

Susie Lidstone

Farnham-based artist Susie Lidstone shares her thoughts on art, creativity and the value of being an older artist.

What does art mean to you?

For as long as I can remember I've always wanted to create. Art is a way of life for me. Without it I wouldn't be me. It encompasses who I am, my character and shapes my way of life.

How does being creative enrich your life?

Creativity is so much a part of my life. Seeing the beauty that surrounds us however small opens your eyes to a new world, taking the time to notice every small detail within buildings, flowers and life in general. My paintings are a very detailed part of how I see the world and colours.



How does your age and experience contribute to your art?

Age is really just a number. If we dwell on it too much it can bring us down. I rather feel that a better way of looking at my 61 years is that it is a gift that I have lived this time and can continue to paint and embrace everything around me, seeing the beauty in so much and producing new work that enables me to meet new people.

Have you been involved in any community projects or initiatives with older people that you could share?

When I open my studio to the public many WI and U3A members come to visit my studio set up and see how I paint. A few of my most recent commissions have been for grown-up children to remember a loved one. Most recently "Pop's Garden" was such a personal painting for the ones who commissioned me and through the painting I began to get to know a little bit more of the man who was so loved.



What top tips would you give an older person thinking of taking up a creative activity for the first time?

I would say that being creative enables one to take joy in everything that surrounds us. It is a way of enjoying a walk in the countryside because you can see beauty in so many things. A walk in a town just looking at the buildings keeps your mind and imagination fresh. Look at what is available in your own community, maybe U3A or adult education classes.

I met a wonderful man who came to see me paint in a local gallery the other day. He had just joined a class and has followed my work for a long time. He was very nervous about joining the class, but I told him to enjoy himself with the painting process. It is a way of meeting other people who basically all want to be creative so there is a common bond from the start.

We should all take the time to look and embrace every bit of the world around us. This is something that is the key to so much creativity, but it also makes us well-rounded individuals.