

# E. LOUISE KERR

February 19, 1925 -- November 13, 2018

Renowned American Artist, E. Louise Kerr, peacefully passed away in her Virginia City, Nevada home with her loved ones by her side.

**A Celebration of Life, Art Show and Reception will be held @ St. Mary's Art Center in Virginia City, Saturday September 14, 2019 1-4pm. Anyone who loved Louise and her Artwork is welcome. [www.elouisekerr.com](http://www.elouisekerr.com)**

*Louise* brought color and light everywhere she went. During her life, she never lost her child-like curiosity to explore the world around her, Louise's life centered around her family, friends, and her great love of painting. She will always be remembered by her engaging personality, inviting smile and contagious laugh. With sparkling blue eyes and a beautiful smile, she always lit up a room, and her gentleness and welcoming spirit made even new friends feel at ease. Throughout her life, Louise's strength of character and warmth drew many to love her deeply. Louise's compassionate heart will always be cherished and her friendship intensely missed.

Throughout her life, Louise possessed a genuine innocence which was often reflected in her artwork and in how she perceived her surroundings. Tender and strong, she lived her life in balance with her colorful and immense imagination: from her childhood, as she excitedly rode her favorite wooden horse, until last summer when she discovered a fascinating praying mantis gracing her front porch.

Louise's unique, warm personality and vibrant impressionistic oil paintings complement each other with harmony and grace. Her creative awareness was often expressed in her bold and colorful artwork. Landscapes were influenced by her surroundings, and her love of nature and the outdoors was often expressed in her work. She captured the visual melodies found in nature and the play of light on the land--- timeless and intimately revealing.

Curiosity of the character of people inspired Louise to paint portraits of people in all walks of life. Cowboys, musicians, politicians, bikers and fishermen; all were drawn to her welcoming spirit and beautiful smile. It is the Native American people, however, who captured the very heart of her soul and imagination. In each portrait she revealed a spiritual quality of her subject. Their proud, sad eyes reveal deep knowledge, love and a universal understanding.

During the 60's, Louise packed up her 2 young kids and her dog named "Sabik" for a road trip to Virginia City. It was there, in the old western town on the Comstock, that she met artist, Elizabeth Holland McDaniel "Bets" who was having lunch at the old Ponderosa Saloon. At "St. Mary's in the Mountains" Catholic Church, Bets introduced Louise to Fr. Paul Meinecke. He was dressed in his favorite Hawaiian shirt, and he and a few artists were gathered under the shade of a tree in the church parking lot. They were on a mission to restore the old wooden headstones from the local cemetery.

Later that evening, Father directed Louise and her children to a motel down the hill. At the time, he didn't mention that the establishment was Joe Conforte's Mustang Ranch. Father, who was a practical joker, always had a good laugh about it for many years to come.

Louise's life was profoundly changed after meeting Fr. Meineke. Louise and her young family became seasonal residents of the old County Hospital known as St. Mary's Art Center. She developed lifelong friendships with the first director of the Art Center, Louise Curran and her husband, Jack. Louise and Jack Curran were wonderful people, and they were important historical figures. Jack was an accomplished musician and a multi-talented artist. He was sculptor who worked with clay, wood, stone, iron etc... and Jack was a talented painter, a published author, a surveyor and a fine banjo player.

It is no wonder that Louise Kerr fell in love with Virginia City from the start, and she painted her first painting under the watchful eye of Bets Holland McDaniel in 1967. "The Virgin in the Steeple" 24x36 Oil on Canvas. A true Daughter of the Comstock, Louise often painted the many treasures in her historic town. Louise's love of the old mining town drew her to make VC her permanent home.

Even Louise's house has a unique story of its own. The story is told that in the old days of the mining town, a young couple fell in love and wanted to marry, and the two families pushed together 2 old mine shacks to make a home for the newlyweds. This 150-year-old home is where Louise and Jack Curran lived for decades, and later it became the home of Louise Kerr. This primitive old house has witnessed the strength of unending love, even during some hard times and mighty cold winters, and its rich character has inspired the creative process of artists for decades.

St. Mary's Art Center is where Louise Kerr continued her professional painting career. She has studied under many famous artists who have left their own creative marks on Virginia City such as: Elizabeth Holland McDaniel, Mavis Hess Chaney, Charles Movalli, Delores D'Pharr Smith, Thelma Calhoun, Ted Goerschner, George Post, Hedi Moran and other fine artists.

Often, the subject matter of Louise's oil paintings reflect different time periods in her life, but no matter what subject matter she depicts, her colors are always bold and vibrant. In the 1960's she was painting around northern Nevada mostly, reflecting life in rural areas. Father Meinecke sponsored Louise from 1966 - 1974. The warm colors of the high desert and the charm of the old buildings around Virginia City inspired her to continue to develop her unique talent. Louise learned a lot from another historic figure, an artist who was an expert in drawing perspective and architecture, the talented Thelma Calhoun.

When painting historical treasures, Louise always approached her painting with an enthusiasm born of her deep dedication to the past. She would say, "My hope is to preserve a memory of a fleeting moment in time". Thankfully, just as she had hoped, Louise did preserve memories, and as a highly regarded oil painter, she blessed us with a lifetime collection of captured moments.

Louise continued to visit and paint with her old friends and teachers, Bets and Mavis Hess Chaney, both of whom resided in northern California. In the 1980's Louise's talent would continue to excel as she attended workshops in California, Nevada and New Mexico. She attended a workshop in Santa Fe's "Ghost Ranch", where she painted with the esteemed Ted Goerschner.

During the late 70's Louise moved her family to the beautiful Sierra Valley, where she purchased the historic Loyalton Hotel. She loved everything about the Sierra Valley, for it is truly one of the most beautiful and magical places on earth. She lived there from 1972 to 1990 when, sadly, circumstances beyond her control forced her to leave. Louise was indeed homeless and heartbroken, but she always stayed anchored by her faith in God, close family and friends. She became an even stronger person, and her talent soared. She reached inside herself to connect with her innate creativity and talent, her love of nature and people, and her deep love of painting.

It was during this time that Louise came to know and love the highly talented Charles Movalli. She would often travel all over the country to workshops accompanied by another great talent, teacher and friend, Delores D'Pharr Smith. Louise's talent continued to soar.

In the early 90's, Louise lived in her motor home near the Ballard Locks and entered into her "boat painting" era. She painted on the docks of Fisherman's Terminal in Seattle. She was making a living by selling boat paintings to the owners, captains and the crew of commercial fishing vessels and private yachts. Louise's skill excelled during her boat painting phase, and her talent continued to pour out of her and onto the canvases that she brought to life. She painted huge crabbers, seiners, research vessels and working tugboats; some at sea and some safe in the harbor. During this period, she concentrated on the colorful life at the waterfront, while making good friends as she painted the old Alaskan canneries and working fishing boats, and a variety of cultures and lifestyles are creatively expressed in her paintings.

It was after the turn of the century that she began painting beautiful flowers, deeply rich in color, under the instruction of the exceptionally talented Hedi Moran. Louise would say that she never knew how to paint a beautiful flower until she met Hedi, and she learned a lot about "still life" paintings because of Hedi's awesome instruction. Soon, Louise was able to bring her own gorgeous floral paintings to life.

Throughout her decades in Virginia City, Louise was often spotted out and about with her easel and canvas. Sometimes she would paint at the red light district, or Donovan Mill, or she would be uptown painting one old favorite bar or another, or she was found painting her favorite bikers during "Street Vibrations". Whatever it was, she gave her subject matter a special value, and she made it matter. Louise loved life, and she loved people. Living her impressive life is what stoked her imagination, and she embraced her gift fully which enabled her to express her creative brilliance through her paintings.

Throughout her life, Louise's oil paintings have been shown in many exhibits and galleries in California, Washington State and Nevada. She was a member of the Skagit Art Association and the Nevada Artists Association. Louise has won many prestigious awards throughout her professional career, and her paintings are held by private collectors throughout the world. Louise Kerr was greatly loved by many, and she will be deeply missed. May she receive all of our hugs and kisses, and may God bless her soul.

**Goodbyes are Not Forever, Goodbyes are Not The End, They Simply Mean I'll Miss You,  
Until We Meet Again.**

**Louise wanted to share these final thoughts with her close family and beloved friends:**

***"It has come to mind that when I pass there may be a few who will feel sad. For my loved ones, I do not see this as an end, but as a continuation of Life. It is my request that after cremation, my ashes be released into the wind and air over the mountains of Virginia City. This way, Life will continue in the area where I feel at home. Once the ashes combine with the wind and air, they will eventually settle to the earth and be absorbed there. Then, they will continue on through the plants and trees and onto the birds and animals that feed on them.***

***This cycle continues on and on, and there is really... No End. To feel at home in a place where I feel I belong is something to be happy about. I wish anyone who may read this... that you will enjoy a similar happiness."***

Written by Louise's daughter, Theresa L. Kerr and lifelong friend, Michelle K. Rahn ~ [www.elouisekerr.com](http://www.elouisekerr.com)

