

# Like Mother, Like Daughter

AN EAST END MOTHER-DAUGHTER DUO TELL A TALE OF FEMALE RESILIENCE AND FORTITUDE THROUGH THEIR PLEIN AIR PAINTINGS.



BY ERICA PRAIT

MaryAnn Lucas, a native Long Islander, made her first work of art in crayon on her family's living room wall. Impressed by the adept hand of her young child and assured this wasn't a typical act of youthful naughtiness, her mother "framed" the piece with masking tape. Lucas pursued a more academic path, receiving an undergraduate degree from Georgetown University and a master's in journalism from Columbia University despite these early signs of painterly passion. A young mother with a burgeoning career, she seemingly had all the makings of a perfectly full life. Yet, there persisted in her an aching emptiness that she wasn't able to fulfill. "I was, frankly, miserable in my career. I wasn't satisfied at all!" MaryAnn says. An older female friend sagely suggested a solution: "If you don't paint, your soul will die! Paint so you have a good day!"

Years later, MaryAnn would see the same raw talent in her own young daughter, Edwina. Lippiped with real oil paints her mother had given her, she created her first painting at the age of 5. And like her own mother had done, MaryAnn proudly displayed the work in a chunky, ornate frame. Nurtured in this artistic environment, Edwina developed a keen, critical eye for painting. In fact, her earliest memory is sitting at the dinner table, analyzing her mother's early works, offering careful advice on color and composition. These early sentiments instilled in Edwina the confidence required to realize her artistic ambition: "I loved being the kid who could draw, who could paint," she says. "I've never stopped chasing that feeling of pride."

It was when Edwina came home from school, armed with the assurance academia so often provides, that the collaboration

between mother and daughter truly began. MaryAnn, in sweet simplicity, describes her daughter as "the wind beneath my wings." In turn, Edwina honors her mother's sense of color, as she describes the "gut reaction" she has to it, much like a perfumer might discern a scent or a chef distinguish a taste. The symbiotic nature of the two artists exists beyond the canvases and into plein air, the environment the duo most often portray. In winter, they can be seen enduring the long walk to the beach, canvases and tools folded in hand; come fall, they begin to chase the flowers (many of which come from their own casually curated garden). Their approach to the canvas is with the sensitive, studied eye of any realistic painter. As the artists explain with a laugh, "We know we have done something right—we can put our signature at the bottom—when a real-life bee comes to pollinate on one of our painted canvases!"

There is a specific stroke to both mother and daughter, and though they might depict the same subject, the results are strikingly different. They are each other's toughest and kindest critic, each other's best friend in the world of art, which is often unforgiving. The two are malleable, wildly talented and possess the humility so often required of the artistic process. In Edwina's words, they do not create paintings "because they look good over your sofa. We make paintings because we have to. Because they are achingly beautiful." This resonates in each work: the enchanting, soul-soothing beauty.

MaryAnn is represented by Greening Gallery in Sag Harbor, while Edwina's works can be seen at Greening as well as M&M Gallery in Southampton. View their work in the upcoming show *California Dreaming*, which opens Aug. 8 at Greening Gallery. In addition, Edwina will be exhibiting Aug. 1 in *Under the Influence* at M&M Gallery. [maryannlucas.com](http://maryannlucas.com); [edwinalucas.com](http://edwinalucas.com)

From top: MaryAnn Lucas, "Big Quiet" (2020, oil on canvas panel); Edwina Lucas, "Magnolia Madness" (2018, oil on canvas); Edwina and MaryAnn Lucas.