

knitted & stacked

cindy rizza's works will give
you the warm and fuzzies.

What stories do these painted blankets hold? I have a strong memory of one particular Afghan blanket I used to use when I visited my grandparents' house. When they passed away, I took that blanket home and I've since been slowly collecting an arsenal of blankets mostly purchased from estate sales, online auctions or thrift stores. My blanket-stack paintings happened somewhat by accident. I had folded them on a chair one day to keep them out of the way, I was struck by the juxtaposition of colours, patterns and textures. They were visually exciting, but they also spoke to me as a 'stockpile' of comfort.

Your love for vintage and kitsch is enduring. What draws you to old objects? I think of myself as a painter of human experiences and memories. The more I paint, the more I'm drawn towards heirloom subjects because they have an intimate human presence, more powerful than traditional figure or portrait paintings. I've always been interested in antiques, but vintage textiles move me because they feel like a recorded history.

Why do you love painting things rather than people? I attended an art school that was focused on skill development, and I received traditional training in figure drawing and painting. Much of the work coming out of that program, including my own, was figurative and used the human form to narrate an idea or concept. Children as subjects make their way in and out of my work, but overall, I've been creatively sated by the poetry of things. It is more profound to me to paint something human by illuminating something material, rather than painting faces.

What's your process like? My work always starts with an idea that has been stewing in my head for a long time. In order to bring that idea to a painting, I work from life, photography, drawing studies and my own intuition. My concern is always about translating imagery into a successful painting, never copying something verbatim, so I try to equip myself with the tools necessary to help me get there. I think varying source material

keeps the idea fluid and hopefully gives the painting more space to grow. I always do thumbnail studies of my ideas to get the essence of the composition down and I own a quality camera to help me capture the light I'm looking for.

How does where you live influence your work? My recent works juxtapose my subjects with the untamed New Hampshire landscape. I personally dislike landscape painting if the purpose is to paint a pretty scene. But our New England region has four solid seasons of change and my interest in the natural cycles of plant life can be seen in my work. I also find that my studio practice is seasonal. I have prolific periods and times of rest and reset.

How do you encourage inspiration to strike? In the studio, I'm either working out ideas for paintings and making those 'big' creative decisions, or I'm actively painting details of a larger piece. When I'm in development mode, I listen to curated playlists and look through art books. When I need to get really stuck into a piece, I listen to audiobooks.

Do you have any advice for those who want to do art full-time? I create art full-time now, but in a way where I have a full life. I think there's an assumption that in order to be successful, you need to drop all other aspects of yourself and devote your entire time and soul to making art and networking in a major art city. For a long time, I felt guilty about my desire to start a family, live in the country, learn about gardening and be involved in my community. Now that I look back, I realise I have found success, and that formula I thought I needed to adopt in order to 'make it' was probably created by someone very different than me. So my advice is you must commit to a disciplined practice; you must love what you do; you must be true to your voice and interests; and you must be true to what makes you happy. Any sustainable practice has a mixture of all these things.

Where can we see more from you? Online at cindyrizza.com and on Instagram at [@cindy_rizza](https://www.instagram.com/cindy_rizza). ✨



pretty pictures



