

# Art and the City

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## **Artist Profile: Lynn Mehta**

**BY**

**JIM MAGNER**



9th St. Market, oil.

The paint moves. It carries you into a swirling, living space. You join in its questioning of all that is apparent: people and the things that grow or flow or sit quietly waiting for your curious attention. Then forms begin to take shape within the brush strokes and you join them in their transportation to an alluring and compelling time and place.

Lynn Mehta travels to everywhere, exploring the world in color and form. There is fluidness in her work that connects the oceans to the deserts to the farmlands and into the cities – backstreets and main streets. Her paint celebrates the luxuriousness of its own reason for being, be it an ocean scene, the desert at night, or a crowded street corner in DC. Each place retains its own identity. Its own soul.

A “plein air” painter, Lynn wants to be centered in the dynamics of the outdoors, where the colors are honest and forms distinct. As a result her deep shadows have pure strength, while bright yellows and whites hold their own and give you an open, fresh air experience.

Skies come alive. They dance with the trees below; they turn sunset orange or ocean green and spread those colors across the landscape. They sing with the waves that

pound the shore or reflect the isolation of a country road. In her words, the skies are “dirty,” heavy, full of matter, not a thin curtain of blue. There is often a “loneliness” in the light that brightens or deepens the forms below.

Lynn Mehta grew up in California and has a BA in art from San Diego State. She has studied with acclaimed artists around the world, beginning with her mother who painted the landscapes of southern California. You can see Lynn’s work this month at the Hill Center (see At the Galleries) and at [www.lynnmehta.com](http://www.lynnmehta.com).

### Jim Magner’s Thoughts on Art

Lynn Mehta grew up in San Diego – La Jolla – where the sounds and smells of the rolling, pounding surf are as much a subconscious presence as they are a physical reality. I lived there for a while when I was young. We lived on the side of a hill looking out over the great Pacific. I would stand spellbound, entranced by the incredible ocean expanse that leads visually to the curved horizon, the line where water and sky dissolve into one ever-transforming tone. That’s the place where thunderous clouds are born from clear skies and black angry shadows are released. Winds rush in, bringing the salt air. It’s more than a memory; it’s an indelible mindfulness. If you’re an artist it imbeds itself in your core, your DNA. It stays with you.

It stayed with Lynn Mehta. The early information of this powerful force has been carried over the years into the sights, sounds, and feelings in her paintings wherever she goes and in almost any subject she picks. It could be Chesapeake Bay or the human dynamic in a DC underpass.

Psychologists talk of the formative years, those early times when everything is new and some ordinary sight, sound, smell, or just a spine-tingling feeling can stick with you, take up a place in your blossoming brain and gain importance.

For Lynn it was the ocean. But for you it could be the clamor of the city with its faces, the enduring and endearing people who filled your home and your neighborhood. It could be a summer storm in the desert, snow on the prairie, or the sound of the wind in the mountains. But then, it wasn’t always a lovely, friendly domain, was it? It came with threats: an underlying malevolence that became a chunk of that indelible mindfulness that can give power to a painting and meaning to life.