

# A Path To Self-Discovery

by Jacqueline M. Duda

**V**ian Borchert grew up surrounded by a family of artists. Born in Beirut and raised in Amman, Jordan, Borchert moved to Maryland when she was 14. Her mother is Diana Shamounki, a famous Jordanian artist whose work is sought after worldwide and displayed in embassies, galleries and private collections.

Borchert herself is a minor Jordanian celebrity, having appeared in interviews on Jordanian television, and with artwork on display in the National Museum of Jordan.

**InSight:** Has having the art “gene” in your family influenced you from the start?

**Borchert:** Yes. I grew up in an artis-

tic household. Art is in my blood. I believe it is genetic. My mother is a famous Jordanian artist. My father is a businessman who appreciates and collects art. My mother’s sisters are also artists. I always had the feeling that painting was what I was meant to do. I learned painting and drawing from my mother. After moving to Maryland, I finished school and graduated from the Corcoran College of Art and Design in Washington, D.C. I also work as an art instructor at The Arts Barn in Gaithersburg. I held an interest in the medical field and briefly considered becoming a doctor, but I was compelled to surrender to art. Art comes naturally to me. It’s part of who I am. It’s my lifestyle.

**InSight:** You have young children. Do you see the art gene being passed down to them?

**Borchert:** It is possible. My three-year-old son, Leonardo, loves painting with me; just as I painted with my mother when I was a child. He has his own brushes, paint and canvas. We’ve even framed some of Leonardo’s paintings to display at home. The energy in Leonardo’s paintings is so beautiful. He’s can’t wait to show them to his father when he comes home from work. He (Leonardo) even makes commentary on my work, saying, “Mommy, this person looks sad,” or, “this one looks happy.”

**InSight:** Do you use all mediums—acrylic, oil, and watercolor—in your paintings?

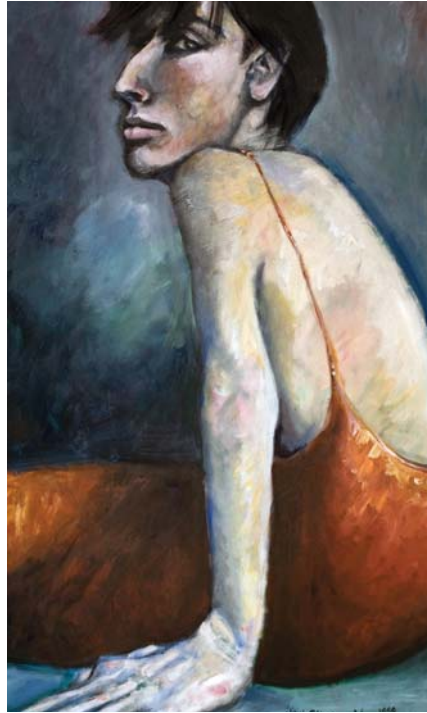


Vian Borchert

PHOTO BY PAUL KLINE



Man with a Pink Tie



The Ideal Nose



Man

PHOTOS OF ARTWORK BY PAUL KLINE

**Borchert:** I work with all three. I used oil when I was younger, but with children in the house, I prefer acrylic. Oil can produce a strong odor. Acrylic doesn't present this problem, and it dries fast so I can do touch-ups if needed. I'm very dynamic when it comes to art. I like the process to go quickly and smoothly. Acrylic is also versatile. I can apply it thick, like oil, or water it down for a watercolor effect. Watercolor is transparent, and that's its beauty.

**InSight:** What drives you, personally, to paint?

**Borchert:** It's not that I choose to paint because it's a hobby or that it's fun to do. I feel like I am a true artist. I enjoy the struggles I go through in being an artist: the journey and the growth that come with it. It is therapeutic to paint. I usually paint in the evenings after the children are in bed and work until around 3 a.m. if I'm on

a deadline. I frame my work and do everything from scratch. It is a process. I enjoy the process of creating a painting. When I paint, I go into my own little world—it's my journey to self-discovery.

**InSight:** Self-discovery?

**Borchert:** I don't do sketches of how I want the end result to look. I like to surprise myself. I always tell my students that drawing is the basis of any good painting, but I don't do my drawings in a sketchbook first. I use my brushes to sketch right on the canvas. My paintings are figurative, expressionistic. I play music in the background to set the tone and then enter into my own quiet world. I start painting lines and then layer the paint on step by step. I feel like a plastic surgeon because I correct all through the process—adding to a facial feature, subtracting here and there. It's the psychology of figurative thinking: the

way the person in the painting is posed, the eyes and the position of the hands, the expressions are important. And I have certain colors I choose—like blues. A painting can convey emotion, and color sets the mood. My emotions are released through this process and mimic my life's struggles. It's about not knowing what the future holds. That is my journey: starting from one point, the bare canvas, and going to the other, to the end. Sometimes, I shock myself. It's an achievement for all the hours I've worked that night and it makes me happy. Painting is my reward and my way to grow creatively.

*Vian Borchert's paintings are on display during August (along with other members of Potomac Artists in Touch) at an art show held at Behnke's Nursery in Potomac. Her work can also be viewed during August at the Kentlands Mansion in Gaithersburg or by visiting her website: [www.vianborchert.com](http://www.vianborchert.com)*