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Young Moraga artist launches home furnishings line with Anthropologie

By Kara Navolio



Moraga native and artist Bridgette Thornton.
Photo Terri Riggins

A career as an artist is a dream that many people may wish for, but not see it as a realistic way to make a living. Not so for 26-year-old Bridgette Thornton of Moraga.

After years of pursuing painting as a side interest, Thornton has shown it's possible to make a living doing what you love. Since May, four of her paintings are being sold through the retailer Anthropologie as prints as part of their Art & Wall Décor Collection. In July the company reached out to her to have some of her floral paintings converted to designs for their Home Product Line. Her Paint and Petals collection, launching this month, just in time for spring, is featured on duvet covers, shower curtains, melamine dinnerware, and about 20 other products.

Thornton, who grew up in Moraga and graduated from Campolindo High School in 2010, got excited about art in an eighth-grade art class at Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School. It was an outlet away from the pressures of school. After spending two summers taking

pre-college art classes at the California College of Arts in Oakland, she got a taste of what attending an art school would be like.

She attended CCA after high school, but although her passion was painting, she chose graphic design as her major. "Graphic design was a path that seemed a more direct path to employment," stated Thornton. "But then with the lingering effects of the economic problems of 2008-10, I saw that even the safe bet didn't ensure a job anymore. So I decided to throw all my eggs in one basket and switched my major to what I loved: painting and drawing." She sold her first paintings as a college student, but a career as an artist was still a dream.

During her college internships in the fashion industry, Thornton got the opportunity to see how art can work in the business world. She saw how a painting could be used to design textiles, and one of her own designs went into production. After college she worked at BCBG, an advertising agency in Los Angeles, and furthered her knowledge about how the creative arts can be used in business. Meanwhile, she continued painting on the side and submitting her work.

After two years of submitting her work to Serena & Lily, an interior decorating site that sells original art works, she was accepted and sold her first painting on their site in 2016.

By September she was ready to make art her full-time profession. She moved back to Moraga, and once again, threw all her eggs in one basket, renting a studio in Berkeley to paint full time.

When asked about her success as an artist, Thornton explained, "Some people think you are born with a talent, but I disagree. It's something you have to put tons of work into. I enjoy the process of investing that time, instead of focusing on the end product. I read Malcolm Gladwell's "Outliers: The Story of Success," and I agree with the concept that it takes 10,000 hours to be really good at something." Thornton is well on her way to her 10,000 hours, as she spends 10-12 hours almost every day at her workshop at Maker's Workspace in Berkeley where she paints her floral canvases with acrylics and gouache (an opaque watercolor). She also believes in keeping her energy in the right mindset, as she explains, "I live life with an abundance mindset and staying positive." She uses a vision board as inspiration; there she posts images of others' work she admires and where she wants her career to go. "I hope Anthropologie is a stepping stone to accomplishing more goals," she adds.

Thornton also believes in inspiring other young people to follow their dreams. She has spoken to girls at the Santa Catalina School in Monterey and is open to speaking to other school groups in the Bay Area. Contact her through her website briggettethornton.com or see more of her designs on Instagram: @PaintandPetals.



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