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An Interview with Artist Summer Myers About Fine Doodles

By Keri Withington

If you haven't heard of the company [Fine Doodles](#) yet, you're missing out. This fairly new small business seems to be taking the parenting world by storm, and it's easy to see why. Their product is adorable. Fine Doodles offers a unique service. You send them a drawing, or doodle, by your child (grandchild, etc.), and then artist/owner Summer Myers paints a beautiful acrylic picture based on your child's drawing. This company has received a lot of positive feedback and attention among [parenting blogs](#) ([click here](#) for an example). Being a parent myself, I definitely understand their appeal, and would love to own one in the future.

So having noticed the cute product and buzz around Fine Doodles, I decided to contact Summer Myers and ask her for an interview. Luckily for me, she said yes, and it's been a delightful experience. If you didn't already want a Fine Doodle for yourself, you definitely would after talking to her. Summer is obviously a great artist and businesswoman, but she has such a quirky and cute personality that you feel at ease around her. Here's what I found out from my interview. (My questions are in italics, all the other stuff in quotation marks is verbatim from her.)

How did you come up with the idea for Fine Doodles? Was there a moment of inspiration or did it develop over time?

"The idea came from Andy, my husband. In high school he'd seen some work by a college professor that incorporated children's drawings, and he loved them and encouraged me to try my own version. A few years later, in college, I was assigned to write my own project for a figure drawing class. I took some drawings from my nieces and nephews and rendered them classically, in the style of Rembrandt. They turned out a little nightmarish. But my family loved them and encouraged me to custom paint and sell them. I tried it out with colorful paint instead, and suddenly they were more cute than creepy."

How difficult was it to take your concept and turn it into a functional business?

"I'm amazed at how naturally the business end of things fell into place. We just started in November 2009, and we had zero business experience and very little capital to spend. I'm blessed with a husband who knows how to put a website together and has a head for numbers, though. And thanks to blogs, Facebook, and word-of-mouth, our exposure has snowballed with surprising success. I just got a phone call this morning about possibly featuring Fine Doodles on a television show. Yeah. Crazy. I owe it all to the friendly bloggers out there who kindly posted about my work. They really can make or break somebody's little business."

As an artist, is it fulfilling to work from designs made by children rather than producing completely original art?

"I adore working from children's drawings! Once you get too old, too trained, or too experienced, you just can't draw like a kid anymore. You can't make those lines, or those beautifully surreal compositions with floating families and inexplicable blobs. I add my own touch and my own interpretation to them, but I always try to stay true to the child's vision. I do a little of my own work on the side, too."

As a mother yourself, do you enjoy working in a business that is geared towards families? How difficult is it to balance running a business (and creating the product) with a family?

"Everyone I work with is very kind and enthusiastic. It's a perfect situation, really."

As for time management, that's one of my weak points. My first and most important job is to be a stay-at-home mother to my one-year-old son. We have another baby on the way, too, and that slows me down. But I do squeeze in some work while my son is napping or while my husband watches him for an hour or two. Some day I'll figure out how to juggle everything perfectly. When I grow up."

Fine Doodles seems to be unique to the market. Why do you think it appeals to people?

"As I mentioned, people love their own kid's creative work. I think my customers love their child's work not just because they love one particular drawing, but they realize that it honors and validates their child's artistic pursuits in general. All the feedback I've received from the kids themselves has been very positive - they seem excited to see something special done with their work, to see their work transformed into something they can't make for themselves. "

What's your favourite Fine Doodles painting and why?

"I have so many! I love *Wedding Cat* because it's such a great example of a kid drawing exactly what they like, which in this case was a kitten getting married. I like *Aunt S.*, which is a drawing my niece did of me years ago, and I think it looks like an old-fashioned portrait with a quirky twist. There's a new one that I haven't posted yet called *Raining Cats and Dogs*, and that's definitely a favorite, too. Because it has a stormy sky full of oddly cheerful cats and dogs."

What is your vision for the company?

"My dream is that I can make enough money with Fine Doodles to ease the financial burden of putting my husband through grad school while still spending most of my time with my children. If it gets to the point where we're really getting a lot of demand, I may have to look into grabbing an assistant or two. It's not a big-business concept, but it's been pleasantly successful and a good supplemental income for our little family so far."

I'd just like to conclude with a huge thank you to Summer Myers for spending the time to answer a few questions for me. I appreciate it.

I loved getting a chance to find out more about Summer and Fine Doodles, and I think her paintings will win you over too.

More resources

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