

Young Las Vegas artist has more than her share of fans

# The Main Event

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**J**ennifer Main has the dream life for an artist: Her work sells and it sells for good prices, which enables her to work at her art full-time.

While that's impressive enough, especially for a Las Vegas artist, it's her age that's most eye-opening. She's only 21 years old.

Her art sells in large numbers, but she has had to slow down her rate of production. She does about five to 10 paintings each month.

"I try not to do too many," she says. "I have to go slower than I can work, or I'd have paintings everywhere. I've been going slow on purpose."

Many artists would kill to have that problem.

Main's early interest was in the performing arts, first with competitive gymnastics, then studying piano, ballet and jazz dance.

The visual arts were just a hobby at home. But that changed in the eighth grade at Johnson Junior High School. Main had to pick an elective class and had three choices to put down. Her first was Spanish, but the school put her in the second, art.

"I absolutely loved it," Main says. "If I hadn't gotten into that class I wouldn't be doing this now."

Main took the local Citizens Area Transit bus to the nearest Borders bookstore and spent hours looking at art books. Her biggest influences have been Salvador Dali, Pablo Picasso, Marc Chagall and Tamara de Lempicka.

"When I first looked at Picasso's work I didn't like it at all," Main says. "But I grew to appreciate it. I love his use of color. He kept the spirit of a kid in his work, and he didn't care what people said."

After catching the art bug, Main spent every spare minute drawing.

"In restaurants, in line, in the car, I was always drawing," she says. "That



helped me develop."

Her work became more abstract with time and she began using more vibrant colors.

The Art Encounter gallery on Spring Mountain Road began representing Main's work when she was 17 and a junior at the Las Vegas Academy of International Studies, Performing and Visual Arts.

"She came walking into our gallery with her mother," says Rod Maly of Art Encounter.

"I thought, 'Why not give it a try,'" Main says. "I brought in my school artwork. There was nothing like my artwork in the gallery. That was pretty scary, but it worked out."

What attracted Maly to Main's work was her "very

distinct style, vibrant colors, and she touches an emotion. And her work is thoughtful. They're innocent without being immature. She's a phenomenon. And I'm not blowing smoke here. She's uniquely Jennifer. When you take her work to New York, there's no other art like hers. And she has a great quality as a human being; she's very down to earth."

After high school, Main attended a summer art program at the Art Institute of Chicago, and has exhibited her work at Art Expo in New York and galleries in New York, Dallas, San Diego and Boulder, Colo.

In her first year with Art Encounter, 200 pieces of Main's work were sold,



Left, Las Vegas resident Jennifer Main was the featured artist at the Wildflower Festival in Richardson, Texas, last month. One of her works adorned a building at the festival. Above, "Love Song" is an example of Main's work.

according to Maly. That's "10 to 20 times" the gallery's other artists.

"She appeals to a very sophisticated audience," Maly says. "Her works have been bought by people in Boston, Chicago and New York."

Reproductions of her work sell for \$200 and originals range from \$1,200 to \$12,000.

Main — who works in oils, acrylics, pastels and watercolors — has three major themes she works in: "a solitary woman, male and female musicians, and romantic couples," Maly says. "Each is pretty popular across the board, although the musician works are selling more right now."

She likes the theme of couples because "I always like thinking of two people and love and relationships and the closeness they have," Main says.

Musicians frequently show up as subject matter out of Main's love for music. "I paint to music and I play the piano and go out to listen to live bands," she says.

Main paints solitary women because "everyone can appreciate a beautiful woman. And I am alone a lot just creating."