



## The Artist with an Eye for Design | [Dana Kern](#)

By Allison Alene

**A**rt can define a space. Without color, texture and design, a room is just that—a room with blank walls. No one quite understands the transformative power of art quite like Dana Kern. With a 20-year background in interior design, Dana has always loved the use of color and texture.

Growing in up in Colorado, Dana's creativity emerged at a young age and was influenced by her grandmother. "The first memory that I can recall where I felt a connection to art was in Ms. Jensen's third grade class," Dana says, "we were making the standard 'glue stuff onto a drawing of a turkey' art. She came to my desk and told me how good mine was. I responded with "my grandmother is an artist."

In my young third grader view of life, if she was an artist then I must be one too.”

Throughout her life, Dana dreamed of pursuing art in a substantial way. Her interests were always creative and included jewelry making, designing and sewing clothing and floral design. “I started a little business doing dried and silk flower arrangements,” Dana recalls, “I connected with a local interior designer and created pieces for her clients. Later she was the one that offered me a job designing homes.”

As a newly single mother, Dana started working at a local interior design firm. The pay was solely commission. It was a risky proposition but Dana knew she had the drive to be successful in interior design and support her children. “I would get up early and cold call on the new construction projects in hopes of meeting the builder and getting a set of blue prints to design the interiors and ultimately bid on the project. It was through this process that I met my now husband, Larry. He was running the installation crews for a new home build I was working on.”

Dana went from a stay at home mom to starting a successful career within three years. “One of the highlights of my career was completing a large scale remodel in seven weeks as a general contractor.” After working for a couple of different firms Dana struck out on her own and created her own interior design and installation business that her husband, Larry has since taken over.

Dana designed and built homes from the conceptual drawing stage

to completion and discovered she had a true talent for reinvigorating spaces. She worked with clients to redesign their homes, offices and retail spaces including many medical clinic interiors. “The goal was to always create an environment of peace and safety and calm for the patients,” Dana reflects, “I knew I could put people at ease and create feelings of joy through color.”

“I have wanted to be an artist for as long as I can remember,” Dana recalls, “raising four beautiful children, starting my own interior design business, and working hard to create a life for myself and my children, the dream became buried.”

With children raised and wanting to look at ventures outside interior design, Dana was free to think about ‘what’s next’?



*Northern Lights | 36 x 48 | Acrylic*

Dana has always loved flowers and began photographing the flowers she had always grown in her home and garden. “I started photographing them (flowers) and that led to showing my photography in a local gallery and other

venues in the state. I then took a pastel class from a local artist and continued my love affair with flower subjects, but soon wanted to explore what else was possible. I bought a couple of tubes of paint, a brush and a canvas and started to play.”

Though Dana had pursued artistic interests in photography, painting became her passion and there was no turning back. “With the very patient and loving support of my husband, I could take classes, hone my skills and explore new possibilities. I started painting ocean scenes and portraits which lead into acrylics and abstraction.”



*Ancient Warrior | 48 x 60 | Acrylic*

Dana’s design sensibility influenced the direction of her work. “When designing homes it was always frustrating to find the perfect size of art to complete the look of the space” Dana recalls, “the open floor plans and high ceilings of

many homes I worked with, the availability of large scale art was limited. When I started to experiment with acrylics, I wanted to create pieces to complement these vast spaces. The more I played with large canvases, the more I liked working in that size of format. It has allowed me to create without size constraints.”



*Eventide | 30 x 60 | Acrylic*

Her large-scale paintings depict hints of land and seascapes in abstract form. Dana’s work is decidedly three dimensional and demands a live experience—it is not possible to perceive her paintings’ rich textures and bold colors unless you see them in person. Each piece makes a statement.

Color is of key importance in Dana’s work and life and she constantly recognizes its crucial interplay. “I feel I see color differently than most. I create variations of colors without the constraints of what should work and instead just let the colors tell their own stories. The color and motion of the sea, the bright Colorado sky can be represented in dynamic ways.”



*Creative Framing and Gallery | Louisville, CO*

Dana’s design sensibility has been an asset to her client relationships as an artist. “I have incorporated my design and artistic skills to create beautiful spaces for my collectors.” She often hangs pieces for clients and has produced many commissioned pieces.

Inspired by her grandmother and wanting to learn more about her artistic journey, Dana recently collected a total of 80 paintings that her grandmother painted and created a catalog of her work. “It was a great experience and made me realize what an excellent and prolific artist she was. I am honored to own a favorite piece of her work. My grandmother spent most of her life raising children and only started painting

fifteen years prior to her passing. I sure did not want to wait that long!”

Dana continues to paint out of her studio in Fort Collins, Colorado. She has made artistic contributions to many organizations in the region. Her work has been donated to the Healing Warriors Program in Colorado, Nebraska and Wyoming, which helps veterans with PTSD through natural healing methods. In addition, she has worked with Colorado State University, the Humane Society and the Christian Alliance in their fundraising efforts. Her artwork can be found across Colorado, Southern California and in Scottsdale-based, Xanadu’s online gallery.

When not in her studio, Dana can be found enjoying the Colorado foothills just steps from her backdoor and enjoying time with family and friends. She is constantly learning new techniques and exploring new surroundings for inspiration.

Dana truly wants to evoke emotion and spirit through her use of color. Her paintings convey a design sensibility but more importantly reflect her vibrant soul.

You can view Dana's latest work at [danakernart.com](http://danakernart.com)

