



# A MINIATURE MASTER

## AUTUMN DE FOREST DEFIES AGE WITH HER PRECOCIOUS PAINTINGS

"One day I saw a commercial for a TV show called *Whale Wars*. You might've heard of it," explains Autumn de Forest, standing beside one of her paintings during a visit to the Park West Gallery in Southfield. This one in particular – entitled "Whale (What's Next?)" – depicts a large whale isolated above a swirling ocean.

"At that moment I learned that, for the very first time, people were killing whales to extinction. And I was so sad and a little sick to know that I might never meet a real whale in person," she continues. "They're so beautiful and so intelligent. We don't have to kill them to survive. The only reason we do is for money. Once whales are gone, what's next?"

As the youngest person on the Park West's roster of artists – notable mentions including Thomas Kinkade and Peter Max – Autumn has been recognized endlessly by media outlets and art enthusiasts as an accomplished young prodigy with a deep understanding of the artistic process. At only 12 years old, her works have collectively surpassed \$1 million dollars in sales, with many individual pieces selling for up to \$25,000.

"You know, I'm not the money girl," she says with a laugh. "I don't price the paintings, but a lot of my paintings have gone for charity – for Haiti and Japan and Hurricane Sandy."

At age 8, she was featured as a child genius on a Discovery Health special and the world has since been enamored by not only her abilities as an artist, but also her mature yet high-spirited personality.

"I've always been curious and once my paintbrush touched the painting that very first time, my curiosity burst," Autumn says, wearing a black and white, houndstooth newsboy cap with her hair loosely secured in two braids. "Seeing everything I could do was the first really big thing for me, and I love that."


When Albert Scaglione, founder and CEO of Park West Gallery, saw Autumn's artwork in person – the first set of paintings were sent from her studio in Las Vegas to the Park West's 181,000-square-foot facility in Florida

– he was completely taken with the art. In a matter of a few days, her work was sent to Michigan and the collection was hanging in the Southfield gallery location.

"I don't see age in her artwork," Scaglione explains. "When you go to a gallery, are you looking at the art or are you looking for the picture of the person who painted it and how old they are?"

Regardless of her age or background, Scaglione admired her raw talent and execution, and the mastery of color in her work. While judging art, he says, he focuses on four simple, but key aspects: color, composition, technique and creativity. All of which he says Autumn possesses and at a relatively high level, too. Her paintings combine a variety of techniques – encaustic (wax-based paint) and pulling paint, for example – and shed light on issues or ideas that mean something to her. "Gold Horse," for instance, represents her soul and how she is surrounded by golden opportunities. Another popular painting of hers, "Barbie Marilyn," was inspired by Andy Warhol's painting of Marilyn Monroe and a classic Marilyn Barbie from *The Seven Year Itch* that she got from her grandmother. While Autumn sticks to using oil, acrylic and encaustic for her paintings, her style ranges from abstract impressionism to pop art. "I have no artist who paints like that," Scaglione notes.

For Autumn, who is already well established in the professional art world, one of her biggest hopes is for art education to stay in schools, and she continues to spread the word on the importance of encouraging the "creative urge" among her many other philanthropic efforts.

"We're on this earth for a reason, and we all have gifts to give before we die," she says, explaining her "Dripping Hearts" painting. "I think that this is what the inside of my heart looks like and each gold drip represents my feelings, which are attached to my love."  — Audrey LaForest