

COYOTE & OAK

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CHELSEA WARD IS SUPER SKETCHY.

On the surface, she appears to be a regular girl: college graduate in her early thirties; live-in boyfriend; lover of yoga pants, travel, cats, and plants. But she's one of those people whom, if you met her at a party, you'd be tempted to follow around all night hoping some of her magic might just rub off on you. Her response to the age-old, small talk question, "What do you do?" makes you tilt your head to one side and think two thoughts. First: "Dang! You do ALL of that, AND you're good at it?" And then: "What have I been doing with my life?"

She's an artist in multiple mediums, an author and a teacher, an entrepreneur, and even a retreat host and tour guide. She chawks, draws, paints, writes, teaches, hosts, swears, and sells for a living. She's a strange mixture of "totally normal, bright and airy, friend in your head" and "Jill-of-all-trades." She has a heart for art and a brain for business.

After graduating from the University of Texas at Austin with a BFA in Studio Art, Chelsea jumped at a chance to study abroad. She spent two years exploring the sights and scenes of Italy, and discovered a love of watercolor painting, a medium that allowed her to create while on the go. She returned to California, and in 2012 she started selling her sketches and paintings as prints,



stationery, stickers, and greeting cards under the moniker *Sketchy Notions*.

Everywhere she goes, her sketchbook and paints go too. Whether state to state, as she teaches her workshops, or crisscrossing the globe, back to Italy with love and to Africa on safari. Her style is full of good cheer and punches of color, sprouting with florals, ferns, and lots of cats (and sometimes, cats in ferns). Chelsea's paper goods are sold in stores across twenty-five states. Fans of her work also patronize her online shops for custom art like watercolor paintings and one-of-a-kind illustrated children's books.

Speaking of books, Chelsea has written and released a whopping three art instruction books in the last two years! She believes that anyone, young or old, can learn to draw, paint, create, and color. She says the secret to mastering any skill is to take your time and practice. Her books teach amateur, hobbyist, and professional illustrators and artists alike, how to use basic drawing principles and techniques to create their own awesome art.

Modern Drawing and Your Year in Art came out within six months of each other in 2018, and her third book, *Modern Colored Pencil*, is out in November of this year.

Chelsea has achieved so much success with her art. She's what people would call "accomplished." But she's also a real girl, with a real girl problem: "I swear like a sailor even though I paint pretty things."

But Chelsea has found a way to make even her potty mouth work for her. Her smart and sassy *Cursive Cursing* greeting cards are beautiful looping watercolor creations mixed up with words that'll make your gran' mama blush. These cards will encourage you to laugh a little and practice your phonics a little. Investigate the one you receive carefully, and you might just find a hidden message. In fact, somebody might think you're a real "SEE YOU ENN TEA!"

Need a hand-lettered chalk sign for your business, wedding, or other function? Chelsea is the woman for this job, too! With *Chalk by Chels*, she decorates walls and windows, announces births and marriages, and welcomes guests and customers — all by the grace of her hand and the flick of her wrist. And chalk is fun because it's forgiving! If she screws up, it's no big deal; she can just erase that sh*t and start again.

While Chelsea adores all her many jobs, only one rewards her handiwork by satisfying her wanderlust and sweetening her love for Italy, the country that draws her back again and again through her company, *Wanderful Retreats*.

Each summer, Chelsea introduces small groups of four to six total strangers to all her favorite spots, and together they discover new beauty in the land of food, fashion,





famous architecture, and art. Her annual trips take her guests on a weeklong adventure to see the sights, drink fine wine, hunt for haute couture, and enjoy a lovely time of improving their artistic skills with personal instruction from Chelsea.

With more than ten years of experience traveling through one of her favorite countries in the world, and with American expat friends on board to host her retreaters in their family villas, Chelsea's travel buddies experience Italy as the locals do.

So with all of that, Chelsea couldn't possibly have plans for even more in the future, could she? But oh, yes! And she does!

Bucket list destinations for future retreats include Croatia, Greece, and Africa. She wants more cards and more collections to present at next year's major stationery trade shows. She's excited to discover the ways she can use her art to create fresh new products through her connections with online retailers like Society 6 and

Casetify (It's always lovely to see your artwork on your mom's iPhone case). And she's already hard at work on another book based on her personal sketch style, perhaps even a graphic novel.

Not enough evidence to prove something is seriously up with this chick? The cherry on top is that Chelsea has a heart of gold. Through Arts Outreach, a non-profit in the Santa Ynez Valley, she's spent many years teaching art to kids in need — in their classrooms, after school, and during summer camps. Plus, she gives back through the *Art for You = Art for Kids*. It's a print fundraiser, whereby every Sketchy Notions print sold provides one hour of art instruction to an Arts Outreach student. Like you needed one more excellent reason to support Chelsea's (many) small businesses.

See? I told you this lady is sketchy. ☺

Find Chelsea on Instagram at @sketchynotions