

PET PORTRAITS

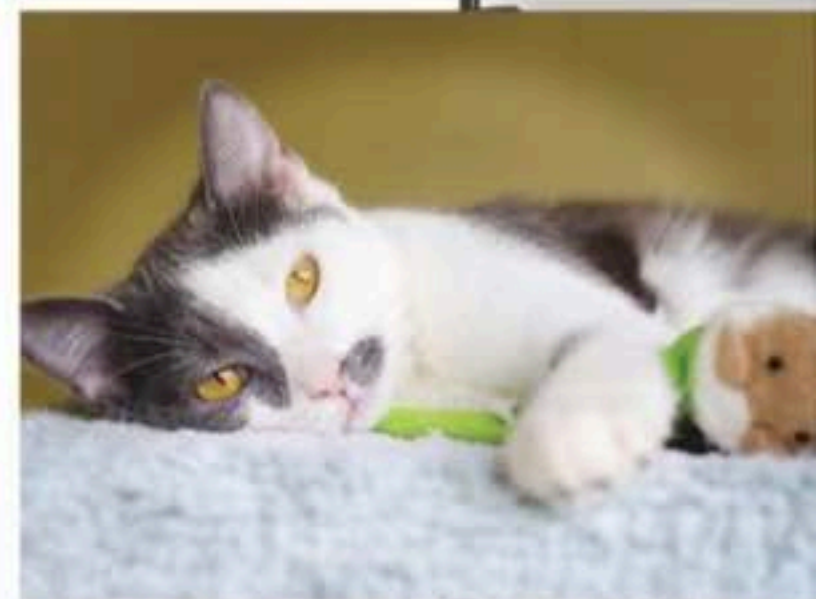
Cherish or memorialize them in photos, sculptures and paintings



Sculptor Carol King at work in her Old Road Gallery; one of her canine sculptures placed side by side with the subject



Pet photo sessions with Patty Stefan Photography can be arranged in an outdoor setting or in a studio.



Photographs of a pet, like this one by Paws & Prints Pet Photography in Naples, make memorable gifts.



Sean P. Callahan, of Dog Tired Studio, begins with a drawing and then works into a watercolor work of art.

Pet owners throughout Florida have a variety of artistic choices when it comes to showing their love of living pets—or preserving precious memories of deceased ones. Photographs, sculptures and paintings also make terrific gifts or cards for birthdays and holidays, or to give as thank-you presents.

PATTY STEFAN PHOTOGRAPHY

Port Charlotte-based Patty Stefan Photography is a mobile pet portrait photography company. Photos can be taken outdoors or in the comfort of a home. Owner/photographer Patty Stefan has clients who want to give that perfect gift and has customers looking to document their pet's life—from puppyhood to adulthood and even end of life. People seek ways to ensure that their furry companion's life is creatively preserved.

Session fees start at \$200, depending on location and number of pets. "Our furry family members leave such an indelible impression on our hearts that it only makes sense that we would want to include them in the family portrait—or preserve their memory in a quality photo that captures their unique character," Stefan explains.

Patty Stefan Photography, Port Charlotte; 941-276-3327; pattystefan.com

PAWS & PRINTS PET PHOTOGRAPHY

Michelle S. Wood, owner/photographer of Paws & Prints Pet Photography in Naples, strives to capture beautiful, cherished photos of beloved pets, in all stages of their life. She meets with clients or speaks by phone to decide the "best setting" for photo sessions—whether it be a favorite couch or park. Clients receive "custom artwork at all price points" and Wood "walks away feeling like they had an amazing experience from start to finish." She adds: "I will do whatever it takes to accomplish that for them."

In addition to working with private clients, many of whom have become friends, Wood explains she has donated hundreds of hours of photography/graphic design services. Recipients are local pet rescues and shelters, namely Humane Society Naples.

Paws & Prints Pet Photography, Naples; 239-370-8499; pawsandprintsphotography.com

OLD ROAD GALLERY

Sculptors Dwayne and Cindy King own Old Road Gallery in Tavernier, in the Florida Keys. Cindy explains that her process begins with a client consultation in person or via email. Photos are provided and sizes, positions and other details of the proposed sculpture are discussed.

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Cindy then sculpts out of stoneware clay, lets the piece dry and bisque fires it. She glazes with colors to match the pet, ending with a final high firing. The process can take four to six weeks and prices range from \$325 to \$1,200.

Her pet sculptures really took off after she created a replica of her beloved Boston terrier and displayed it in their gallery. "I speak for myself and many others when I say that our pets are indeed true members of the family." Cindy adds that some clients order sculptures when their pets are alive; others use the sculpture "as a memorial and as a way to ease the pain, and keep their spirit alive."

Old Road Gallery, 88888 Old Highway, Tavernier; 305-852-8935; oldroadgallery.com

DOG TIRED STUDIO

Sean P. Callahan has been painting watercolors of dogs for about 30 years, inspired by artists Andrew Wyeth, Winslow Homer and John Singer Sargent. He began painting his yellow Labs while living on a Vermont farm. Callahan's business, Dog Tired Studio and Gallery, is now in Key West.

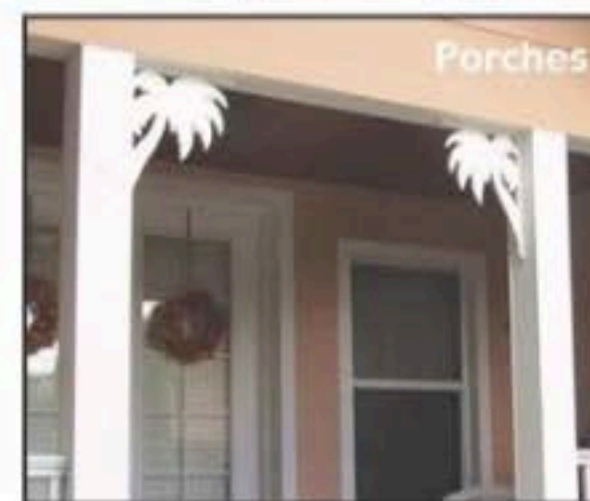
His main focus is dogs and pet portraiture but he's grown into murals, acrylics, collages and other works. Clients send a photograph and Callahan first does a drawing. He then sends the compositions and provides daily updates so customers can see the work unfold. Upon completion, he mails the portrait back to his client.

His pet portraits cost \$700, and the size ranges up to 20-by-30-inch watercolor paper. "I have had the great joy of being given the honor of painting people's loved ones," says Callahan, "and if the painting brings tears to their eyes, I know I have done my job."

Dog Tired Studio, 1011 Whitehead St., Key West; 802-989-5910; dogtiredstudio.net

Ann Marie O'Phelan is a Southwest Florida resident and a regular contributor to TOTI Media.

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