

## ARTIST PROFILE: Angela Nesbit



Jeff Cravotta

Greensboro native Angela Nesbit never set out to make a career as a professional artist. She was a CPA, then a mom. Painting was a hobby, a creative outlet, the fun challenge of learning “something new and different from the business world”, she recalls. She never imagined she’d soon sell hundreds of paintings a year and be teaching other artists.

But her pursuit of painting was more than casual, studying up to 18 hours a week with renowned art instructor Andy Braitman, and it wasn’t long before he began suggesting Nesbit pursue representation. “I truly thought he was nuts. I really didn’t believe anyone would be interested in buying my work, and I found that world to be intimidating,” Nesbit says.

Ten years later, Nesbit is represented by seven galleries throughout the Southeast. She has developed a signature style that has attracted a following of collectors to her endearing, action-packed portraits of children at play and lively still life paintings. Now leading sold-out workshops for students who wish to learn her techniques, she is no longer intimidated, and has firmly placed herself within NC’s art scene.

Nesbit spends up to six hours a day working from her sunny, loft-style studio in Charlotte’s Historic South End district. While she produced several hundred paintings a year when the economy was strong, she currently paints at least 10-15 paintings each month, taking the opportunity to slow down, work on her craft, and continue her weekly

study with Braitman. In 2009, her work was commissioned for the Charlotte Symphony’s prestigious Sprit of the Symphony award.

“Know what you love and paint it,” Nesbit says, has been the guiding principle that brings her to the easel each day, and her desire to capture the zeal of children in motion has been a motivator from the beginning. Her attempts to recreate the graceful, yet frenetic, movements of her spirited daughter on canvas led her to develop her signature style. “I would come to the studio with piles of photos of her in motion, and experiment with chaotic layers of paint and use of the palette knife, loosening up till my natural style emerged. Somehow the two just went together and produced this emotional energy.”



**Runaway Bride, 30" x 40"**



**Boys Building, 24" x 24"**

It is that emotional energy that has struck a chord with viewers. More mothers than she can count have approached Nesbit, some in tears, to remark upon the likeness of her images to their own children. Collector Elizabeth Brown, of Charlotte, recalls her and her husband's first encounter with Nesbit's work: "We saw the painting on vacation at Figure Eight Island and were stunned at how much the painting reminded us of our two boys, even down to how they both held their sand pails. The colors were vibrant and rich with happiness and optimism."

"We like to call Angela's figurative work 'memory portraits', because they might remind you of a fond memory of your own children or as a child yourself. Running, twirling, playing and just being a free spirit," says Kathy O'Brien, Gallery Manager at Tyler White Gallery in Greensboro.

Having spent summers at the beach all her life, scenes of the coast are prominent in her work, and her impressionistic paintings of children in the sand and surf have been her most popular paintings. "I just love to sit on the beach and observe the light and atmosphere, photographing children running and splashing. Having these images to savor in the winter gets me through until the sun shines again," Nesbit says.

Just as her emergence as a professional artist surprised her, so has her new role as instructor. In 2006, she was scheduled to do a casual demonstration at her Atlanta gallery, Huff Harrington, but she arrived to find 30 women, an entire art school along with their instructor, assembled with notebooks in hand. "I truly flew by the seat of my pants and dove into a three hour lecture," Nesbit recalls. "Thanks to Andy Braitman, all of his lessons ran like a tape recorder in my head and I just spit them out while I painted." To her surprise, the impromptu lecture went well and afterward the owner of the art school, Donna Thomas, invited her to teach a workshop. "And so my teaching career started," Nesbit says.

Since then she has taught multiple workshops to groups of 10-18 students in Atlanta, Greensboro and Raleigh and recently hosted her first session in her Charlotte studio to a sold-out crowd. Her Charlotte students demanded a second session and the day she scheduled that workshop for May 2010, it was almost full. In Atlanta this April, she judged an exhibition of palette knife painting, a technique that has been the focus of many of her workshops.

"I love teaching," Nesbit says. "It is so fulfilling to share and connect with other artists, and I always finish a workshop recharged." Students appreciate her easy-going, supportive manner and her ability to effectively relay concepts and techniques to both the beginners and the experienced artists in

*“Angela has constant forays into the unknown with palette, tools, scale and application. I have never seen anyone work as diligently as Angela has to grow, develop, and learn. She is immensely talented as an artist and as an instructor.”*

ANDY BRAITMAN  
Charlotte Artist and Instructor



Rose Garden Reds, 24" x 24"



Standing Watch Study, 24" x 24"

the class. “I have worked with three experienced teachers during my two years painting, but have certainly learned the most from Angela Nesbit. She is most professional and her style puts one at ease to accomplish personal goals during the allotted time,” shared John Redhead, who has participated in two Greensboro workshops.

Nesbit has seen a steady demand for her non-traditional portraits of children and families and accepts a few commissions each month as an enjoyable break in the business of producing paintings for shows and galleries. “Painting is such a solitary activity, that it is a lot of fun to get to know a family and create a work of art that has great meaning to them,” Nesbit says.

Nesbit’s most recent works experiment with interesting new textures and include a series of paintings featuring young women. These, and other new works, will be exhibited at Charlotte’s Shain Gallery, 2823 Selwyn Avenue, ([www.shaingallery.com](http://www.shaingallery.com)) from May 14 through the end of June. Preview the show at [www.angelanesbit.com](http://www.angelanesbit.com).



Angela Nesbit teaching a still life workshop in her Charlotte studio, February 2010

Jeff Cravotta

*Christine Dryden is a freelance graphic designer and marketing consultant to artists, galleries and other small businesses. She works from her home studio in Charlotte, which is also headquarters for her young family of six and the renovation company she operates with her husband. [www.stirstudios.net](http://www.stirstudios.net)*



Nesbit in her studio with her children, Christopher (6) and Elizabeth Rose (8) *Jeff Cravotta*



*Christine Dryden*

In the shadow of its growing skyline, Charlotte's Historic South End district was transformed in the 1990's from an aging industrial area to a bustling mixed-use neighborhood with a vibrant arts community.

On East Kingston Avenue, just off South End's main drag and adjacent to Charlotte's new light rail line, the Dilworth Artisan Station building quietly buzzes with artists and designers at work.

The three story building, with its exposed brick walls, huge windows and creaky wood floors, is home to the studios of featured artist **Angela Nesbit**, photographer **Jeff Cravotta**, and some of Charlotte's most notable artists, interior designers, two art galleries, and an architectural antiques dealer.

Residents include:

- » Campagnia Fine Mouldings, framing
- » Casa Bella Finishes, faux finishing
- » Ann Conrad, artist
- » Jeff Cravotta, photography ([jeffcravotta.com](http://jeffcravotta.com))
- » Crossland Studios, antiques
- » Miriam Durkin, artist ([miriamdurkin.com](http://miriamdurkin.com))
- » Pamela Freeman, artist
- » Lita Gatlin, artist ([litagatlin.com](http://litagatlin.com))
- » Tony Griffin, artist ([tonygriffinstudio.com](http://tonygriffinstudio.com))
- » Hacker Studio, gallery ([hawkinsstreetgallery.com](http://hawkinsstreetgallery.com))
- » Caroline Hall, artist
- » Paul Hastings, artist ([paulhastingsart.com](http://paulhastingsart.com))
- » K. Interiors, interior design ([k-interiors.com](http://k-interiors.com))
- » Heidi Kirschner, artist ([heidikirschner.com/](http://heidikirschner.com/))
- » Anne Neilson, artist ([anneneilsonfineart.com](http://anneneilsonfineart.com))
- » Angela Nesbit, artist ([angelanesbit.com](http://angelanesbit.com))
- » Jim Shannonhouse, artist
- » Studio 21 Fine Art, gallery ([studio21gallery.com](http://studio21gallery.com))
- » John Seibels Walker, artist ([johnseibelswalker.com](http://johnseibelswalker.com))

See the building and tour the studios at one of their biannual open house events or visit during South End's monthly First Friday Gallery Crawls. Several newly-renovated studios are currently available.



*Heather Fink*

PHOTOGRAPHER:  
**JEFF CRAVOTTA**

Jeff Cravotta is a Charlotte based commercial and editorial photographer who best likes to shoot people.

He was born in Brooklyn, NY, and relocated to Charlotte in 1980. Jeff's photographic niches include dance, healthcare, yoga, gardens, travel, environmental issues as well as a deep interest in the workings of the food chain.

Jeff's clients include Time Warner, The Girl Scouts, Condé Nast, Town & Country Magazine, The New York Times Magazine, Self Magazine, YMCA, North Carolina Dance Theatre, Presbyterian Healthcare, National Multiple Sclerosis Society, A&E Television Network, National Geographic Channel, and more.

When not working, Jeff enjoys astronomy, yoga, movies, reading, riding bicycles, feeding birds, growing tomatoes and immersing himself in foreign cultures. Recent trips include: Japan, Berlin, Ukraine, Paris, Kazakhstan and several trips to Spain. [www.jeffcravotta.com](http://www.jeffcravotta.com)