

# Our Businesses

**Jamie Lindholm Portraits~**

*A Thousand Words  
are Not Enough*

By Christopher Reardon



*Jamie Lindholm is working on a portrait of her husband, Jonas.*

**M**iss Lena was a woman in Baltimore who lived her entire life in the same house and each day peeked out at the world from her doorway. One day the world peeked back and Miss Lena was forever captured in the oil paints of her neighbor, Jamie Lindholm.

"In portraits, I love it when I can capture, almost instinctively, the spirit or characteristic or little twinkle I wouldn't know about as a stranger," Lindholm said. "I think that's awesome."

Lindholm is much like a textured painting herself. A person who by her own admission is equally left-brained and right-brained, Lindholm traveled a circuitous route to her present place as portrait artists, businesswoman and owner of Jamie Lindholm Fine Arts Portraits & Paintings.

Lindholm, who loved art almost from birth, excelled equally in the sciences and art as a child and earned bachelors degrees in marketing and business management in college. Her career path included stops at the apparel division of retailer Kmart, insurance company Aetna and financial services giant OMX, including working on the opening of the International Securities Exchange in New York. Somewhere along the way Lindholm returned to school to study engineering.

She attended college in the Midwest and has lived in Baltimore, Sweden (where she met her husband), New York and, now, Martinsville, where she and her husband are currently renovating a house built by the son of Upton Sinclair, of all people.

Along each stage of her business journey, Lindholm never lost her passion for art.

"The minute I graduated (college), the first thing I did was grab my sketch board," Lindholm remembers. "I thought, why can't I do both?"

Toward that end, Lindholm kept pursuing her passion even as she was plying her trade in the business world. While working for Aetna in Baltimore, Lindholm studied at the Maryland Institute College of Art and Studio 33 Art Center, and studied under American artist David Zuccarini. After returning from Sweden, it was on to the Art Students League of New York.

"I always knew my goal was to be a full-time artist," she said. "But I didn't want to be a starving artist. I think art is a fabulous profession. I don't think you have to starve. It's just another business."

Lindholm's career in the business world has helped her turn her passion into a successful enterprise. She is able to balance the artistic side of her business with the business side of her art.

"You can't paint all the time," she said. "So when I need a break, I go do the accounting or the marketing."

She applies those organizational skills in delivering her product, as well. The path to creating a portrait for a client is a clearly defined series of steps. The preparation phase includes consideration of such aspects as mood of the portrait, outfits, pose, size and lighting. That is followed by an initial sitting, which yields an oil sketch or at minimum, photography. A charcoal composition follows, which leads to the actual painting.

There is no conflict between the "artistic license" of the inspired artist and the wants of the client for Lindholm. Potential clients review her work and style prior to commissioning a portrait and the artist enjoys figurative painting, so portrait work comes naturally to her.

"And the business side of me says I always want the customer to be happy," she added.

Finally, delivery of the portrait is done at an unveiling party, which is "good for business, too," Lindholm says.

The business of being an artist did not always run so smoothly for Lindholm. Like all small business owners, there was a time during her start-up period when she felt overwhelmed.

That is where inspiration helps.

One day Lindholm walked into the bedroom of her 5-1/2-month-old son and saw him sitting on a bed, safely surrounded by blankets while happily gazing out the window. The result was an oil painting titled, "Each Day a New Beginning."

"I looked at him and realized everything is going to be okay," Lindholm said.

So it has.

Lindholm has completed 97 paintings that hang in homes, businesses and galleries in both the United States and Sweden, and is currently working on a commissioned portrait for a client in Ohio. She won awards for her work—including for "Miss Lena"—and is a member of the Portrait Society of America, Oil Painters of America and the Somerset Arts Association, where she occasionally teaches.

With every step, the anchor has always been the art.

Lindholm loves dramatic lighting—"A painting really sings if it carries all those notes," she said—and colors—"I get blown away by colors relative to each other, relative to value, relative to hues," she added. "It's just awesome. It's completely mine."

Her favorite medium remains oil. And while Lindholm paints landscapes and still lifes, portraits remain her favorite genre.

"It's a true, honest emotion or story of the person's soul," she said. ▲



*"Each Day a New Beginning"*