



Women in the Arts

Exploring the Magical Works of Junia Mason-Edmonds

By Michelle Nickens

When you see the works of Junia Mason-Edmonds, you feel transported to a magical place where everything is possible. Her works defy logic, creating a world that is familiar yet fantastical. Through her unique technique, her art develops into seemingly glasslike creations. The light and dark shadows offer depth and meaning to her art. It is easy to get lost in her work, exploring the dimensions, colors and complexity of her art.

Junia's journey as an artist started early in life. Growing up, she became intrigued by nature and the patterns, color and light of trees and foliage. With a supportive family, she began painting and taking classes. She received her BFA from the University of Tampa, graduating magna cum laude, and she's been painting ever since.

Junia says, "I get excited by discovering shapes and patterns that can be pulled out to create what I hope will be a compelling composition." She has certainly accomplished this goal. She focuses on images that have a "deep sense of space" and suggest a "sense of motion or spiral." When she discovers a pattern that is interesting, she begins her creative process.

Junia's favorite media is an oil stick, which, she explains, is oil paint with wax added to create a stick form. First, she applies a transparent layer of acrylic wash to canvas and then draws general shapes and lines. She fills the background with color and uses the oil stick to draw directly on the canvas. Brushes and oil pastels are used to deepen the details. This process results in what Junia refers to as an "image" and an "abstract." From a distance, you clearly see the image, but as you approach, it becomes abstract. Her "mosaic" method results in vibrant, multilayered and rich pieces that lure you into a breathtaking world.

Junia has participated in numerous art shows and has won many awards. She has held solo exhibits at the Tallahassee Artport, Le Moyne, the Annette Howell Turner Center and Tallahassee City Hall. Some of her works can be viewed by visiting her website: juniamason.com.

Because the layers of her pieces are such a critical component, she moves away from her piece to analyze how the layers interact. She "takes direction from the painting about how to proceed instead of focusing one's will with the work." Her message to new artists is "to recognize when what's actually happening with the work is more exciting than one's original concept, to value and respect that, and go with it instead of overcontrolling the process." This is not easy, but essential for producing fresh work.

Junia's art gives her a sense of purpose and serves as a form of meditation. For others, her art gives the opportunity to admire her unique craft, explore the beauty of shadow and light and become lost in a medley of effervescent colors. 