



## Memories Find a Home in Fine Art

by Anhay Stewart

My name is Anhay Stewart and I am an artist.

I was born in Santiago, Dominican Republic, a bright country with white sand and blue seas. A typical scene from my country is full of vibrant, rich colors and warm tropical vibes. The Dominican Republic is a place that thrives in the path of the sun, with its warm climate and lush landscape.

Since I was a child, I've always been interested in arts and crafts. My mother was a teacher who always encouraged me to have a very solid education and taught good values. I was provided with many art supplies such as watercolors, sketch pads and colored pencils.

From a very young age, nature inspired me. I grew up always outdoors, climbing trees, running down to the river, and using my imagination with only my environment around me.

Throughout high school I was very much into drawing. In every school assignment I took charge of the artistic and creative aspects of our projects. Although my heart was dedicated to architecture I also briefly delved into interior design.

After graduating from high school, I chose to go to college and study architecture. I studied at my university for 5 years. Architecture taught me detail, perspective and the basics of composition and design. I apply these elements to my drawings and paintings.

While in college I was offered the opportunity to go to The United States with an international exchange study program. In 2007 I spent the summer on Cape Cod, where I met my husband. Unfortunately I had to return to Dominican Republic, but successfully maintained our long distance relationship.

I returned to the United States in May 2008. That year I married my husband and started the process of becoming a citizen. In the many months of being unemployed and waiting for my work visa, I developed my interest in painting.

When I was an architect, I spent most of my time in the office working on designs. Occasionally I ventured out into the field to supervise and make sure blueprints were carried out properly. Many things in my life changed when I moved to the United States. My day-to-day life changed as a result of not being able to continue my architectural career.

Then, in October 2011, my first child was born. Being an independent woman, the transition into becoming a stay-at-home mother was difficult for me. Painting became a good outlet, because it allowed me to express myself and have a voice while raising my son.



My first paintings were inspired by scenes that reminded me of my home. When I started painting, I had no prior education in Fine Arts. My very first paintings took a significant amount of time to complete because I didn't know the proper steps to create the look I wanted. I would start the detail and then later add in the background. I researched techniques and methods online and also read books about painting to learn how to create certain effects.

In my mind, art is a form of therapy. Painting is about my interpretation of my many environments. My paintings often reflect the nature and landscape of Dominican Republic, a place I hold dear to my heart. The scenery expressed in my work often lets me escape from the troubles of my reality into places I fondly remember. My paintings tie my memories of the past with my present life.

When people look at my artwork I want them to experience the feeling that they can belong in the environment I have created for them.

In the future, I would like to share my work with others, hoping they will enjoy it as much as I do. A goal of mine is to get my work into art shows, galleries and be recognized for what I love. My wish is that individuals with similar stories can relate to my work.