

15 MINUTES

BY MEGAN KAPLON

CREATIVE ESSENCE

MULTIMEDIA ARTIST KRIE ALDEN CULTIVATES A UNIQUE DIALOGUE WITH BOTH HER ART AND HER AUDIENCE.



You never know what Krie Alden will create next. The former actress paints, draws, writes poetry, dances, makes music and sculpts. When she first turned to art, instructors, friends and fellow artists often told her she was trying to do too much. One teacher at the Art Students League of New York even said, “I think you’re dissipating your creative energy. You need to take one medium and go with it.” But Alden ultimately chose to ignore their suggestions.

“I have to go where the energy is,” she says. “I have to go where my intuition leads me, and I have to go with what inspires me.”

Alden’s most recent show in Philadelphia showcased her poetry, improvisation, performance and visual art all in one unique package. It encouraged audience participation by allowing visitors to write titles and reactions to each untitled piece, which Alden then turned into poetry and later performed.

Alden has pursued her creative dream from New York to Hawaii to

Minnesota and back to New York again, where she has remained, continuing to create and follow the inspiration.

ART BUSINESS NEWS: How would you describe your art?

KRIE ALDEN: Within my abstract paintings there are pieces that are super textual, that have a lot of lyricism and movement. And then there are some almost like Japanese calligraphy, very minimalistic. There are some that have a lot of graffiti. I wouldn’t call it street art, but it has that kind of funk in it, that punk funk.

For me, growing up and always feeling like I never really fit in and always saw things very differently, showing my work to people is really about giving them an opportunity to honor who they are. My art is what it is. If you love it, you love it. If you hate it, you hate it. But there’s no right answer.

I adore hearing what people see in my art because it lets me see my work for the first time. I always say that my work is a dialogue between the canvas [and] color and texture. One of my

greatest joys is creating, and the other is hearing people’s feedback. From that I’m inspired to create other work.

ABN: Why did you choose to leave acting?

KA: I realized when I was acting that my favorite thing in the world was improvisation. I was really bad at having to do the same thing over and over again. At the time, I was taking a class with Susan Batson [an acting coach]. I went to her and said, “I’m just really struggling right now. I just feel like I’m not auditioning well.” And she said, “Come to love, and you will never be denied.” In that moment my heart was like, “I hear you, and my love is painting.” My love is getting up in the middle of the night or 2 in the afternoon and doing what I have to do and not having a director or a producer or someone say, “You’re thin enough, you’re pretty enough, you fit a role.” It was coming from the true essence of being able to create.

I have great respect for people who are actors, but I really wanted to live my



life and be authentic to who I am as a person. I feel like spiritually, by being our truest selves, that light shines and inspires others to do the same. That to me is such a great gift, and that's what art is all about. It's about standing in front of something and [it moves] you in a way you can't explain.

ABN: How do you build your brand and promote yourself and your art?

KA: It took me a while to figure out the brand because I was more involved in doing the work—just being in the creative space. Now, I'm trying to find a way to blend the authenticity of who I am as a human being with the ability to show my work. On Instagram, it took me a while to figure out how much I wanted to share and not share because privacy is also really important to me. I've worked really hard to find a balance [with] my language, which is somewhere between hip-hop, folk, the way I say "y'all," [that] I swear, and [that] I'm kind of gangster in my own way, but I also have a very spiritual side. And

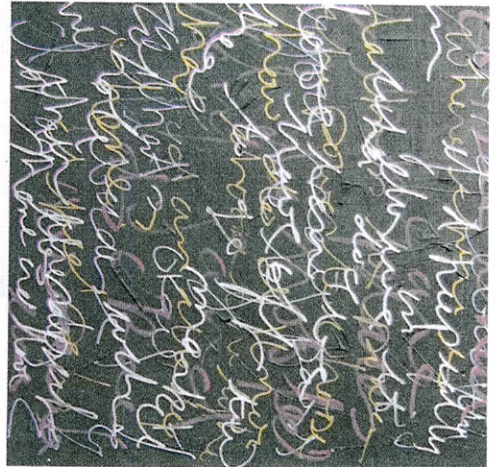
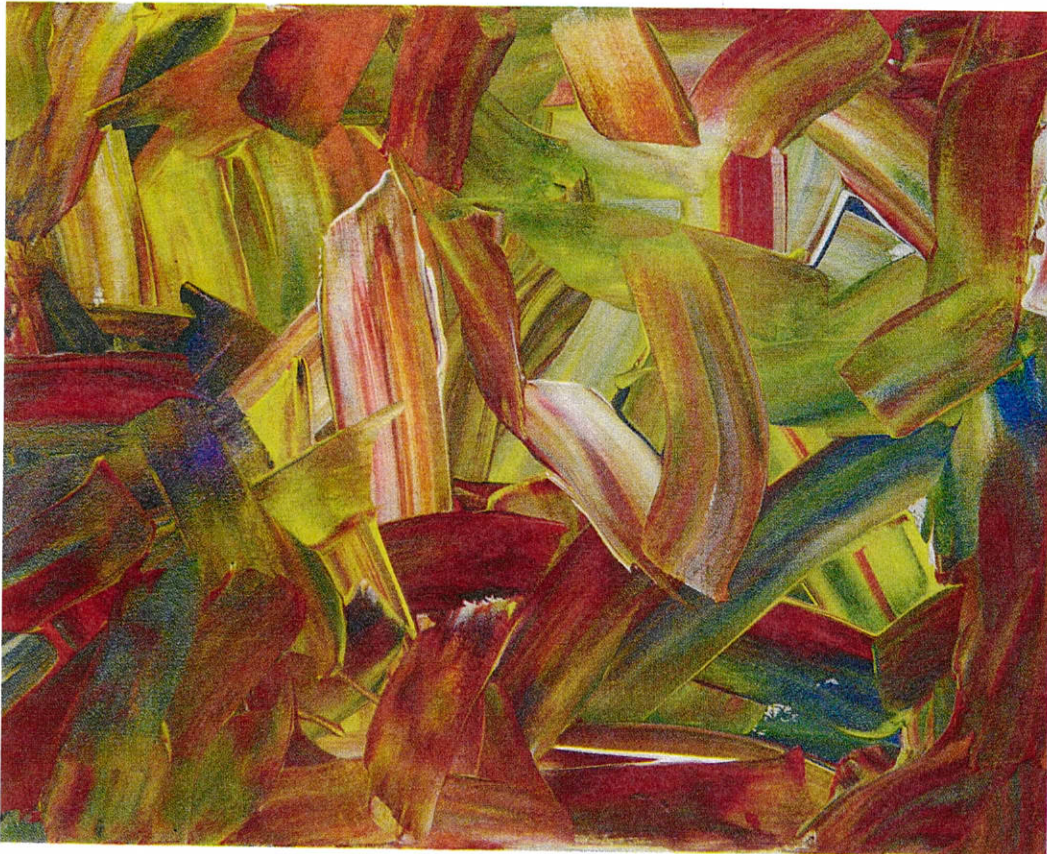
"By being our truest selves, that light shines and inspires others to do the same. That to me is such a great gift, and that's what art is all about. It's about standing in front of something and [it moves] you in a way you can't explain."

then there's the work. I'm still trying to make sure everything is cohesive. If people meet me in person, everything makes sense. Cohesion and collection and collectivity are always important to me because I always want the message to be the same.

ABN: Who does your publicity and social media?

KA: I do it all myself, and, I've got to tell you, it's so exhausting. It's like another job in itself. I hired a

17-year-old to teach me Twitter. I'm like, "140 characters? What?" Then I had her make it so that when I post to Instagram, it posts to my Facebook fan page and to Twitter. But I'm still irked by the fact that when it posts to the Facebook fan page, it says, "Posted on Instagram," because I find it inauthentic. But one can only do so much. I'm very particular and precise about everything that I do because branding and messaging are so important to me: how things are laid out, how



they're presented, how things are curated. [Social media] took me a minute. It took so much for me to think in that new format because it's a whole different way of branding and thinking and creating, but I wanted it to match my language and still be authentic.

ABN: What advice would you give to up-and-coming artists about how to be successful on the business end of things?

KA: In my case, I just believe that I have to keep creating and that all the works that I create will get to those who are meant to have them. When I have buyers emailing me and calling me years later who say, "We want more of your work," and "We can't tell you how happy it makes us to look at it every morning." To me, that's success. It's how you define success. I create out of love and hope that my pieces get to where they're meant to be. So I don't

know that I have any advice except to follow your heart and go with what you feel is true.

ABN: How have all the different places you've lived affected your work?

KA: I first started painting in New York, and I felt inspired by whatever was going on. I am inspired by everything, whether it's life, fashion, texture, color, architecture or music. When I moved to Hawaii, I felt like I needed space to create larger-scale work. I got into a project that involved my repurposing a farm. I hand-designed the irrigation system, picked out flowers, built a structure and created space between the space with the intention of connecting the mountain to the ocean. It all kind of naturally evolved very beautifully, and I think it showed me how I work best in the moment.

When I went to Minnesota—which I love, I adore Minnesota—there was a

groundedness there that really allowed me to express my artwork in a very different way. I think that grounding really helped me, which is why I was able to complete the poetry book I started in 2000 and why I was able to complete my [music] album and kind of quantify the beginnings of my brand and my brand's story.

The art evolved and changed from place to place. In some ways, it was weird. There were pieces in Hawaii that I was like, "That's so New York. That so quantifies what I left." Then there were some pieces when I first got there that were so open and had a totally different energy. And then as I stayed there and my life got more complicated, there was just a layering aspect that happened. The space I'm in always affects me. **ABN**

For more about Krie Alden, visit krieart.com.