**Artist’s Statement: Heaven Series**

Throughout my life, I have always loved a beautiful sunset. I have taken hundreds of photographs of sunsets and sunrises. Also, in the last couple of years, my faith has grown, my grandparents have all passed away, and my parents are aging. In the midst of all these thoughts, I have asked myself, “What happens after we die?”.

At first, I thought about our culture’s first impressions of what “heaven” would look like. A place in the clouds among a pretty sunset or sunrise and this was the subject matter of the first three paintings. Then, I came back down to Earth and begin to reflect upon what happens to our soul when our physical body has died. Do we see a bright light as we die, or do we see our friends in heaven, or are we guided through a light. In the next paintings, I continued to use the subject matter of the sky, but as if we are standing on earth.

Using old master techniques of glazing and scumbling as well as using stencils to bring out hidden images within some of these paintings, I have continued to grow and develop a new style. After using a thin opaque coat of paint for the first layer, I then lay a stencil of a specific image over the surface of the painting, and then paint more layers over the top of the stencil. Only after the last layer of glaze has been applied to I pull up the stencil. Only then can I see the final product of what the stencil creates in order to add a different dimension to the painting. I hope that everyone can enjoy these beautiful paintings but gain inspiration and a personal message in each one as well.