

Art and marriage

One artist reveals to **Charlotte Pearson** how her wedding added extra sparkle to her work.

When Louise Brooks got married it not only had an affect on her relationship status but also her artistic direction.

Specialising in seascapes, flowers and abstracts, Louise's paintings have always been textured with items from the beach.

But when she used Swarovski crystals as a wedding decoration her fascination with light saw them incorporated into her artwork.

"I used to work as a studio photographer so loved being able to use light," she reveals. "The table decorations at my wedding created amazing and mesmerizing lighting effects.

"Nowadays it is this essential quality of light that dances on the horizon as the sun rises and sets that captures my imagination and I am on a constant quest to immortalise this light on canvas."

Louise also uses semi-precious gem stones to recreate this effect.

"Each one of my seascape paintings literally dances with light, shimmering and sparkling with the added radiance of Swarovski crystals and semi precious gemstones," she smiles.

It was her 2011 fairytale wedding which opened her eyes to this type of material, but it was a twist of fate and a click of a mouse that led her to meet her soul mate.

"I never really believed in that before. I wasn't one of those girls that had their wedding planned so I have been quite surprised at the impact it has had," she reveals.

Louise met her husband John Heal on match.com, but it could have been a different story.

"I was at my sisters and had pretty much given up on internet dating, but on a wet and rainy day she found John's profile and said I should contact him," she recalls. "So I did and as soon as we met we connected.

"It all happened quite fast but getting married has been the catalyst for a change in my paintings.

"My work has been evolving naturally but I think because I found the love of my life it has made it happen a bit quicker than I was expecting."

Alongside love, living by the sea is another source of inspiration for the artist.

"There is a wonderful, under cliff, walkway that runs from my home in Saltdean to the



Brighton Marina. It is here that I constantly draw immense inspiration, fascinated by the way the ocean glitters with a silvery sheen at low lights," she explains.

"I want to re-create this miracle of nature on canvas and capture this mirror-like sheen I see on my seaside walks."

She creates this by using the crystals but also metallic paints which adds another dimension to the work.

"My work looks different in different light, so depending on the time of day one picture can look completely different to an hour before," Louise says.

Originally from Cheltenham, Louise adds

that living in the countryside never felt right as she has always felt an affinity to the sea.

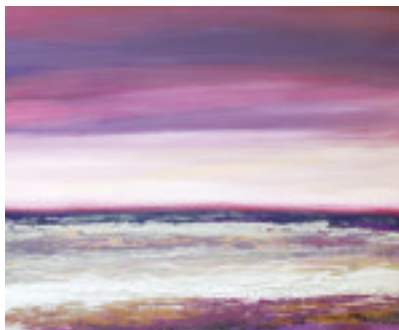
"I moved to Hove in 1999 but it didn't click, but now Saltdean feels like home," she smiles.

"I have my own workshop which I never had before and it is just a few steps from the house.

"I used to paint in my flat, which wasn't ideal as I would fling paint around my cream lounge," she laughs.

Explaining she loves what she does, her passion for her work shines through when she talks about her creations.

"I work on a number of paintings at the same time building layer after layer. It can be quite draining both emotionally and physically



Purple Haze, pre-wedding 2009



Louise with her husband John on their wedding day,

Photo by Paul Hickinbotham, www.positivenegatives.net



Close up of Beau Rivage, showing gemstones and crystals



Beau Rivage, post wedding 2013 with clear crystal quartz and swarovski crystals



Aquamarine Beach, post wedding 2013 with clear crystal quartz and swarovski crystals

but I love it so it is worth it," she reveals. "The paintings are like my babies so it can be hard when I have finished to give them away but otherwise I would keep them all and I don't think my house is big enough for that."

Her work is currently on display at Art 5 Gallery in Bartholomews, Brighton and it is work that has to be seen to be believed.

Louise also undertakes commissions. For more information, visit Art 5 Gallery or go to her website www.louisebrooks.co.uk or email art@louisebrooks.co.uk



Aqua Blue, pre wedding 2010