

Emily Erwin

Emily Erwin grew up in the foothills of the Sacramento Valley, happily ensconced in an artistic family, and is one of eleven children. Her father, also a painter, encouraged her inventive nature and fostered the considerable creative talents which she exhibited at an early age. Growing up in the countryside of California in the '70s left an aesthetic mark on the artist. She recalls fond memories of her mother straining amber-colored honey from bees' wax, "under sunset that seemed stained yellow from the mustard pollen filling the air from the surrounding fields." In the evenings, moths would swarm around the porch light, while her brothers played mandolin and guitar.

Erwin's formal training began at the San Francisco Art Institute, where she was introduced to a new world of art not only through the curriculum, but from the exchange of energies and ideas with her fellow students. In 1993, she graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Art, and then continued her academic pursuits abroad by enrolling in the prestigious Gerrit Rietveld Academie in Amsterdam, which was founded by an architect and furniture designer internationally renowned as one of the forefathers of modernism. While in Holland, she studied the Dutch masters and visited the van Gogh Museum and Rijksmuseum to experience the Vermeers, Holbeins and, most remarkably, the Rembrandts first-hand. Erwin often now reflects on that time as the most definitive in the formation of her style, blending her passion for contemporary art with a reverence and admiration for more traditional ways of painting. Artists who Erwin feels embody some of these qualities include Odd Nerdrum, Ralph Steadman and Robert Crumb. Creatively, Erwin has expressed being affected by the musician Tom Waits in a way that no other single artist has moved her. His "reckoning" voice, weaving his stories with provoking lyrics, has made a profound impression on the artist.



Emily Erwin
Born in California
Resides in Astoria, OR