

# You Art What You Eat

## When a plate really is as pretty as a picture



The art of presenting food on a plate isn't always limited to what chefs create, and the medium isn't always an edible one. Charlotte-based artist Loren DiBenedetto has been painting professionally for 15 years, and food is one of her favorite subjects. In love with and proud owner of several of Loren's sweet and savory landscapes as well as her perfectly poised pet portraits, I sat down for a quick Q&A on how she practices her craft

### HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN PAINTING?

I have been painting as long as I can remember. Growing up I was always encouraged to be creative. I have been painting "professionally" for about 15 years

### DID YOU HAVE ANY KIND OF FORMAL TRAINING?

Yes, I was classically trained, attending Ducret School of the Arts in NJ, The Art Student's League and The National Academy of Design both located in NYC

### WHAT DREW YOU TO PAINT FOOD?

Years ago as I struggled with "what to paint" I came upon an article that said to paint what you know....and food has worked for me ever since!!

### I NOTICE THAT YOUR PROCESS ALWAYS BEGIN WITH A PHOTOGRAPH. WHY?

Yes, I always work from photos. My process begins with setting up a still life and taking dozens of photographs. I find it the best way to capture light falling on the objects that I choose to paint.

### WHAT DRAWS YOU TO A PARTICULAR FRUIT OR VEGETABLE? WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR IN YOUR SUBJECT?

I am drawn to certain subjects because of shape, color and texture. As in the pomegranate piece...they have it all!

### WHAT IS YOUR MEDIUM? OIL/ACRYLIC?

I work in oil on linen canvas.

### WHAT'S THE SMALLEST PAINTING YOU HAVE EVER DONE, THE LARGEST?

The largest oil painting that I have ever done was 48"x60". It was a landscape. The smallest work I do is 4"x4". So there is quite a variety in between.

### HOW LONG DOES EACH PROJECT OR PAINTING TAKE?

A painting can take anywhere from a month to three months, longer if it is very large and extremely detailed. I paint in layers, and each layer must dry before I can go back into it. I normally have anywhere between 5 and 10 paintings in progress at a time. And a lot of what I do is commissioned work.

### WHAT KIND OF TIME FRAME DO YOU NEED?

Normally a commissioned piece will take anywhere from 4-12 weeks depending upon the size and subject matter. The commission process starts deciding on a subject, then I will do studies for the client and then proceed to the final painting.

### IN ADDITION TO FOOD, I KNOW YOU ALSO DO WONDERFUL PAINTINGS OF PETS – TELL US ABOUT THE PROCESS –

My first pet painting was about 20 years ago. We were visiting the botanical gardens in the Riverbank Zoo in Columbia, SC, and I took a photo of a cat living there. I just knew I had to paint her. Ever since then I have loved to paint pet portraits.

Normally, the pet owners have tons of reference photos for me to work from. Occasionally I will take pics of the pets. This process of capturing the character of a pet takes a bit longer because I will normally do a few studies before deciding upon the final portrait. They normally take about 8 to 12 weeks.

### WHERE CAN PEOPLE FIND YOUR WORK?

My work can be found at The Art Cellar, Banner Elk, NC; Hughes Gallery, Boca Grande, FL; and most recently Shain Gallery, Charlotte, NC.

### HOW CAN PEOPLE MAKE CONTACT WITH YOU?

You can contact me through my website [www.lornedibenedetto.com](http://www.lornedibenedetto.com) or email me directly at [lornedibenedetto@gmail.com](mailto:lornedibenedetto@gmail.com) You can also find me on facebook [@lornedibenedettoart](https://www.facebook.com/lornedibenedettoart).





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