

# Main Attraction

Work of local artist  
Jennifer Main gaining fans

By Kimberley McGee  
AS VEGAS SUN

**W**ith soulful eyes and bodies that float through brilliant landscapes, the paintings of Jennifer Main are reminiscent of such legendary artists as Picasso or Chagall, who struggled for decades before catching the eye of the art world.

But Main's star began to rise in 1997 when she was a teenager.

The 21-year-old Las Vegas's paintings are displayed and sold at Art Encounter, a gallery at 3979 Spring Mountain Road, as well as a gallery in New York. Since graduating from the Las Vegas Academy in 1998, Main's work has been featured in art shows in New York, Colorado, Dallas and San Diego, as well as the annual Art 21 show locally.

Her art centers on abstract paintings of people in whimsical scenes. In her painting "Love Song," a blue-suited man gently holds a violin with a tender expression. In "Composer," a woman strums a mandolin while sheet music floats behind her.

The art industry magazine Art Trends featured an October 1999 article about Main, then 18, saying the artist "is rising above the neon jungle with artwork that is as stylish as any local musical revue and more colorful than the Las Vegas Strip."

Haji Mohayya, owner of H and S Art gallery in New York, began to showcase Main's art after he saw some of her pieces in an art trade show in New York.

In March he hosted a show for Main to display and sell her art. She sold 15 pieces and secured a position at Mohayya's gallery, he said.

"I want to show her to the world and our market is good for that," Mohayya said. "Her work, contemporary style, is what people are buying now."

On a recent afternoon Main talked about her art during an interview at her northwest Las Vegas apartment. Dressed in black with streaks of bright red, yellow and blue paint on her pant legs, she talked with the enthusiasm of a young woman experimenting with her talent, but with the savvy of a business person who understands that selling her paintings allows her to devote her time entirely to art.

"I've been lucky," Main said.

She also doesn't let her youth stop her from being considered a serious artist.

Main won her first coloring contest when she was 6 years old. But it wasn't until she entered high school in 1994 that the petite redhead took art seriously.

With her mother's encouragement, Main entered a drawing of a young girl with deep emotion etched into her smooth face in the local WE CAN (Working to Eliminate Child Abuse and Neglect) art contest sponsored by the nonprofit organization.

Main brought home the first-place prize for the WE CAN contest, as well as a new direction for her young life.

"I knew that was it, that I wanted to paint," Main said.

Rod Maly, director of Art Encounter, said he chose to showcase Main's art four years ago, although her age caught him off guard at first. He said he saw the depth of talent in the then-17-year-old's art.

"She's really brilliant," he said. "We wanted her right away."

In the first month of displaying Main's art, eight original paintings were sold. In the first year she sold more than 100 paintings, Main



PHOTOS BY STEVE MARCUS / LAS VEGAS SUN

See Main, 2E Jennifer Main relaxes in her Las Vegas art studio, surrounded by her work. At left, a silk necktie hand-painted by the artist.