



Meet Johnny DeFeo

We recently connected with Johnny DeFeo and have shared our conversation below.

Johnny, appreciate you joining us today. We've love to hear an interesting investment story – what was one of the best or worst investments you've made? (Note, these responses are only intended as entertainment and shouldn't be construed as investment advice)

When I was in grad school for painting I received a grant to purchase art materials– I stretched the definition of “art materials” and purchased a moving truck with the funds. I used it to start an art shipping company which was an excuse to meet artists and gallerists all over the country just as I was leaving grad school, hoping to get a foot in the door somewhere with my artwork. My friend Aaron Zulpo and I used the truck as a mobile base to take a trip to paint landscapes across the southwest. This later developed into us co-founding a mobile painting residency called Adventure Painting which allows us to take artists with us into the wild to paint all across North America. Prior to that, when I first got the truck I outfitted it with solar power, art storage and sleeping quarters. My now girlfriend Ari Myers and I co-curated a moving art show called Part Art Truck. We brought the work of some of our favorite artists for a ride to some of our favorite locations and curated pop-up art shows inspired by each location in which we would stop. So in the end the truck even helped me find love! What else could you want from an investment?!





Johnny, love having you share your insights with us. Before we ask you more questions, maybe you can take a moment to introduce yourself to our readers who might have missed our earlier conversations?

I have always been drawn to painting and drawing, since I was little, but I decided to pursue it as a career after watching an episode of Law & Order. The action centered around an artist, on the night of his opening at a big Chelsea gallery. There was so much glitz and glamour, good food, beautiful people, he took a stunning woman home. When he was found dead the next morning I said to myself "I think this is the life for me."

I am a painter, for the most part. Most of my work centers around landscapes, magical encounters with wildlife, and places of sanctuary. In my paintings I imagine a time that predates the daily rituals, bloody fights, healing ceremonies, and protective structures created by humans. Or maybe a time when all of us are gone and there are just herds of wild horses roaming the plains, coyotes skulking through the long shadows of day's end,

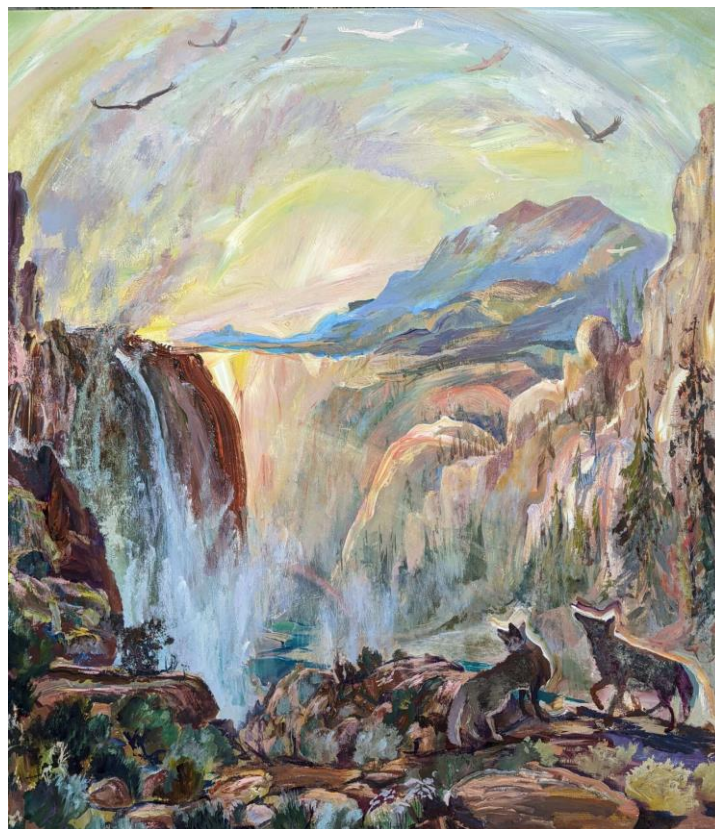


and mountain vistas devoid of vacation homes, forest roads, and skilifts. I oscillate regularly, as I am sure many do, between wishing to save the world, to commit myself to the best course and fight for a better future, and wishing the planet would just hurry up and get it over with already. The scenes in my paintings could be omens, dreamy premonitions, or stolen glances of the inevitable— a soft eyed look at our lands unpopulated, when the wild and untamed is punctuated with moments of serenity with no one there to see it. I also make design objects, such as ceramics, textiles and wallpaper.

I co-founded a mobile artist residency called Adventure Painting with friend and painter Aaron Zulpo. We take artists on trips to paint outdoors in America's most beautiful places.

The goal of my work is to help people recognize the immense beauty in the world, to appreciate nature and become better stewards of the environment.





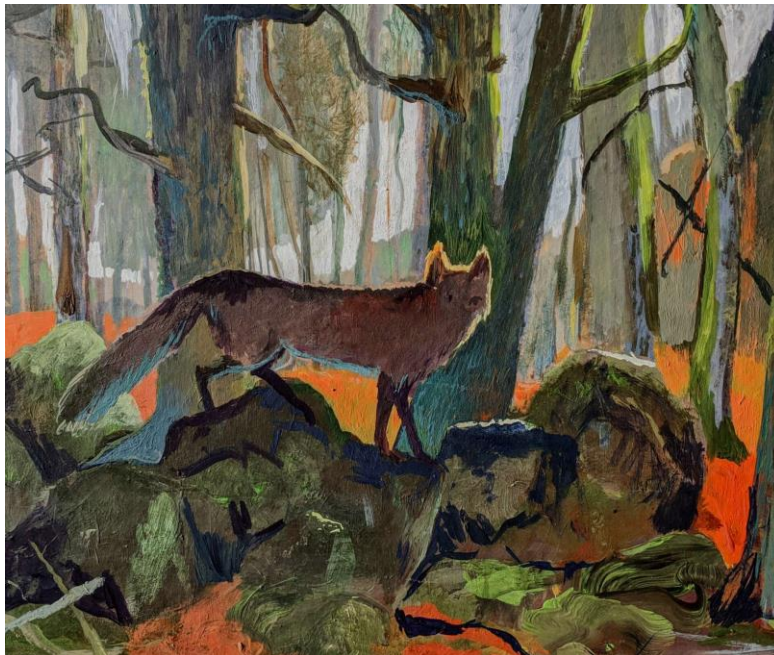


We often hear about learning lessons – but just as important is unlearning lessons. Have you ever had to unlearn a lesson?

“Suffering creates great art.” — I find this common notion to be fundamentally flawed. In my perspective, the idea that one must endure pain and hardship to produce exceptional art neglects the profound impact of working from a place of comfort, contentment, and abundance. Artistic expression is not solely born from suffering; rather, it can thrive in an environment of fulfillment and security.

In the early years of my artistic endeavors, I found myself immersed in the belief that only through personal hardship could I truly tap into the depths of my creativity. I intentionally sought out challenges and difficulties, believing that the struggle would be the catalyst for profound artistic expression. However, this approach left me emotionally drained and creatively stifled, making do with sad paintings trying to evoke something easy rather than grappling with my inability to portray what I envisioned and coming to terms with the fact that what I needed was to get better at my craft.

It wasn't until I consciously shifted my perspective, embracing a life of contentment and abundance, that I discovered the true wellspring of inspiration. Working from a place of emotional stability allowed me to explore my art with a newfound clarity and enthusiasm. It feels good to keep my tears out of the paint.







What do you find most rewarding about being a creative?

The most rewarding part of being an artist is the freedom to build a life that is exciting, and malleable and varied. I work with people that I love, that I think are the best at what they do, and have met collectors, contributors and collaborators all over the world that share a passion for art and, more importantly, all kinds of other niche interests that aren't related to art in the slightest. Building a life in the arts means my colleagues aren't just coworkers; they're comrades in creativity, partners in paint, and accomplices in absurdity. We don't just work together; we embark on adventures disguised as "meetings." I am allowed to pursue interests as they come, and go, and call it all "my work." The other day I drove 4 hours to go look for bald eagles just because it felt like I needed to see one. I often take 2 hours to cook an elaborate lunch and take a nap. And then when I step back into the studio to make paintings, and it's going well, I feel like I am sharing ideas about life and nature, and love and beauty.

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