

# Susan Weckesser

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OWNER & FOUNDER  
**SUSIEBEE STUDIOS INC.**

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Susan Weckesser is an artist on a mission—several actually. Whether it's creating decorative paper, painting, writing, taking pictures, teaching scrapbooking classes

or running a successful business, this Canadian artist is living her dream.

She is the founder and owner of Susiebee Studios Inc., a designing company committed to educating others on how to master colour through design, painting, photography, and art. Also an online store for her exclusive line of scrapbooking paper called Live in Color (a line that combines watercolour painting, ink drawing, and computer graphics), Susan's dreamy imagination, creative mastery, and entrepreneurial spirit form a business founded on her philosophy: **Create to live. Live to Create.**

Susan is a warm-hearted, high-spirited, and reflective artist inspired by colours, images, children, and her natural environment. Based in Medicine Hat, Alberta, she is surrounded by an abundance of such images that unfold into her soft and whimsical style of art.



A self-proclaimed daydreamer, Susan is a focused, driven, and passionate adventurer whose entrepreneurial energy can only be contained by quietly productive moments when she is painting, writing, or designing.

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## AN ARTIST'S JOURNEY

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Born in Burlington, Ontario on March 2, 1970, Susan and her family spent a few years moving around Alberta: Edmonton in 1979; Leduc in 1983; and then Whitecourt in 1992. She comes from a family of strong, disciplined work ethics and Ukrainian roots. It was her father's love of nature and people and her mother's passion for crafts and family life that would influence Susan throughout her life. Her father chose the oil business over an opportunity to enter the Banff School of Fine Arts and he raised his children with the philosophy "to love life, make the best out of everything, and go after what you really want." Susan's warm memories of her late father influence her work today.



"My father was always happy and a real people person," says Susan. "He loved nature, and could sell anything to anyone. My mother kept us in line and taught us the importance of family, and trips to the mountains created that hub for my artistic vision."

A happy child who loved the outdoors, Susan was a perfectionist. She was shy, creative, artistic, and a teenage dreamer -- the foundation for her creativity.



"I dabbled in anything that brought out the best in me," says Susan. "I entered every contest, did movie extra roles, and was even the runner up for Miss Edmonton in 1986." I was always writing, drawing and participated in gallery and school functions. I did everything on a fast track."

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## PASSIONS COME TO LIFE

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Susan is a 1992 Bachelor of Education graduate from The University of Alberta in Edmonton. She majored in English and minored in Art and French. After completing additional online courses in children's literature, writing, education, and genealogy, while working part-time at Lewiscraft, a well-known Canadian craft store chain, Susan taught in elementary schools. A decade later, she developed art, writing, and drama classes designed to help improve communications skills with children and adults.

"I believe art can help people with life, often times even with depression," says Susan. "Art is therapy, it connects everyone, and it's a feel good activity." It is this down-to-earth philosophy that has attracted many to Susan's work.

"Customers have told me that my artwork is uplifting," says Susan. "They are drawn to it because of the happy colours and images. And they tell me my work is inspiring. Knowing that I'm somehow making a difference in their lives warms my heart."

Married in 1990 and becoming a new mom that same year didn't curb her love for crafting, painting, and scrapbooking. She also started a craft business in Taber, Alberta called Sunflower Studios, eventually changing the name to Susiebee Studios.

But Susan's passion for her artistry didn't stop there. In 2003 she served on the Board of Directors for The Writers Guild of Alberta—a position that helped to hone her writing skills. In 2005, she became a member of the Arts Council of Whitecourt, Alberta (SWAC). She's written and illustrated children's literature, her poetry has appeared in several anthologies, she's a designer with FaveCrafts.com, and a contributing designer with Creating Scrapbooks. Her designs have also appeared in the Sketches 2 Scrapbook application and her articles have been published in *Canadian Scrapbooker*, *Creating Keepsakes*, *Scrapbook News & Review*, *Canadian Living*, and several North Alberta newspapers.



"My art and my writing depend on my creative juices flowing," says Susan. "Writing helps me maintain a well-rounded, clear perspective of my craft. It's my own space."

She shares that space with her fire inspector husband of 21 years, their four grown children (ages 13 to 19), and two cats in Medicine Hat, Alberta. Susan is typically found immersed in her artwork. "You don't have to be an artist to create good art," she says. "You have to see beauty around you and put colour into everything."



While it appears to be an overwhelming environment for an artist, she is still motivated and inspired by “ideas, images, and looking at things from a different perspective.” So how does she stay focused and balanced? “I set the timer,” says Susan. “Each part of the day is scheduled, structured and has deadlines. I journal and post them on walls so they’re always in sight. I never miss an opportunity to have my work seen.”

Susan’s paper products are available around Alberta and soon to be across Canada and the U.S. She is also being courted by distributors and potential partners interested in combining their product with her line of paper. As an artist who’s already made her mark in the paper industry, she is primed for partnerships with the fabric, card, home décor, and home design industries. “Every project must have a wow factor,” she says. “The possibility has to sizzle and be sellable.”



Given the abundance of artists in the marketplace today, Susan stays on top of her game by actively engaging in social media and connecting with people and companies. “I read company profiles, trade information online and offline, and attend seminars, workshops, and conferences.” Susan was a speaker and demonstrated her signature skills to an audience of 500 attendees at Scrapfest 2011, a paper crafting event, attracting scrapbookers, stampers, card makers, and more in Kitchener, Ontario. Susan has also been chosen to design a mixed media gown for the Crafty Couture Display at the Craft & Hobby Association Summer Conference 2011 in Rosemont, Illinois this summer. The Crafty Couture display will feature fashions worthy of the red carpet, designed and created by CHA’s talented Designer Members. The fashions will exemplify how different products in the industry, regardless of their primary segment, compliment one another. It’s an exclusive chance for Susan to combine all skills and do what she loves.

But near and dear to Susan’s heart is a charitable project she began in 2008. The Christmas Love Campaign encourages crafters to create a work of art, donate it to someone unknown, and then tell the story online at the Susiebee Studios Facebook Fan Page. Susan has also donated her own artwork to various charities, art societies, and groups including fundraising initiatives like Your Creative Journey, an art group that raises money for flood victims in Australia and the Red Cross to help raise money for tsunami and earthquake victims in Japan. She also recently donated a piece to raise funds for the tornado victims in Joplin, Missouri in the U.S.



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## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

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Susan’s multi-faceted responsibilities at Susiebee Studios include promoting and processing her product orders, marketing her product at trade shows and fairs, developing partnerships in the paper industry, teaching crafting classes, and managing day-to-day operations of the company. But it is her genuine, down-to-earth, and friendly approach to doing business that draws customers into her creative world at her website ([www.susiebestudios.com](http://www.susiebestudios.com)) and her blogs.





Her site is virtually an online gallery for artistic work done by clients who have used Susan's fine papers.

"There's an incredible high that comes with seeing the end result of my artwork and knowing that people are using my creations," says Susan. "I always want my product to exceed expectations for my customers, my distributors, and for me. Clients appreciate the quality of my work. It's unique and I'm dependable."

As a highly-motivated, energetic, determined and über creative professional, Susan has the process of achieving results also down to an art form. She starts with a strategy, then sets realistic goals, and then paves a path towards those goals. The process is based on her mission to BELIEVE in the possibilities that lie ahead and driven by the words of Theodore Roosevelt: "Believe you can and you are half-way there."

"Art is always going to be around and it's always going to be necessary," says Susan. "Art is not my work, it's my life and I know it will blossom from paper into other products as long as I have a say and a hand in it."



## AN ARTIST'S WAY OF LIFE

As a self-proclaimed "beauty seeker," Susan is consistently on a creative mission to share her artistic talents and improve lives through art. It is the core of who she is.

"I draw energy, creativity, knowledge, and power from my heart and my soul," says Susan. "When I put it to work, I'm like a child wanting to go out and play and explore everyday." It is this joie de vivre that has earned Susan a reputation as "the greatest friend on earth." And she is an artist who "conveys a happy vision of life through whimsical and airy notes," as one Toronto gallery owner says of her work. Her playful, silly, and outgoing character also allows her to seamlessly blend her professional life with her personal life. She is a photography enthusiast who captures precious moments that unite nature and people. And she loves cooking, baking, sewing, and occasionally curling up with a good book (her favourite is *Eat Pray Love* by Elizabeth Gilbert).

Susan continues to champion her opinion that art is life and that it can change the world. "I like to think outside the fishbowl," she says. "It's an empowering feat."

"Walking, taking pictures, meditating, feeling the wind, and smiling continues to drive my creativity and helps me to become a better person and professional. I absolutely love what I do and love the opportunity to earn my living through creativity."

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