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## A Conversation With Wedding Artist Anthony Galati

*How did you get started with live event painting for weddings?*

In general, my style has always been very realistic and detailed. I have done many paintings of people in this style. Years ago, I began doing several plein air landscapes outdoors, several of which were in places like Central Park. From doing these paintings, I had learned to paint expansive scenes full of trees, water, clouds and sunlight in a much faster style than before— Mother Nature waits for no one. Live event painting was a natural progression for me, and combines the quick style with the slower, more refined style in various ways.

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*Can any bride have live event painting, or does it depend on where the reception is (i.e., if someone is having an outdoor tented reception, can live painting be done outside)?*

I can do a live event painting at just about any event; I just need a small area to set up my easel. I will need to visit the venue ahead of time, preferably with the couple, to take photos so that I can do some preliminary work on the background before the event. This way there will be something for guests to look at as soon as the event begins. Some things will be a little different in the process if an event is outside or under a tent, but I am happy to paint these events as well.

*I saw on the Youtube video of the Heritage Hotel wedding that you do the layout and base layer the night before the event - do you go to the venue the night before?*

As you can see in the video of a painting that I did at The Heritage Hotel, I used to start working on paintings the night before the event. After a while, I found that it's better all around to do this a few weeks before, which is what I do now.

*How long after a wedding is a live event painting ready?*

The amount of time that it will take for you to receive your finished painting depends on how many other event paintings that there are to be finished at that time, since I work on them in chronological order. On average, it will probably be at least four months.

*I read on your website that you add in "specifically recognizable faces of the married couple." - How does this work - does the bride provide you with photos?*

Something that couples always love about my paintings is that I paint their faces to be specifically recognizable. This is something that is rare among live event painters, especially with the level of detail that I paint with. In order to do this, I take photos of the married couple in the room shortly before the event, which I may use as reference later. This will usually take place during the cocktail hour if I am painting the reception. Couples have the option of choosing other people that they would like me to make sure are included in the painting. At this time, I will take their photos as well.

*What are some reception venues in CT have you done live event paintings at?*

Two Connecticut venues that I have painted at are Cascade Fine Catering in Hamden and The Heritage Hotel in Southbury.

*How far in advance do you recommend a bride contact you about scheduling a live event painting (I am assuming as soon as they have the reception venue and date locked down, to secure the date, but I was curious if there was a particular timeline - do you secure the date, and then do a follow up consult right before the wedding)?*

Once the venue and wedding date have been locked down, I recommend that any couples interested in having a wedding painting done should book as soon as possible. They may be able to wait a few months and do it then, but if anyone else has booked me for the same date, in most cases I will no longer be available to paint at their event. Around a month before the event is the time that I will make my preliminary visit to the venue, and meet the couple there in person.

*Do you determine what component of the wedding reception is painted ahead of time, or do you help the bride and groom decide what would work best (I saw paintings of first dances -- and one was of the bride and groom mid-lift during the dance).*

*- Are there other aspects of a wedding that you recommend being done for a live painting - such as a painting of the father/daughter dance (the painting would make a great father's day gift!).*

Together we will go over the specifics of what will be in the painting in an effort to make the best possible representation of the day or night, based on the couple's preference. Some of these things are: what part of the night I will paint, what location and point of view I will have in the room, and whether they will be looking at each other or towards me for the painting. The biggest decision is often between whether to paint the first dance or everyone dancing. The first dance is the most popular, but whatever part of the night they prefer, the most important thing is that we will want to make sure that the couple is the main focus. After all, it's their day!