

Leslie Neumann Biography

Leslie Neumann received a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree from the California College of Arts in Oakland, California, and a Master's Degree in painting from New York University in Manhattan.

After living in New York City for 14 years and teaching studio art and art history at St. John's University in Queens for 6 of those years, she moved in 1991 to the small fishing village of Aripeka on the Gulf of Mexico in Florida, where she became a self-employed artist.

In Aripeka, Neumann and other members of her community, including the late artist James Rosenquist, became active environmentalists, facilitating the preservation of more than 14,000 acres of pristine coastal lands in the past 25 years. These wetlands surround Neumann's home and studio and serve as a source of inspiration for her artwork.

Neumann is a recipient of a Fellowship from the New York State Foundation for the Arts, an Individual Artist Fellowship from the State of Florida, and an Artist Enhancement Grant from the Florida Division of Cultural Affairs, and a Gottlieb Foundation Emergency Grant for Painting.

In 2005, Neumann was honored with a 15-year retrospective of her work at the Vero Beach Art Museum.

One can find Neumann's work in many private and public collections throughout the USA, including Nissan Motor Corporation, ADT Securities, Marriott hotels, Baylor College of Medicine, National Space Biomedical Research Institute, 42 Firebirds Restaurants in 15 states nationwide, Polk Museum of Art, Tampa Museum of Art, Leepa Rattner Museum of Art, as well as the City of Tampa and the City of Orlando's Public Art Collections, and many more.

[Artist's Statement by Leslie Neumann](#)

In 1991, I moved from New York City, population 8 million, to Aripeka, Florida, a small fishing village of 500 people on the Gulf of Mexico. My home and studio are surrounded by more than 14,00 acres of preserved coastal wilderness. I hear no traffic. Instead, I listen to the fish jump at night, while seeing stars in the water. All of this beauty has inspired and influenced me as an artist. Every day I'm engaged by its raw, primitive energy.

I'm a landscape painter, but "landscape" is a loosely applied word. As several critics have noted, what I end up with is hardly any commonplace landscape. Mary Ann Marger, former critic for the Tampa Bay Times, says that I create "scenes that seethe with haunting luminosity, as if permeated by spirits."

Or as Joanne Milani of the Sarasota Herald said, "Aripeka resident Leslie Neumann is dedicated to preserving Florida's wetlands, but the wetlands are scarcely recognizable in her color-infused paintings. Instead, they become places inhabited by sorcerers, where swamp grass erupts in flames that appear to have been started by supernatural forces."

In the last couple of years, since we entered the “fake news” cycle of our country, I’ve been painting a new series called Transitions, in which we’re elevated above the horizon line with a bird’s eye view of the earth— and at the same time, we’re experiencing a bit of the celestial realm. The stormy nature of the clouds in this series warn of the perils we face, but the light gives us hope.

I paint with encaustic, which is hot bees wax. It’s a difficult medium to manage, and so I yield to the “happy accidents” that happen over and over. I’ve become adept at negotiating between control and chance.

As you view my work from across the room, the illusion of deep space transports you into my paintings. But what appears initially as a realistic type of scene when viewed from afar, quickly dissolves into abstraction as you approach the painting, thus offering both the dreamy quality of an imaginary scene from one vantage point, and the pure pleasure of color and texture from another vantage point.

Lara Bradburn, Tampa Tribune

“To the casual observer, the work of Leslie Neumann evokes a distinctive artistic paradox. It is both passionate and soothing, powerful and disarming, apocalyptic and transcendent, predictable with an element of surprise. It’s a dichotomy of sensations from an artist intent on peering into nature’s soul.”

Susan King, Tampa Bay Times

“Bay area artist Leslie Neumann's meditative landscapes invite the experience of being present. Forget about the "monkey mind" and those chores and holiday shopping lists. Melt into her encaustic paintings, made from a process in which hot wax meets oil paint. Like some of the sublime, edgier paintings by English landscape artist J. M. W. Turner, land and sea border on the abstract. Get lost in the texture, drips and colors of earth, fire, sky and sea.”

Lennie Bennett, Tampa Bay Times

“Hard to say whether Leslie Neumann's subject matter serves her medium or the medium serves the subject. Which is to say, they work very well in partnership. She is essentially a landscape artist and paints using oil and encaustic, a hot wax method that creates texture and depth. The wax also provides a luminous quality that takes the works to a mystical, mysterious level. Her gift for color is undeniable. You can get lost in her imagined lands.”

Joanne Milani, Tampa Tribune

“Aripeka resident Leslie Neumann is dedicated to preserving Florida’s wetlands, but the wetlands are scarcely recognizable in her color-infused paintings. Instead, they become places inhabited by sorcerers. She carves tribal symbols into the surface of her paint. Her swamp grass erupts in flames that appear to have been started by supernatural forces.”

Mary Ann Marger, Tampa Bay Times

“Leslie Neumann is a dark romantic whose mysterious landscapes seem independent of time – or weather. Over the years, she has refined her unusual technique of layering oil paint and hot wax, to create settings that seethe with haunting luminosity, as if permeated by spirits.”

Joan Altabe, Sarasota Herald Tribune

“Like the word love, “landscape painting” is often put to use as a common place term, wasted on work of little distinction or feeling. Leslie Neumann’s visions of natural scenery are the real thing. There’s no peace here, no safe hold. Neumann’s landscapes are about life. They celebrate unpredictability and mood. If you want to see the sublime, if you want to see what Florida would be missing without its wetlands, see these pictures by Neumann.”

