



artist spotlight

martha kelly

By Allie Word • Photo by Joey Miller

MARTHA ALSO WORKS IN WATERCOLOR AND INK, CREATING "URBAN SKETCHES" THAT CELEBRATE THE STREET SCENES AND NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESSES OF MEMPHIS. YOU CAN SEE ALL OF MARTHA'S URBAN SKETCHES AT AN EXHIBITION AT PLAYHOUSE ON THE SQUARE IN NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER, OR VISIT HER ON FACEBOOK OR HER WEBSITE AT WWW.MARTHAKELLYART.COM.

In a large city like Memphis, it's not out of the ordinary to see construction sites making room for street expansions, bike lanes, shopping centers or housing developments. Whether you're in Midtown, East Memphis, or even near Arlington, the city's natural landscape is constantly changing. As a life-long Memphian, Martha Kelly tries to preserve the beauty of our city through her many oil paintings, pastel drawings, and block prints.

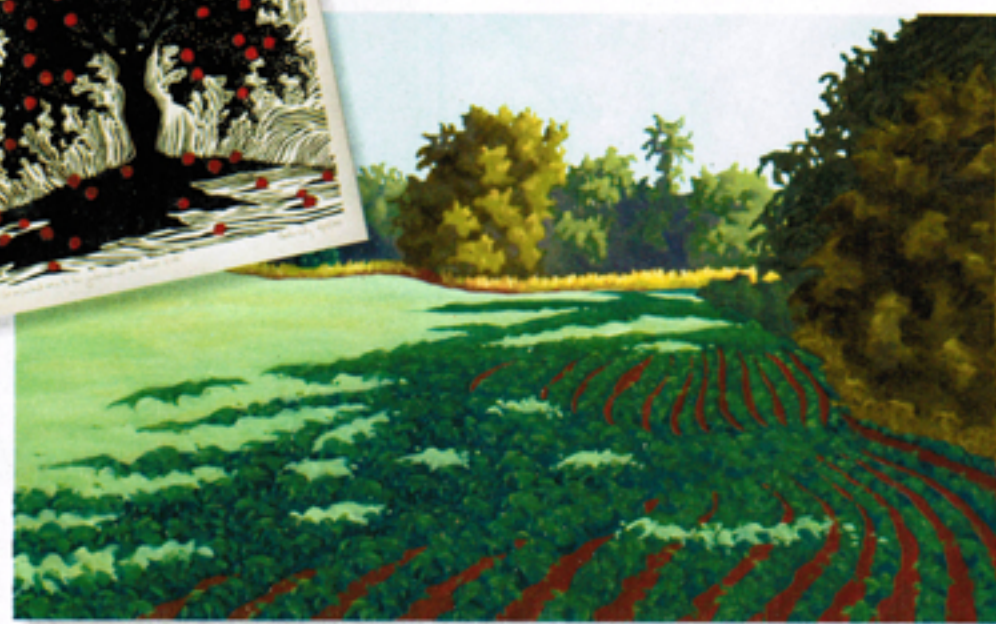
Martha began painting at a young age, and by the time she was 14 she knew it was her future. After taking a few summer art classes at Memphis College of Art, she transferred to Centre College in Danville, Kentucky. Through different studies and art mediums, she learned to incorporate her Christianity into her artwork. She graduated with a double major in art and religion. Since her first art show in 1999 that featured silhouettes, Martha's paintings and pastels have been presented in local shows such as the David Lusk Gallery and Cecilia Lin Gallery. Her landscapes were also displayed at Seven Sisters in North Carolina, NorDys in Alabama, and at Hansen Gallery in Knoxville.

Martha's style - soft brush strokes and light color palettes- have a soothing summery feel. Her goal for landscapes is not to add unnatural color, but instead accentuate the subtle beauty of the scene. Since 2008, Martha has worked as artist-in-residence at Idlewild Presbyterian Church. Each week, she creates an image for the church bulletin that corresponds with their Sunday scripture. Martha also recently finished her collection of block print illustrations for the national Presbyterian Women's Horizon Bible Study, "Journeys Through Revelation: Apocalyptic Hope for Today." She says most block prints use wood, which gives more detailed straight-lined textures, but her prints are carved from linoleum blocks. Carving from linoleum creates a unique texture and color - the black ink is bold and rich, and the illustrations have graceful, even lines - not seen in wood-blocks carvings.

Rustic farmlands and open spaces in the city's parks inspire most of Martha's oil and pastel works. Most days, she says she strolls to church, dinner, or errands, walking anywhere she can. "You don't notice the life and sounds around you until you're moving at about 4 miles an hour," she shares.



"Choicest Fruits" linoleum block, 14 1/6 x 16"



"Morning Shadows" oil, 36x48"



"Peabody Lobby"
pen, ink, and watercolor 8"x10"