

Artist Network Newsletter, 2023

Animal Painter Alex Tabet Takes Artists Network's 2nd Annual Best in Show



[Beth Williams](#)

After a 10-year hiatus from art, this mostly self-taught artist embraced his talent and began earning awards and accolades. Meet our “Best in Show” winner and explore his work.

A House Cat (oil on panel, 20x16) by Alex Tabet

Predominantly a portrait/figure painter, and an occasional still life painter, Alex Tabet shares that he found a new subject in an “in-the-moment” experience.

A House Cat, Oil on panel 20” x 16”



“I was at my friend Rachel’s apartment because I had asked her to pose for a painting. As I sat in the living room waiting for her to get dressed, I noticed her cat Louie sitting beneath the table by the front door. I was immediately drawn to him, for his presence filled the room. He emanated an elegance that was regal yet simple. I loved how he seemed to be in his comfort spot of the apartment, sitting next to a pair of worn-out boots. We spent a long moment looking at each other from across the room. When he gracefully turned his head to reveal his profile, I had my shot. I just knew I had to paint his portrait. It was also one of the most fun paintings I have made, and I definitely feel I should incorporate more animals into my work.”

Alex Tabet

Why It Stands Out

“There’s a fantastic direction of light. The piece is detailed, but you know where to look. The cat takes your full attention; if you drift away, you can notice some beautifully rendered objects. It’s a wonderful use of temperature and texture.”

Jennifer Gennari, Juror

Meet the Artist

“I have loved to draw ever since I could remember. Devouring art books and lessons online, I developed my talent in a self-taught manner and naturally found my way into portraits and figures at an early age.

“Eventually other life forces pulled me away from creating art, and I didn’t draw again for 10 years. At the end of 2018, however, I came across the Instagram profiles from some of today’s top representational fine artists. Their artwork reminded me of the time I drew as a child and left me thinking about what I could be creating had I not stopped. I decided to post an old drawing from my teenage years, and within an hour, I had my very first

commission. Moments after picking up the pencil, I rediscovered my love for the craft.

“I couldn’t stop after the commission was finished. I continued drawing on the side and began receiving new commissions. It was then I recognized my passion truly lied in visual art. I soon wanted to learn how to express myself further with the use of color. In early 2019, I began studying figure painting from life in oil with Julia Diller at the Atelier of Fine Art, in Los Angeles. “She recognized my talent and work ethic and took me under her wing. I studied with her for nine months and wouldn’t be the painter I am without her early guidance and encouragement. I continued my training in a self-taught way, learning much from online tutorials and workshops from the some of the world’s best artists such as Andrew Tischler, East Oaks Studio – Alex Venezia, Michael Klein and Louis Carr, as well as Stan Prokopenko, Marco Bucci and Scott Waddell.

“Most of my free time is spent behind the easel, and I often lose sleep because I find it hard to pull myself away from the canvas. In only my second year of painting, I began gaining recognition from art institutions and magazines. In 2022, my third year as an artist, I began selling professionally with Vanessa Rothe Fine Art Gallery, in Laguna Beach, Calif. I feel I have found my purpose. With a brush in hand, I look forward to what the future may bring.”

Alex’s Advice for Cat (or Other Furry Animals) Artists

“I think capturing the spirit or essence of the animal should be the primary goal. It’s great to always keep in mind composition, lighting and pose to achieve this. As for the actual painting of a cat, I would say try to understand how light is interacting with the structure of the animal. Pay close attention to the value shifts between light and dark. Don’t necessarily feel obligated to paint every strand of hair, but rather how the fur, as a whole, is interacting with both light and form. However, I have seen some very incredible paintings where every strand of hair was fully painted.”