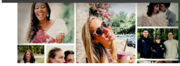
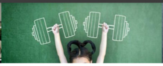


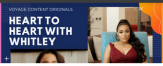
THE CHANGE-MAKERS: STORIES THAT INSPIRE



15 AMAZING FEMALE FOUNDERS CHANGING THE WORLD

Voyage Originals
episode 01
Introverted Entrepreneur Success Stories

INTROVERTED ENTREPRENEUR SUCCESS STORIES: EPISODE 1


VOYAGE CONTENT ORIGINALS
HEART TO HEART WITH WHITLEY

HEART TO HEART WITH WHITLEY: EPISODE 1

11 POSITIVELY BRILLIANT MINI RECIPE VIDEOS

LOCAL STORIES MAY 27, 2025

Check Out Alicia Leeke's Story

LOCAL STORIES

SHARE
TWEET
PIN

Today we'd like to introduce you to Alicia Leeke.

Alicia, we appreciate you taking the time to share your story with us today. Where does your story begin?
As native South Carolinian I spend my fun time between Columbia, Charleston and North Myrtle Beach.

My artistic career began at Columbia College. While there, I began taking French, biology, zoology and genetics; as well as drawing and painting classes for electives. During my sophomore year, an opportunity to travel abroad with my French class arose. As part of this trip, I visited the Musee 'd Orsay and fell in love with the French Impressionists – and the most inspiring spot in France, Montmarte.

I subsequently transferred to the University of South Carolina where I majored in Advertising and Public Relations. I was taking classes in biology, photography, graphic design and computer science. However, when the Journalism school offered a summer graphic design class using a computer during my senior year, I signed up immediately. Little did I know at that time it would

POPULAR

THE CHANGE-MAKERS: STORIES THAT INSPIRE

HIDDEN GEMS: LOCAL BUSINESSES & CREATIVES YO SHOULD KNOW

PORTRAITS OF SOUTH CAROLINA

SMALL BUSINESS OF THE DA CONVERSATIONS WITH YVVE SMITH OF ARIES SEDUCTION BEAUTY

ARTIST OF THE DAY: KIM RUSSO

SOUTHCAROLINAVOYAGER FAQS

change the trajectory of my career both professionally and artistically.

In this class we discussed mass media and photography and the importance of how an image can have a lasting impact on society. After being shown a famous photo, we were to visually display our reaction through creation of an artwork using the computer. We also had the opportunity to create images of our own for our final project. I researched an old image of a single-celled organism called a Euglena and digitally recreated it on the computer through drawing observation one pixel at a time. I think it was this computer image of a plankton that led to me being hired for my first job out of college to replace the graphic designer / teacher that was leaving the position to work for NASA.

I was later offered the position as the Director of Arts, Graphic and Photography at the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control. After staying there several years, I ventured into outside sales for GBC, a leader in brand packaging and design. During this time I started taking painting lessons at City Art in Columbia, SC and when the economy floundered around 2010, began painting full-time and exhibiting art from Georgia to Chicago and never turned back.

Every where I've ever worked has lead to where I am now as an artist. From my early days studying French and learning of the French Impressionists – to my time as a pre-veterinary major to painting images of plankton and working on bigger creative projects.

We all face challenges, but looking back would you describe it as a relatively smooth road?
Statistically, 90 percent of start-up businesses fail – and only 1 in 6 artists have a chance for success. I am fortunate to have gained solid business experience over the years that I could apply to my art business. However, nothing prepared businesses for the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Keen not to let my art business go under, I worked hard to keep it afloat while working from home. The latter was a cinch since I already had over 8 years managing my outside sales territory for GBC from the comfort of my home, calling on customers from as far away as Clemson and down by the coast. I created masks and other new products that launched during that time and evaluated every aspect of my business down to the penny for supply costs. Most importantly, I investigated new product offerings and found one of the new products to be launched was going to be a massive failure which actually turned out to be a enormous win in terms of opportunity costs!

Businesses were shuttered by order of the Governor including the galleries across South Carolina where I sold my art. My only goal was maintaining an even keel and used the majority of that time trying to pivot my business and taking as many online additional business courses as I could find.

When it became possible for just essential businesses to open back up, a doctor friend referred me to help liquidate an associate's office. I used my business experience and network to sell off medical equipment and supplies, collect outstanding debt and free the office space within a few months time for this surgeon's 30+ years in practice. This meant learning a medical software program to get the job done before the short deadline.

Alright, so let's switch gears a bit and talk business. What should we know about your work?
Most people know me for my expressionistic, abstract landscape paintings of South Carolina places. However, I think what sets me apart from others, is my ability to take complex concepts and combine them into larger works of art. Over the years, I have worked in series on several conceptual art projects dealing with consumerism, finite resources and other topics.

I continually intertwine painting, collage, computer technology and photography to create new works. In 2010, I worked on a series about consumerism and how certain items become collectible while others circumnavigate auctions and antique stores – or end up in the trash. During that show, the business owner asked me "Well, what's next?" My reply: "To create art based on microscopy."

As a result, I spent four years creating a body of work that used photography, technology and marine biology to create 32 beautiful, digital mixed-media abstract paintings.

As a result of all my digital work, I am thrilled to announce I've been invited by Wacom to test drive their new Movink and Wacom Pro Pen 3 products. I can already see it is going to change my work flow both in and out of the classroom and I'm super excited about this relationship! I've been using an old version of the graphic tablet since 2012. So now is my time to try the Movink's new organic light-emitting diode (OLED) display! Be sure to look out for updates on my experiences with those in the coming months.

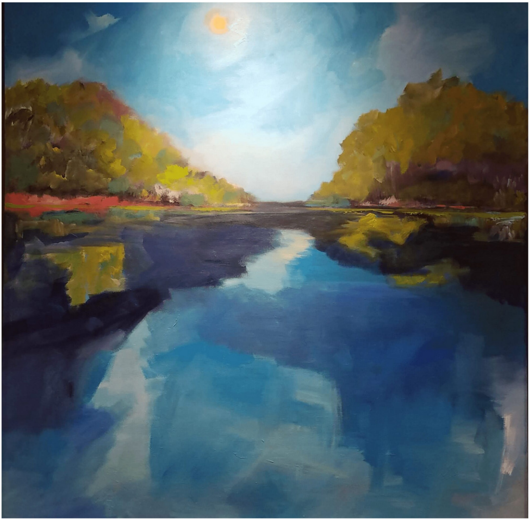
Do you have any advice for those just starting out?
Understand cash flow before opening your business.

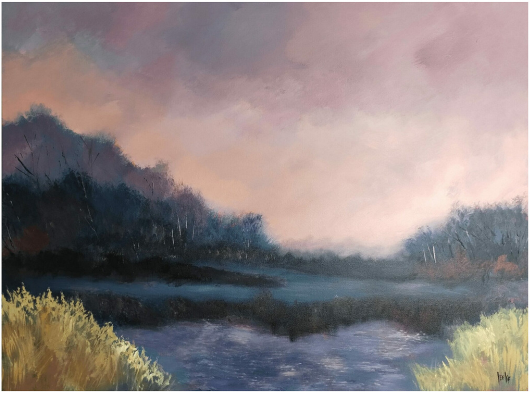
Pricing:

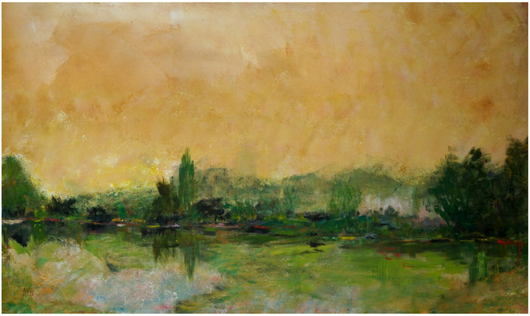
- Gift starting at $25.
- Paintings starting at $250 and up.
- Commissions and murals available. Call for pricing.

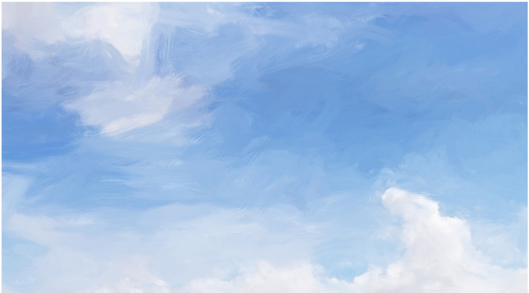
Contact Info:

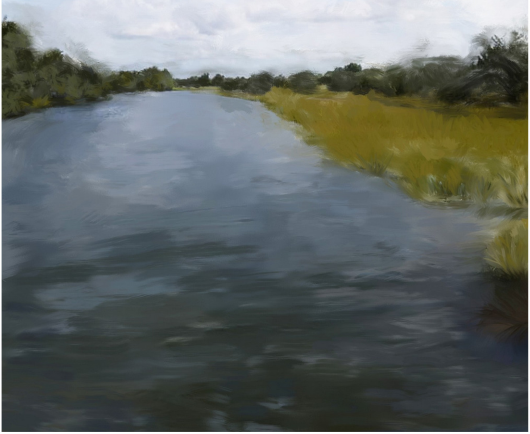
- **Website:** **https://www.alicialeeke.com/**
- **Instagram:** **https://www.instagram.com/alicia_leeke_art/**
- **Facebook:** **https://www.facebook.com/AliciaLeekeContemporaryAmericanPainter/**
- **LinkedIn:** **https://www.linkedin.com/in/alicialeeke/**
- **Twitter:** @alicialeeke

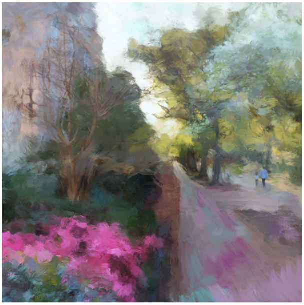


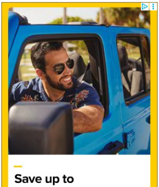




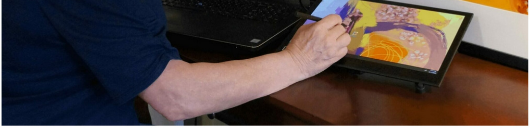


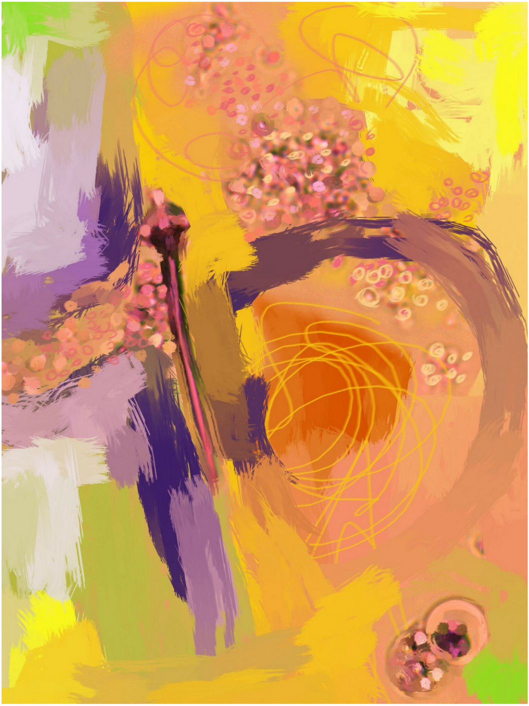


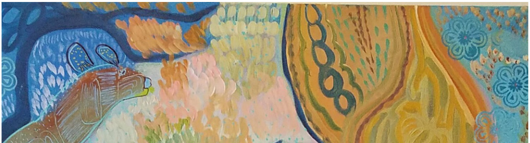




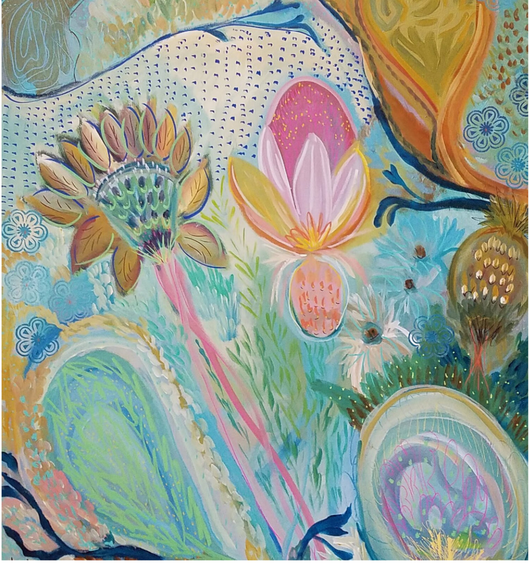
Save up to







25%
Have a fling with
our newest fleet yet.
Book now
Hertz



Suggest a Story: SouthCarolinaVoyager is built on recommendations from the community; it's how we uncover hidden gems, so if you or someone you know deserves recognition please let us know **here.**

RELATED ITEMS

LEAVE A REPLY

Your email address will not be published. Required fields are marked *

Comment *

Name *

Email *

Website

☐

Save my name, email, and website in this browser for the next time I comment.

Post Comment

MORE IN LOCAL STORIES

SouthCarolinaVoyager

SouthCarolinaVoyager is part of the LA-based Voyage Group of Magazines. Our mission is to promote mom and pops, artists, creatives, makers and small businesses by providing a platform for these hidden gems to tell their stories in their own words.

LATEST HEADLINES

THE CHANGE-MAKERS: STORIES THAT INSPIRE

HIDDEN GEMS: LOCAL BUSINESSES & CREATIVES YOU SHOULD KNOW

PORTRAITS OF SOUTH CAROLINA

SMALL BUSINESS OF THE DAY: CONVERSATIONS WITH YVVEY SMITH OF ARIES SEDUCTION BEAUTY

TAGS WIDGET

FEATURED MUST READ OTHER LOCALGUIDE ALBUM MOVIES QUOTES LOCAL GUIDE FASHION FOOD

Copyright © 2025 SouthCarolinaVoyager