

## The Painter Next Door

Artist Tiffany Birch discusses her zest for color and creativity.

“The road always unfolds before me,” says artist Tiffany Birch. “I may start out with a map, but I’m always going into uncharted territory.” It was this rogue sensibility that led Birch to sign up for a community art class in 1993, propelling her down a whole new career path. “After four art lessons at the Torpedo Factory in Virginia, I came home, took apart my dining room, and got an easel,” the East Coast native recalls. “I made 60 paintings in 45 days.”

And the work didn’t stop there. Birch continued painting, eventually settling in Menlo Park with her dog Ellie and making a full-time career of her new passion for color and abstract art. “I see, I feel, and I hear color,” she says. “When I begin to paint, it just pours out of me.”

This free spiritedness has led Birch to teach children’s workshops with Lucile Packard Children’s Hospital, local leukemia centers, and other local youth groups. “I love painting with kids,” she says. “I’ll say, ‘I want you to paint what an ice cream cone tastes like,’ and they *get it*. I find myself very involved with the child within.” Though not a mother herself, Birch describes herself as “excellent aunt material.”

This youthful energy comes across in her brightly colored canvasses, all of which evolve from her own unique creative process. When asked to do commission paintings for clients, for instance, she talks with them, sees their home, and then lets instinct guide her work. “When I go into a home to do a commission, I literally sense the energy—I’m intuitive,” she explains. “I always feel that I’m heavily guided in my work by my spirit.” It’s a spirit that seems to permeate her bold, colorful paintings and has captured the hearts of many.

[www.tiffanybirch.com](http://www.tiffanybirch.com) ■

—LINDSAY SCHAUER



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