



Adding personality to a blank canvas

Mike Trippitt speaks to local artist Samantha Ellis

Sitting in the light, airy lounge of her Bury St Edmunds townhouse artist Samantha Ellis looks happy and relaxed. The 24-year-old painter's studio is upstairs and she shares her home with fiancé Adam, and her two dogs.

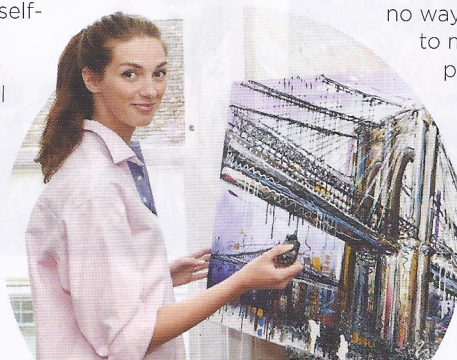
"Freddie and Sprinkle are Chinese Cresteds. I've always grown up with dogs," she says. "I had much bigger dogs when I was younger. I grew up with a Rottweiler first, then a Doberman and then a Bull Terrier." Samantha's lifelong love of dogs is reflected in her latest work. In 2015 she began to paint pictures of man's best

friend in her distinctive style.

"I am trying to do as many breeds as possible so everyone can relate to them. I just love painting dogs."

But her career as an artist could so easily not have happened. Her talent and her love for art when a youngster did not initially come with confidence and self-belief.

"Throughout my whole school life I had done art and it was always my favourite subject.



"Others always thought my art was very good; teachers, school friends. I was conscious of that, but at the same time did not believe them. I thought that were just saying it to be nice; to make me feel good," Samantha says.

"People always said to me I should be an artist, but I thought there was no way I was going to be able to make a living out of painting. I just did not think it was something I would be able to do. I did not even have that in my mind."

Having completed GCSEs

and excelled at 'A' Level, Samantha secured a place at the University of Essex to study for a degree in German Studies and Modern Languages. It was what her parents thought best, suggesting that she could then work as a translator.

But events took a different turn.

"It was only when Adam came along and he saw my paintings and said: 'Why on earth are you going to go and do German? You don't even like German! Why do you want to do this?'"

It made Samantha think. Putting aside her fear that her work was not good enough to sell, she decided not to go to university. She completed an art foundation course at a regional college instead then decided, as she calls it, "to go it alone".

"I was incredibly lucky," she says. "I came across my publishers, and luckily, very luckily, I got accepted by them to represent me as an artist. I went straight into that and it has been my career ever since."

Samantha is endearingly self-effacing. Perhaps it was her talent rather than luck that led to DeMonfort Fine Art, one of the UK's leading art publishers snapping her up. She had no rejection letters from anywhere.



“*"I do love the style I do now. I am so happy with it. It feels right. It is just my personality on a canvas. It is messy. It is such fun to do."*

- Samantha Ellis

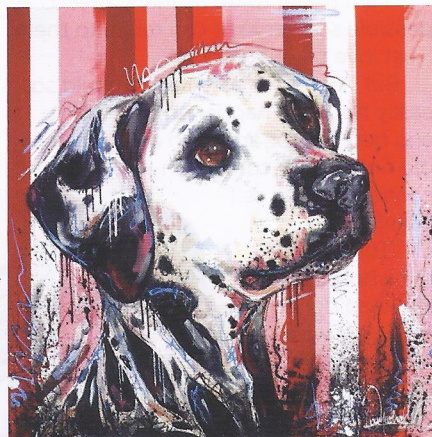


DeMonfort was her first port of call.

Her limited edition prints and original artwork are now sold in galleries throughout the country and beyond via their websites. She undertakes commissions and loves meeting her customers at the exhibitions she attends each year. Does she now realise her work is good enough?

"I am still very self critical of it and I could spend ages looking at a finished piece and keep going back to it, but there comes a time when you have to step away from it and say it is finished and I am happy with it. I have done it for 4 or 5 years so I am starting to believe it now."

Samantha paints in acrylics. She first uses brushes, sometimes on canvasses up to 40" by 40", but then adds more



All photos of
Samantha by
Mike Trippitt



paint from a bottle or tube. These "Dribbles, Scribbles and Splats" are what define her work.

"I tend to layer the paint on quite thick as I love the texture this produces and I feel it also makes the painting more visually interesting," she says.

Using bright, vibrant colours and a mix of contemporary ideas with classic design, Samantha describes her work as fun and funky: "I do love the style I do now. I am so happy with it. It feels right. It is just my personality on a canvas. It is messy. It is such fun to do."

Her success has come from painting cityscapes and iconic buildings and motor vehicles:

"Originally, I started doing London scenes with buses and taxis in. I wanted to keep the same iconic feel. Everything I did was iconic. I started doing the

classic cars because they are instantly recognisable; everyone loves them. They have their own little personality and characteristics."

Samantha was delighted when she was requested to paint a picture of the AC/DC lead-singer, Brian Johnson's personal Mini. But she was apprehensive:

"I couldn't believe it when I heard about it. His wife went into Artique Galleries in Cambridge having liked my work, and knowing he also liked it, asked if for his birthday she could have his own personal mini done.

"Although it was no different to any other commission really, it was a still very nerve-racking knowing that somebody like that would have one of my paintings."

Samantha says she is thrilled to see

her art for sale across the United Kingdom. She feels lucky to be able to wake up in a morning and do what she wants to do. Most of all she values the relationship she has with her clients:

"It is so lovely to hear the stories they have and why a painting means so much to them. I love knowing that my work makes people happy and they have it in their homes."

Samantha Ellis is doing well in her chosen career and her decision not to go to university seems a good one. May be one day, she will look back on her work and realise that she made a living as a professional artist.