

# Ladies of abundance

Tempra Board

Siobhan has thick, shoulder-length grey hair and a bright, expressive face, ready to be amazed and enthused. Which makes sense. She is, after all, living in paradise. Or as close to it as you can get. She and her friend, Deb, decided to go in together on a property that was in foreclosure on Ten Mile Road southeast of Point Arena in 2010. Both hardworking artists, Siobhan and Deb set about fixing up the home (constructed in the 1960s and made out of gorgeous heart redwood board and batt siding) and outbuildings. They began landscaping, gardening, and decorating. Eleven years in, the result is a serene, warm, and welcoming environment, ringed with second-growth redwood stands, meandering, beach stone-lined paths, clusters of Shasta daisies and other wildflowers in bloom, gnarled redwood stumps and burls elegantly re-purposed as displays for Deb's glass sculptures, and of course, Siobhan's silk-painting studio and showroom.

Siobhan's silks are all painted or dyed by hand, creating one-of-a-kind pieces that function as wearable art. The paints she works with are similar to watercolor; they infuse the fiber, which then expands from the heat of a steamer, driving colors deep into the fabric. The designs are both elegant and whimsical, featuring floral, forest, and ocean motifs. The female form pops up in unexpected places: sea-polished rocks become rounded reclining goddesses. Tree trunks dissolve into dryads, and mermaids swim among sea weed and froth.

Encouraged in art and design from an early age, Siobhan grew up in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, before "the dot com billionaires showed up." Her father was a successful commercial photographer and her mother was an English teacher, writer, and photo assistant. "Everyone in my world reinforced me as an artist. I was really lucky." At age 23, while she was getting a fine art degree and planning to attend the Rhode Island School of Design to pursue a

career in the fashion industry, Siobhan's mother died of cancer. Taking time off and a road trip that led through Florida, Siobhan met a silk painter who invited her to visit her studio. On her way home to Wyoming, she visited her mother's oldest aunt, who gave her \$300 and told her to do something meaningful with it. "I went home and bought silk and dyes."

Siobhan went back to school, finished her degree, and began doing ski photography in the winter months, and making and selling handmade books at art fairs in the summer. She finally picked up the silk and dyes that had sat unused for two years. She did some painting, and at the next art show, "the silks all went by noon and my books were still sitting there." She's been a full-time artist ever since, selling at some of the top shows in New York and across the country. She spent a few years living on The Sea Ranch, but her home on Ten Mile Road is where she feels settled and content. "I'm so happy to be right here right now."

Abundance is an apt name for Siobhan and Deb's lifestyle. Art and nature are everywhere, inside their home and studios, and outside amidst the colorful silks waving on their drying lines between stands of young redwoods. There's a feeling of giving and generosity. "If it were up to me, every piece of silk I paint would be gifted." Siobhan's inherent generosity has been channeled into her Empowerment Through Accessories program, which donates scarves to people going through chemotherapy. As Siobhan says, the program "was born from witnessing the power a woman could acquire from feeling beautiful while her body wages war with cancer." She also started donating scarves to men



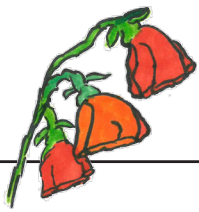




Siobhan (left) and Deb model Sioban's hand-painted silk scarves at the "Abundance Ranch."  
*Photo by David Yager Photography*

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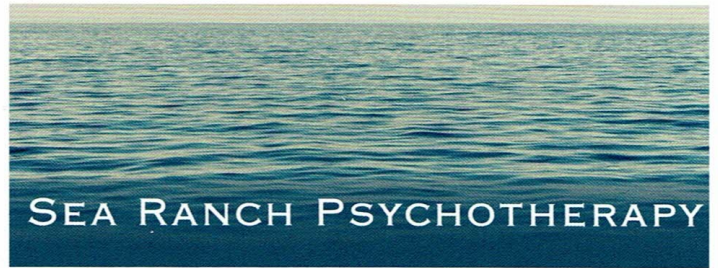


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going through chemo, to give to their caregivers, from which they get the gift of a hug in return.

The twist, is that anyone wanting to gift a scarf can come to Siobhan's studio and learn to paint their own. After witnessing the transformation of a woman battling cancer after she picked up a paintbrush at her studio, Siobhan realized that the act of painting—for anyone—is an act of empowerment itself. That's when her vision for the program crystallized: "Women painting scarves for other women, empowering themselves with the act of creation, coupled with the feelings of empowerment you experience when sharing your creation with someone in need."

In 2016, Siobhan suffered a traumatic brain injury. She went out to dinner in Point Arena and woke up in Santa Rosa in the ICU the next day. The doctors told her "we'll teach you how to walk and talk again. And I was thinking, 'what about my art?'" She did walk out of the ICU after five days, but her doctor warned that she had to go slow, and that staying in a meditative state for the next year was the best thing she could do for her brain. "Art saved me," Siobhan insists. She slowly began to work in her studio. Just 10 minutes a day. Then 15. "It's taken five years to get back to where I have enough energy to do a whole show and bring back the Empowerment project. It feeds my heart."

If your heart could use a little feeding, come visit Siobhan and Deb at the Abundance Ranch. See the glass sculptures. Walk among the gardens. Pick out a scarf, or maybe paint one yourself. Contact Siobhan at 707.291.6319 for a studio tour or visit [www.siobhansilks.com](http://www.siobhansilks.com). 

## Hand Painted Silk

by

*Siobhan*



Studio open by  
appointment

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[www.siobhansilks.com](http://www.siobhansilks.com)

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