



## PRESS KIT



### Biography

Leisa Collins, a native of New Zealand, has carved a unique niche for herself as an acclaimed architectural artist, and her journey has been anything but conventional. Passionate about architecture and travel, she rejected the confines of formal art training and instead honed her craft by exploration, practice and learning about her architectural subjects first-hand. Trips to Europe and other ancient corners of the world cemented her fascination with the historic roots of building styles and how they evolved into the modern era.

Eventually settling in the United States, Collins became interested in the people and cultures that defined architecture throughout the country's history. She was inspired to drive from coast to coast, creating original paintings of homes that inspired her in every state. She selected 650 of these works of art — as well as the fascinating stories behind many of them — to share with readers in her new book, *Hand Painted Homes: An Architectural Artist's Pen and Watercolor Journey Across America* (2021). This vivid and captivating coffee table book explores architectural styles in all fifty states, plus the nation's capital. *Hand Painted Homes* gives intimate insight into Collins' mission to honor the beauty and history of American homes through her art.

In 2013, she established the Leisa Collins Historic Preservation Award to pay tribute to exceptional individuals committed to saving and restoring old buildings across the country. She believes that art

Collins' work has been seen in many publications such as The New York Times, Huffington Post and Los Angeles Times. Due to her fine eye toward detail and her deep respect and curiosity about the stories behind each home, Collins' commissioned house portraits are always in high demand.

Nomads at heart, Leisa and her husband Bruce enjoy experiencing the cultural and architectural diversity of new cities and have lived in all regions of the USA. They currently reside in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and are always on the lookout for their next adventure.



## Artist Statement

Art is a powerful means of communication and is therefore a potent weapon to bring about change. Interaction with people and the environment is my artistic inspiration and stimulation. It's about getting across a message, an emotion, or envisioning a better tomorrow. Art for me is something that goes far beyond the studio and gallery walls.

## Press

Leisa Collins is a house painter, but not in the conventional sense. Instead, this artist creates portraits with symbols of the American Dream as the subjects.

*Los Angeles Daily*

Beautiful buildings, many owned by regular folk, and others by "heroic" property-owners, who've painstakingly restored often decrepit but historic houses, have been at the center of Leisa Collins' around-the-world and grand artistic adventure.

*The Huffington Post*

Collins has traveled the country capturing historic homes on paper and preserving, she says, their legacy as well as honoring the people who made and saved these architectural treasures.

*The Oregonian*



**The  
New York  
Times**

**LA  
Times**



**San Antonio  
Express-News**



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# Leisa Collins Art



## AUTHOR

### Description

Acclaimed artist, Leisa Collins, combines her passion for architecture with her love of travel and adventure in *Hand Painted Homes: An Architectural Artist's Pen and Watercolor Journey Across America*. Her beautiful paintings and fascinating tales take us on an exploration of the architectural styles of all fifty states and the nation's capital.

*Hand Painted Homes* exhibits over 650 paintings: from humble stone cottages, historic row homes and ornate Victorian mansions to contemporary styles that blend seamlessly into their natural environments. While houses are her focus, Collins treats us to a glimpse of farmhouses, churches, town halls and iconic landmarks, all in her indelible artistic style. Her work spans centuries: from the Acoma Pueblo, with structures that date back to 1000 AD, to stunning modern day residences.

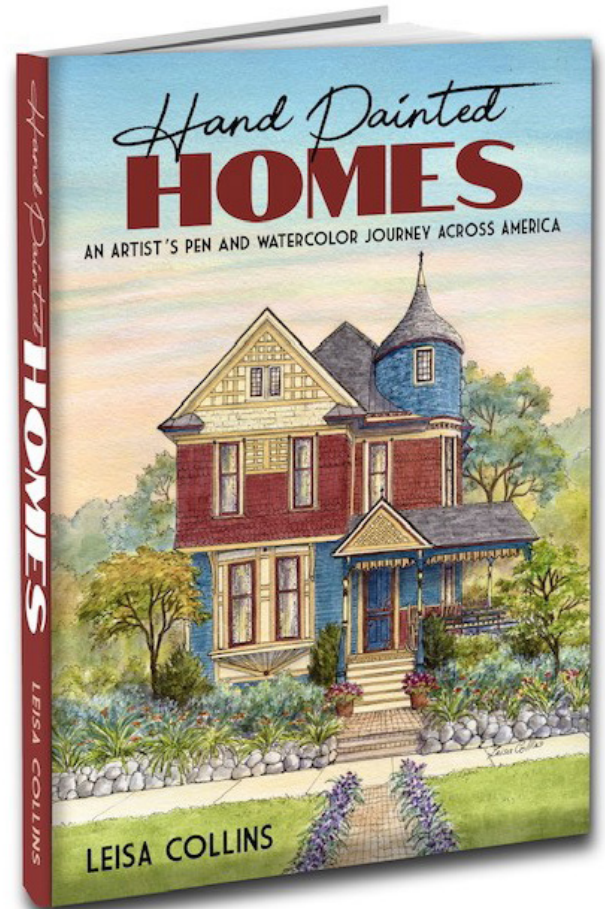
Collins weaves stories of the history behind individual house designs and how geography, industry, politics, economy, available resources and our melting pot culture shape the face of architecture in America. Included are before and after images of historic homes saved from the wrecking ball.

Also shared are portraits of historic homes painted before they were tragically torn down and removed from the country's landscape forever. A one-of-a-kind book of art, *Hand-Painted Homes* gives the reader intimate insight into Leisa Collins' mission to use her artistic skill and talent to honor the beauty and history of American homes and buildings.

**To watch the book trailer go to:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QZFErdvCrKk>

### Book Introduction

I did not embark on my mission to capture homes and historic buildings across America in a regimented or scientific way. Rather, it has been an adventure-filled journey with plenty of unexpected twists. This book celebrates my 10th anniversary as a professional artist. It has been an honor to celebrate and chronicle the character of American homes with my pen and paintbrush. I am thrilled to share their beauty with you throughout the pages of this book. It is my hope that their architectural legacy will live on for many years to come.



# Sample Pages

## ARIZONA

Arizona is as rich architecturally as its majestic natural landscapes such as the Grand Canyon and a variety of lakes and mountains. Historically it offers old frontier towns, remote Native American villages and centuries old missions and churches.

From the ancient Native American ruins to early Spanish influenced styles and the innovative designs of Frank Lloyd Wright, Arizona's breath-taking panorama has inspired a wealth of captivating architecture.

In addition to local cultural influences, pioneers, settlers and cowboys brought an array of architectural styles with them and quickly adopted new elements. They found that adobe houses were particularly suited to the searing temperatures of the Southwest. The heat of the sun is absorbed in the thick walls during the day and slowly releases at night. Small deeply set windows also keep the interior cool.



The Spanish Colonial architectural style derives from the early Spanish colonies of North and South America. Spanish Colonial Revival is the term used today to characterize homes built in the early 20th century and they integrate distinctive elements of Spanish and Mediterranean architecture. I find it to be a very popular style in Arizona, especially in the bigger cities such as Phoenix and Tucson.

Pueblo-inspired adobe home, Green Valley City (left)

Spanish Colonial Revival home in Phoenix



Tlaquepaque Arts and Crafts Village in Sedona

### Arizona Allure

Tourism started to develop in Arizona by the 1920s and into the 1930s. Dude ranches gave tourists the chance to experience the flavor and rejuvenation of spirit that the ranches of the "Old West" had become known for. Additionally, several landmark hotels and resorts, each with their own brand of Arizona architectural flair, opened their doors and many are still a draw today. The Arizona Biltmore Hotel in Phoenix which showcases the

After visiting Sedona, land developer Abe Miller decided to establish an artisan village that embodied the same spirit and sense of community he had experienced in the Mexican city of Tlaquepaque, which means the "best of everything."

Miller created the Tlaquepaque Arts and Crafts Village in the 1970s. However with its grand arched entrances,

## SOUTH CAROLINA

One of the country's original thirteen states, South Carolina's first non-native settlers were wealthy English planters and their slaves, evidenced by the state's array of antebellum estates. To travel through the state is to experience history through architecture, from Colonial to Victorian and Italianate to Art Deco as well as modern structures.

South Carolina has diverse landscapes from Table Rock Mountain to the Chattanooga River to vast farmland. Its architecture is equally varied due to the state's history. Colonial influences, with roots to England, can be seen in homes and others structures. The strong impact that African Slaves and other immigrants, such as the French

Calvanist Huguenots, had on the state can also be seen. Until the Civil War the structures in South Carolina were mostly utilitarian and ornamentation was mostly absent. As towns and cities grew after the war the style trends widened and significant changes were seen in the architecture.

### Historic Preservation in South Carolina

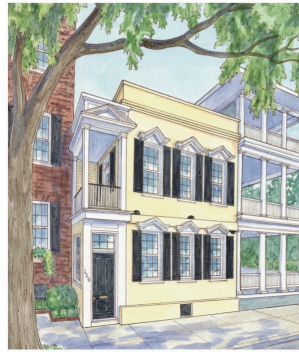
South Carolina has a large number of landmark buildings and the state takes historic preservation seriously. Here are some good examples of important historic structures in South Carolina that were saved from the wrecking ball through the efforts of private citizens, preservation groups and city authorities.

The Dozier House in Columbia was restored by John and Victoria Dozier, the sixth generation of that family to reside in the home. The house is located on a street known for its noteworthy African-American residents.

The Woodrow Wilson Family Home (circa 1871) was saved from demolition in 1928 and opened its doors as a museum five years later. It has since been extensively rehabilitated with special care taken to preserve the spirit of the home.

The Palmetto Compress, a four-story warehouse dating back to 1917, stored over 50,000 cotton bales in its prime. The facade of the building was preserved and the interior now serves as a residential and retail space.

Colonial Revival home with Southern influence in the town of Mt. Pleasant, northeast of Charleston



Restored home with side porch in the South of Bend neighborhood of Charleston, built in 1770



Charleston Federal home in Harleston Village neighborhood, built in 1830



Cottage home on Hilton Head Island in South Carolina, built in 1978



Popular contemporary style of home in South Carolina situated on the water in the city of Beaufort

### The Oldest Structure in South Carolina



The Middleburg Plantation (circa 1693) in Berkeley County is a Colonial period frame house. French Huguenot planter, Benjamin Simons, built the home which initially had two rooms downstairs and two upstairs. During the Revolutionary War the house was targeted for burning by the British. It was spared but still shows the scars. Impressively, Simons' descendants have owned the home since construction.

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