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Wedding Inspirations: Meet Christina Pappion, an artist who live paints weddings

BY SUE STRACHAN | sstrachan@theadvocate.com NOV 22, 2018 - 1:00 PM

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Christina Pappion with one of her live paintings of a wedding.

photo provided by Christina Pappion

On the second, third and fourth Sundays of the month, Wedding Inspirations will feature an element for a New Orleans wedding, such as a

flowers, invitations, food or event space. If you have a suggestion, email sstrachan@theadvocate.com.

Created during a party, a live painting is a one-of-a-kind keepsake. Christina Pappion, owner of Pappion Artistry, has been an artist since childhood, but started painting professionally in 2013 when she was selected to donate a live painting for the Saints player Pierre Thomas' "I Can" foundation gala.

"This was my first experience painting live and my first as the owner of Pappion Artistry," Pappion said. "I was brand new to it, but as I painted I noticed how natural it felt. I learned on the go.

"For that first live painting, I didn't even know I was supposed to paint people! That night the painting was auctioned, and it sold for over \$2,000 and was signed by Pierre Thomas, Will Smith and others," she continues. "I knew this was for me."

Tell me about the couple pictured with this story, and why they chose you?

The couple was very nice and sweet! They searched for a live painter and selected me because of my reviews and the detailed

painting. I am so thankful they asked me to be there.

What do you use for your live paintings?

I use acrylic paints for three great reasons: no smell, dries fast and in most cases, is washable.

What goes into creating a live painting?

I really take time to map out the composition in my mind, and then I take photos with my phone to help with my perspective. Objects often move and lighting changes, so I use my phone to help make sure those factors don't affect the painting in a negative way.

I also try to focus on the details that make the wedding special. For example, I love wedding cakes. They are such works of creative genius! I recently worked at a wedding where I kept smelling bacon. I looked over in that direction, saw a mini Waffle House and thought this cannot be the cake. Well, sure enough, it was a cake in the shape of a Waffle House topped with "eggs and bacon," with the bacon really smelling like bacon with syrup on it. I made sure to add that to the painting as it was one-of-a-kind.

What do you need from the couple before the wedding? How much input do they have?

I need to know their personality, vision and the people they have to have in the painting.

Most time, I don't get input – the couple lets me totally flow and creatively go crazy. That is usually best for an artist.

What do you get more requests for – ceremony or reception?

I get more requests for painting the first dance at the reception.

Do you mind if people talk to you while you are painting?

I love it when people watch and talk to me. It's supposed to be fun for everyone. It should not be serious. I love to have different questions and for people to video the process and get involved.

How long does a live painting take?

For a wedding, I usually get to the location an hour and a half before, to start the background. I usually am at a reception for a total of six

hours.

Christina Papillon, Pappion Artistry

Pappionartistry.com, (504) 710-2434

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