral swirling with artifact ripples, glazed
in Grandfather's basement,

marbled by the kitchen window as Grandmother hums alone.

The women, whose proverbs are stitched to their aprons, hemmed soft
to the laces
 consider the laces, clinging to their garden.

Consider my body, the pink conservatory of my skin, the webbed
furrows which trap every weak gust.

How, when unhinged, I am of two birds,
both Yours.

Consider my lovers, each with an expiration sewed to his collarbone.
My gaping reservoir of desire
 drained easy before its time.

Beloved awaiting, with his raw petalled heart, and Lord where
the groundwater surges forward,

there are hills between which fold me in half, each side better for it.

How I comb and comb that meadow for seedlings
to scoop up home for You,

but my offered hands are hourglassed, expecting the day
to break over me and scatter

that tobacco, cloud and flint, my little ones fishing next to their father.
I, with a handful of stones saying, *consider this one.*

***Description below**

What My Longing Does
after Cecelia Llompart

Swell round, in
fanged cavern walls.

Infect me. Like the invisible
germ of a kiss.

Open the curtained window.

Taste like a pink tongue along
the bent cleft of an envelope.

Conch it through
the narrow glass neck of a bottle.

Carry it always between seam and skin.

Consider the tide.

Gargle salt, then sugar.

Like agave, flow sticky
from the core to the needle.

Unfold the minutes. Shawl them
loose about the birch.

***Description below**

GOD WILL LET ME HUNGER

My therapist asked me on Tuesday what I crave and I stared at her long enough to seem tired. The truth is I hated the question. It's the new year and I live in western culture, where we all like to work for a week of vacation and even when we take the long awaited walk on the beach we think about going home and working. I woke up today in my sixteen year old body writing my twenty-three year old self a letter demanding I get in a van and drive until the engine burns out. I've always wanted to be free. I woke up from a dream where I was revolving from one person I love to the next, every face hazed-over. Next I was singled out and looking at myself from behind, which isn't much different from when I'm awake. I also woke up with hunger pains. Crave is too light a word, or too big, depends on the day. Give me bread and I'll run to the store for wine. Give me coffee and I'll bring it to the counter for oat milk, half as sweet, half caffeinated because I worry when I have too much. When I give myself over to love I feel like too much. Give me your eyes and no matter how much I crave connection I always look away. I am called to be vulnerable. My god, I felt the Spirit in my spirit orbiting my being with gravity like a paperweight ever since I can remember. Now I write. I'm learning it takes a whole life to learn how. I'm learning that no matter how much I try to quicken the process, pace is an act of worship. I crave to be slow. It makes me hate myself so I can see what I need to let go of. I don't want resolutions as much as I want freedom and if slowness is what I must commit to before receiving it, I have to go on. I have to tell myself at sixteen that there are better ways to find freedom. My values define my life even though my feelings want to. I do not live by bread alone, and that's the least of it. Give me this day, my daily bread. Give me five loaves, or whatever is here.

***Description below**

Descriptions of each:

“Homemaking”

A poem about the deep desire for a family and the ache of time, Leilynn draws from memories of her childhood searching for agates on the shore of Lake Superior on her grandmother's private beach and the value of family that was built into her.

“what my longing does”

An imitation poem after Cecelia Llompart's “what my loneliness does”, written on the Hawaiian island of Kauai in the midst of realizing unrequited love.

“GOD WILL LET ME HUNGER”

A stream-of-consciousness poetic essay about the tension between a society motivated by convenience and the desire for contentment. Leilynn draws heavily from her Christian faith and has a passion for mingling the struggles of humanity and the mysteries of God.