

Local artist part of unique Chicago shopping experience

BY ROB EARNSHAW

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When Jes Spivak was a little girl she would dip magic markers in water, drop them on a napkin and watch the colors spread and combine into one another. The adult Spivak is an abstract artist who still embodies childlike wonderment when putting paint to canvas.

"It's like a little kid sitting down and finger painting," she said. "It's really fun."

And now Spivak, who experiments with the application of fluid acrylics, watercolors, India ink and water, has found an opportunity to introduce herself and her work to the fine arts world as one of 500 artists, artisans and designers of this week's One of A Kind Show and Sale at Chicago's Merchandise Mart.

"It's a great way to market myself in Chicago," Spivak said.

A 1995 graduate of Lowell High School, Spivak earned a degree at Ball State University and went on to become an award-winning graphic designer. Spivak currently lives in Chicago's Irving Park neighborhood where she has a rather unique way of creating her art. Unlike most artists who use an easel, Spivak prefers to sit on the floor and rotate her canvas (or walk around it if it's too large).

"You see it from every direction," she said.

The process also results in there not being any specific direction a painting should be viewed -- or hung. And that's why more than three-quarters of Spivak's paintings are not signed.

"Once paintings are signed it usually solidifies what direction they are going to be hung," Spivak said.

"You don't want a signature upside down. Once (a buyer) decides what direction to hang the painting I'll sign it on location."

It's Spivak's way of sharing her art, letting the owner become a part of it, too.

"It's like they are completing a project," she said.

Spivak, who will have about 80 paintings with her during the One of a Kind Show and Sale, hopes to add her signature to a good majority of them. Either way, she knows she'll be able to meet gallery owners from around the world and have one-on-one chats with shoppers looking for a unique holiday gift. ifyougo

"One of a Kind Show and Sale"

When: Noon to 9 p.m. Dec 4, 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Dec. 5, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Dec. 6 and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Dec 7

Where: The Merchandise Mart, 222 Merchandise Mart Plaza, Chicago (8th floor)

Cost: Adults \$10, seniors and students \$7, children younger than 12 free

FYI: Tickets include admission to The Artist Project running concurrently on the 7th floor of The Merchandise Mart.

Tickets available online in advance or on-site during show. (800)-677-6278, oneofakindshow.com