

## Elizabeth Emerson, Painter (Wilton CT)

**Artist Statement:** “I feel as if I know the person I’m looking at,” is how I described my experience at The Met recently, as I walked by the paintings on display at the *John Singer Sargent: Portraits of Artists and Friends* exhibition. To capture the true essence of my subject in this manner is the same measure of success that I use in my painting process. Other painters who have inspired me include Alice Neal’s seeking truth without the need to pretty things up; Frank Auerbach’s succulent, juicy paint; Lucian Freud’s ability to make the person live on the canvas; and Mark Rothko’s places for the eye to rest and his awareness of edges.

I have been painting my whole life. I found my inner painter at an early age while growing up in Indianapolis Indiana and followed that spirit from the Rhode Island School of Design (B.F.A. Painting) to the Henry Radford Hope School of Fine Arts at Indiana University (M.F.A. Painting). Currently I paint out of my studio in Wilton and also attend weekly open studios at Silvermine Arts Center.

The process I use to capture the true essence of my subjects is holistic. At the start of a painting, the thoughts in my head are abstract and chaotic. As silence takes hold, I can feel the air between myself and the subject. The subject’s emotions cycle through anticipation, excitement at the beginning of the pose, withdrawal into their own thoughts, then boredom and discomfort toward the end. As the painter, I have the privilege to stare — rarely tolerated in modern society — and the passage of time reveals the person’s emotional nuances and thought patterns.

My goal is to be true to my subject. I do not want to take anything away from them, nor do I want to embellish or flatter. I try to stay aware of the invisible energy that we all project for clues about whom I am painting. If the viewer feels “as though they have met the person” in the painting, then I have been successful. An extra bonus is when the person in the painting identifies themselves even when it is not the enhanced, beautified version of the self they approve of.



**Biography:** Elizabeth Emerson is a Painter who lives in Wilton, Connecticut. She is originally from Indianapolis. In 1991, she earned her Bachelors of Fine Arts as a Painting major at the Rhode Island School of Design. After taking a brief hiatus to tour Europe’s art destinations by rail, backpack, and hostel, Elizabeth enrolled at the Henry Radford Hope School of Fine Arts at Indiana University, earning a Masters of Fine Arts for Painting in 1994. She has lived in Brooklyn, San Francisco, Seattle, and Basalt, Colorado. Across this itinerant journey and throughout her life, the human form has always been her choice for the subject matter in her paintings.



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