

## AROUND TOWN

KRISTIN VAN GINKEL  
OPENS THE DOOR  
TO A NEW CAREER

*Watercolour art explores 'mystery, beauty, strength, intrigue and history' of doorways*



DAVID PARKER

Kristin Van Ginkel has launched her third career, as a professional watercolour painter.

She was a successful architect for 22 years, but after daughter Isabella was born she made the decision to be a stay-at-home mom. Eighteen years later the talented daughter is now studying at University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon, and Van Ginkel has the time to devote to what has already become a satisfying and rewarding new career.

A third-generation Calgarian, having excelled in her Grade 10 drafting class, she made the decision to study to become an architect. After attending Arizona State University, she completed her architecture degree at Montana State University in Bozeman, while working as a summer student with architectural firms in Calgary.

Back home she had no problem finding positions with architectural firms, quickly moving up the ranks. The majority of her career was with the former BKDI Architects, one of the largest architectural firms in Western Canada, where she was named as associate, then on to a partner, primarily working in commercial

architecture.

Her passion in architecture was the preliminary design, through sketches, and the co-ordination of all disciplines involved to bring projects to successful completions. Among her favourites were working on the Grand Okanagan Resort and Convention Centre in Kelowna, B.C., for the Royer family, Emerald Stone condo tower, and the GE Harris office and manufacturing building that was awarded a BOMA Building of the Year Award.

Life changed when Kristin married Calgary artist Paul Van Ginkel in Mexico. After Isabella left to study at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon, Paul encouraged her to return to her art. She pored over the many photographs of the beautiful old doors she had taken in San Miguel and began capturing them in watercolours.

Paul says her early paintings were a bit too "architectural" in rendering, but Kristin was a quick learner in taking his advice in interpreting her memories instead of copying what she saw, to depict the recollections of her thoughts.

"I have always been drawn to the mystery, beauty, strength, intrigue and history that lies behind every door, I always try to imagine who has passed through each one," she says.

Paul says his wife soon "nailed it," and he was impressed with her interpretations and her commitment to excellence. The first



Artist Paul Van Ginkel urged his wife Kristin, a former architect, to be less "architectural" with her paintings when she became a watercolour artist. He says his wife soon "nailed it," and he was impressed with her interpretations, here in the background, and her commitment to excellence. JASON DZIVER

eight paintings in her series of Mexican door watercolours sold out quickly and, fuelled by her success, she continued to re-create some wonderful memories. Then the couple took a 2015 holiday in Venice, and each created a new series of paintings.

Kristin is passionately inspired to continue to create architectural subjects through her watercolour paintings — she says she will never try to compete with Paul by painting a horse.

Along with Isabella, they went back to Venice in 2023.

Kristin has completed 31 Venetian watercolours, many of beautiful old and elegant doors, but she has also included views of historic buildings along the romantic and picturesque canals. Originals are selling quickly to

admirers of her art, and now Kristin has produced fine art prints, limited to 250 editions of each, of two of them.

For the moment, she is sticking to magnificent Venice, but also has Rome, Florence and other old-world cities on her radar to travel to in pursuit of additional, inspirational images to offer to a growing list of collectors.

Paul, who works in his studio while Kristin paints at home, says she is also gifted with strong business and marketing skills, helped by her long involvement in this community that includes past board membership of Theatre Calgary and Calgary Opera.

**Notes:** In 2023, Adam Pekarsky merged his executive search

firm with Humanis based in Edmonton. He says it was a brave, new world for his company at the time, but now reports that it has left that association and has joined forces with Amrop Rosin, a premier executive search firm with deep relationships with boardrooms and C-suites across Canada and around the world. Pekarsky says his team needed to be part of something larger, with a meaningful presence in Toronto, one of 70 Amrop Rosin offices in 57 countries. Pekarsky is a partner in the firm and Ranju Shergill has been appointed as managing partner of the Calgary office.

David Parker appears regularly in the Herald. Read his columns online at [calgaryherald.com/business](http://calgaryherald.com/business). He can be reached at 403-830-4622.