



CHICAGO'S MOST INSPIRING STORIES

THE CHICAGO NIGHTLIFE GUIDE EVERYONE'S

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EDITOR'S CHOICE: BEST VIDEOS ON THE INTERNET

ULTIMATE GUIDE TO DATE NIGHT IN CHICAGO

DECEMBER 6, 2018

Art & Life with Cathleen Clarke



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Today we'd like to introduce you to Cathleen Clarke.

Cathleen, please kick things off for us by telling us about yourself and your journey so far.

I grew up in Chicago, and later my family and I moved to a small country town in Northern Illinois which was a huge change for me. We didn't have the

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internet or TV
channels in our home,

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so I passed most of my time drawing and writing poetry in my room. I found a lot of inspiration during that time from the isolation and lonesomeness of the country, which still has a major influence on my work today.

When I was 20, I found an ad in the newspaper to become a flight attendant and I figured this was my chance to move out and start a career. However, I realized shortly after that being gone all the time wasn't for me. After going through numerous random jobs, I finally decided to move to San Francisco and pursue an art degree at the Academy of Art University. Four years later, I earned my BFA in Fine Art, Painting and Drawing and I eventually moved back to Chicago, where I

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**Can you give our
readers some
background on
your art?**

My figurative oil paintings explore themes of memory, isolation, and transient moments in everyday life. I was recently inspired by a quote by Edvard Munch who said: “I do not paint what I see, but what I saw.” I felt that this quote really expressed what drives me to paint as well. To paint not directly from real life or a photo, but to use that memory or image and turn it into something not seen through the human eye.

I find a lot of inspiration from old family photos, childhood recollections and found images, and I begin with a vision and allow the paint to interpret what is often

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overlooked or
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forgotten. In this way,

the photo reference becomes a small piece in my process, and the end result is the memory and feeling I have from it.

I love the fluidity and texture of oil paint, which is what I use primarily in my work. It dries very slowly, so I have time to manipulate the paint after putting it on the canvas. I also love working in watercolor, it's hard to control but really helps my work stay loose.

Do you think conditions are generally improving for artists? What more can cities and communities do to improve conditions for artists?

I think there are a lot of benefits that artists can find today compared to years past. The main benefit

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is social media, which
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has really helped open

doors for me as an
artist by discovering
new artists that really
inspire me and giving
me a platform to
share my work with
people who would
never see it otherwise.

Chicago has been a
really great city for
me as an artist.

Compared to the cost
of living in larger art
capitals like NYC or
LA, Chicago is much
more affordable while
also having amazing
art museums,
galleries, and an
exciting
contemporary art
scene. Living in
Chicago, I've
connected with so
many supportive
people who have
assisted me in
growing as an artist
and guiding me in the
right direction.

When I first moved to
Chicago, I started
searching for galleries
and came across the
Woman Made Gallery

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which is a non-profit
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organization that

supports female-
identified artists.

They've been super
supportive during my
time here, and I've
been lucky to show
my work in numerous
exhibits in their
gallery and pop up
shows that they've
organized. I think it's
important for cities to
support these types of
non-profit
organizations to
increase opportunities
for emerging artists.

**What's the best
way for someone
to check out your
work and provide
support?**

My work can be found
on my website
at cathleenclarke.com and
on Instagram
[@cathleenclarke](https://www.instagram.com/cathleenclarke).

I currently have
paintings available for
sale
through collective131.com and
at saatchiart.com/cathleen.clarke.

You can also contact
me directly for any
inquiries or requests

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through my website,
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or at
clarkecaithleen@gmail.com.

Contact Info:

- Website: www.cathleenclarke.com
- Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/cathleenclarke>



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Image Credit:

Andi Azry

Getting in touch:

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