

Angela Canada Hopkins

(BFA '01)

What was your educational path?

My mother is a very skilled artist. As a child I'd play with her art supplies, which isn't unusual for kids, but the unusual part is that I kept going. I had doubts about choosing a career in fine art. I knew it would be a tough road to follow. I spent a couple years at different schools, trying out different majors. But when I finally decided to commit to art I returned to Andrews University. Greg Constantine was the best painting professor anyone could ask for. In 2001, I completed a Bachelor of Fine Art with an emphasis in painting. Today, I am a self-employed fine artist.

From student to self-employed artist—how did you get to where you are today?

After graduating, I worked as a junior high art schoolteacher for awhile. In 2003, my husband James and I moved to Chicago, Ill., where I worked as a florist and product designer while James attended law school. In my free time, I continued focusing on fine art by exhibiting in galleries and alternative spaces while living in Chicago. In 2006, when James finished school, rather than settling into the suburbs of Chicago we headed west to Loveland, Colo., a small art town nestled

on the edge of the Rocky Mountains. This change created the opportunity for me to focus solely on fine art again.

Your capstone artwork is of cancer cells. How did this particular interest of yours evolve?

In June 2001, my dad succumbed to cancer. I decided the best way to overcome my new "enemy" was by embracing it through my art. I think the hardest thing about grief is moving on with life while trying to comprehend life without the person you love dearly. It's my way of remembering him and what he struggled with while also trying to find a glimmer of hope for the living. My dad always saw the best in every situation. I feel that I am embodying his spirit in my mission.

Your artwork has been featured in some major journals. What has this meant to you?

Being published gives me the opportunity to reach more people with my message. My art has been featured in the Journal of Oncology Navigation & Survivorship and will soon be featured in Wavelength, a clinical journal for treatment of cancer and brain disorders, as well as several local newspapers and magazines. Through this, I hope people can literally envision cancer in a different respect—no

matter if they themselves are fighting cancer, a doctor treating a patient with cancer, or a scientist developing a cure.

What does the future hold for you?

Often people feel defeated and overwhelmed by their illness. I am confident that being surrounded by art will promote healing. Therefore, it is my goal to bring my art to wellness centers, hospitals and medical facilities around the world to improve the overall experience of visitors. Even though I'm not an art therapist, I'd like to share what I know with patients who are sick and who could use the therapeutic benefits art has to offer. I'd also like to see my art used as a fundraising tool for cancer research and to aid in paying for families' medical bills. As far as the direction of my paintings, I will keep creating cells but I'd like to inspire people to think about prevention too. Cancer is not 100% preventable but we can do our part by taking care of the body we live in.

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