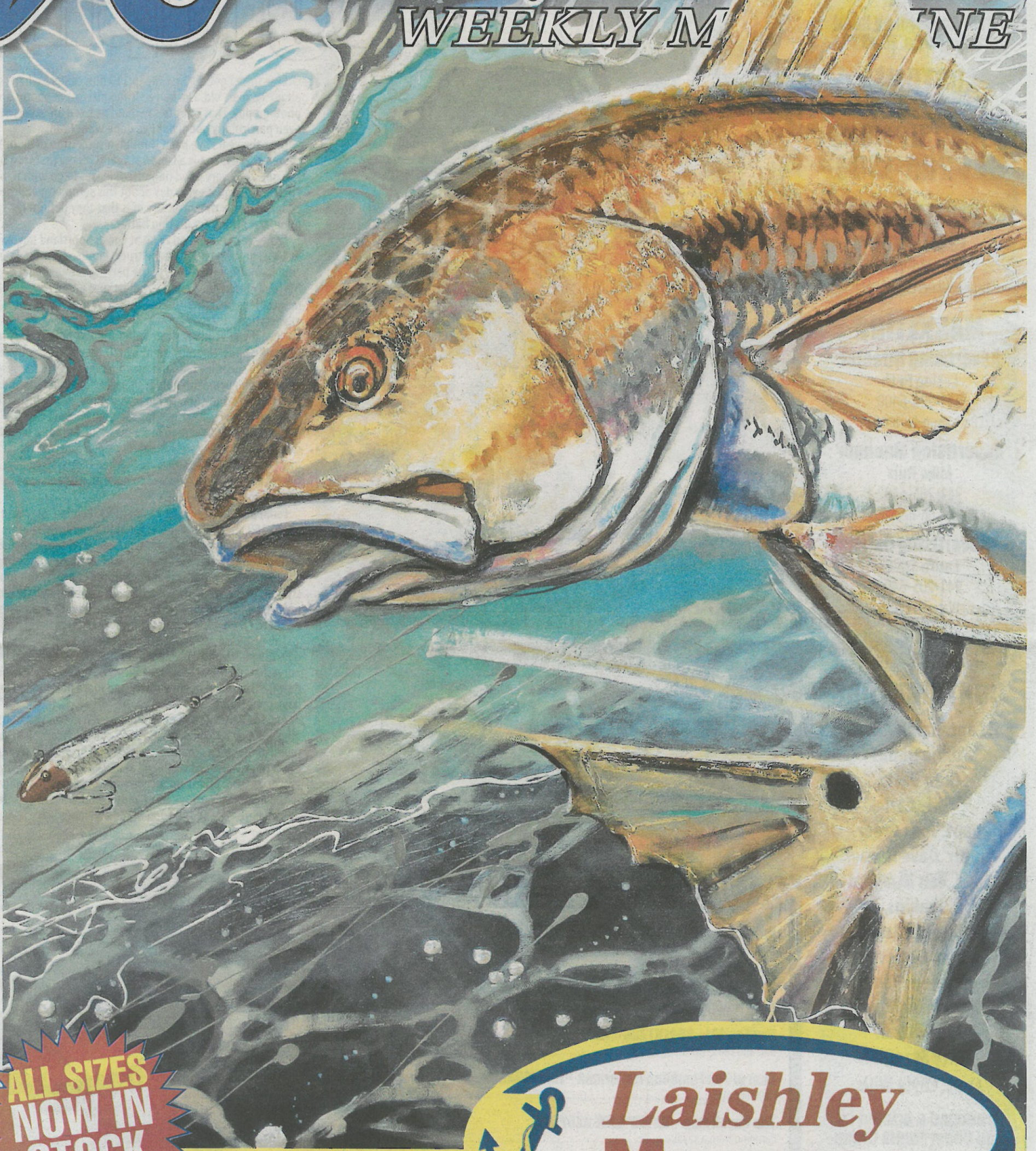


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A new face in marine art



WaterLine photos by Josh Olive

Anastasia Musick spends a lot of time in her open-air studio overlooking the backyard canal — including time she ought to be sleeping. She says, "I don't sleep much because I get these ideas at the 2 in the morning, and then I have to sketch them right away. If I don't sketch it, I'll forget it — it's gone. And I have to, because the hardest part is to get ideas."

By Josh Olive
WaterLine Publisher

Anastasia Musick is a 25-year-old Russian immigrant. Her degree is in architecture technology, and she actually attended college in Mississippi on a tennis scholarship.

What is she doing in WaterLine? Well, it's simple: She's on track to become a serious player in the male-dominated world of marine art. She's already done a few smaller shows, but this summer, she'll be exhibiting on a bigger stage — the Guy Harvey Blazing Mako Festival, scheduled for June 16-19 in Islamorada.

Normally, it takes years for an artist to build a reputation in this field. But Anastasia has been at this for only about a year. In fact, she says, "I'm so new to marine art, I wasn't even sure who Guy Harvey was until I looked him up, but he's a really big deal."

Of course, talent like this doesn't appear overnight. She's actually been honing her craft for some time.

"Artwork is how I made money to come to America for college," she says. "My parents would help me sell them — I was 10 years old, I didn't know how to sell — but I would paint all the time."

Many of her older works focus on a very different genre: World War II aviation, done in oils over a base of acrylic paints.

"I still like doing aviation art because it connects me to the veterans, and it's just a very romantic topic, I think," says Anastasia.



"But I am just so in love with the marine topic right now. I can't wait to push it further."

"I think if you want to paint every day as your job, you have to be able to paint a lot of stuff. So I had to learn to paint abstracts, animals, horses, landscapes, seascapes — pretty much everything. You never know what someone will want when they ask for a commission."

She and her parents emigrated to the U.S. from Moscow in 2009. They've lived in Port Charlotte for the past three years. The move here was instrumental in connecting her with her new passion. She can tell you the day that

it happened.

"Capt. Karl Butigian is a friend of mine," she says. "I was in Fishin' Frank's and I was complaining to him that I never get a chance to fish here even though it's such an awesome place to fish. So when he had a day off, he offered to take me and my husband fishing. We caught redfish and big snook, and we took some amazing pictures. And I said, 'Oh my goodness, this is so awesome. I want to paint them.' So I painted a redfish, my very first fish painting, and I gave it to Karl. He posted a photo of it on Facebook and it got some really good feedback."

Anastasia creates her own canvases, building the stretcher bars from 2x4s bought at a local home store. And she likes to make them large.

"I like paintings bigger — the bigger the better," she says. "In a small space, I really can't show the movement. I need a big space to add more details, to catch people's eyes. In a small space, I just can't put enough stuff."

Another distinguishing feature of her art is the use of impasto to create heavy texturing.

"I always try to use drama and emotions," she says. "I put a lot of texture in many of my paintings. It's fun. I think 3D makes them really stand out, because as the light moves the painting looks different. The shading from the texture will change as the light angle does. Adding texture to the fins or scales really makes the painting come alive."

"I encourage people to touch my paintings

if they want to," she adds. "I believe art is like therapy. Sometimes people don't feel good, and they see art or maybe even paint themselves and then they feel better."

In addition to the texture, many of Anastasia's creations feature metallic highlights, in the form of metal leaf or crystals. This is a technique she's used for years, and it's working very nicely with her new subject matter.

"The silver and gold materials that I use a lot in my paintings goes so well with fish for scales and water," Anastasia says. "I just felt like this was the perfect topic because I can use the shiny materials and Swarovski crystals and it goes so well to creating that marine feeling."

Her smaller pieces are very affordable — as little as \$150 for some paintings. Larger works are still low-priced for their quality and size, at around \$1,500 for pieces like the one in the photo above. But don't expect to be able to buy prints of her art.

"I have an old-school way of thinking that when people buy original art, it should be theirs," she says. "There shouldn't be a bunch of prints that other people have. I've always liked the idea that they should have the only one. Maybe I'll do giclée prints of some paintings before I work myself to death, but I want to always make sure some paintings will be the originals, and that's it."

To see more of Anastasia's art, visit her website at <http://goo.gl/fdEOfn>. To inquire about purchasing or commissioning a piece, call her at 601-618-0054.

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