

'NICK' WILL BE ON DISPLAY AT  
THE LANE COUNTY FAIR ART  
EXPO. BY ALISHA SNYDER



## Spot's Masterpiece

**FORGET INSTAGRAM, CAPTURE YOUR PET WITH AN ARTIST'S RENDERING** by Alex Notman

**P**ets have been popping up in art for millennia. Nearly 20,000 years ago, people of the Paleolithic era painted at least seven cats deep in the caves of Lascaux, now known as the Chamber of Felines. A fuzzy Brussels Griffon pup appears front and center in Jan van Eyck's iconic 1434 Arnolfini wedding portrait. There's an entire book devoted to cats and dogs in Impressionist art; Frida Kahlo painted her self-portrait with a dog and monkey ("Self Portrait with Small Monkey," 1945) and Andrew Wyeth captures a dog snoozing on a white bed in "Master Bedroom" (1965).

Even with the invention of the camera, pet portraits have remained popular. A painting or drawing can capture a subject's essence, Spot's *je ne sais quoi*, if you will, in a way that a photograph can't. Local artist Alisha Snyder knows this well, and has started to make a business out of it, crafting portraits with paints, charcoals, pastels and colored pencil. "I like capturing the personality of the pet," Snyder says. "I have a really strong passion for nature in general." Her art business, Method Graphix, is her way of sharing that love with the public, which she did at last year's Lane County Fair; her charcoal portrait of her own Lab-Dane pup Bentley won a first place ribbon at the art expo.

Snyder has been an artist for 20 years but didn't commit to pet portraits until a few years ago when her mother's co-worker asked her to paint her kitty. When it was complete the co-worker told Snyder, "You know you could do this for a living." After doing portraits for a few more co-workers, Snyder says, "I decided to go for it."

Now you can peruse her website and find renderings of cats, dogs, lizards, chickens, horses and possums. "I had never drawn lizards before so it was a unique challenge," she says with a laugh. But Snyder can pretty much create a portrait of any pet as long as the patron has a good photo. Her most memorable portrait thus far? Nick the Australian shepherd. Nick's owner, a breeder of Australian shepherds, requested the portrait of the pup after he passed. She also froze his DNA. "She has a puppy from him right now," Snyder says. You can see the acrylic painting of "Nick" in his fluffy glory at this year's Lane County Fair art expo. 🐾

For more information about Snyder and her work, visit [method-graphix.com](http://method-graphix.com)

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