

Coronary care nurse Julie puts her heart into street art

A coronary intensive care unit nurse brushed up on her painting skills to relieve the stress of working on the NSH front line at the height of the coronavirus crisis.

Julie Fitzsimmons has been an ICU nurse for 13 years at the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh, but has always had an artistic bent and runs a part-time photography business.

During the coronavirus lockdown, Julie picked up her brushes for the first time in years as a means of reducing stress. She shared some of her works on Instagram and one painting of Circus Lane in Stockbridge proved a big hit with her followers.



Millerfield Place



Cumberland Street



Victoria Street

Julie's paintings are streets ahead

The mum of two, of Fairmilehead, Edinburgh, was astounded to be inundated with requests for prints of the much-photographed lane and this led to a spin-off which resulted in a number of commissions.

Julie, 39, said: "I have always been interested in art and it was my favourite subject at school but I was never interested in pursuing it as a career and this made my art teacher furious when I didn't go on to art school or university.

"I have done the odd painting over the years but very infrequently. Then lockdown happened, work was very stressful and we are all anxious about how things would go. When I wasn't working I was stuck in the house and had to organise home schooling for my daughter and son. While the children were busy with schoolwork I picked up my brushes again and I found painting really relaxed me and got me in to a good place.



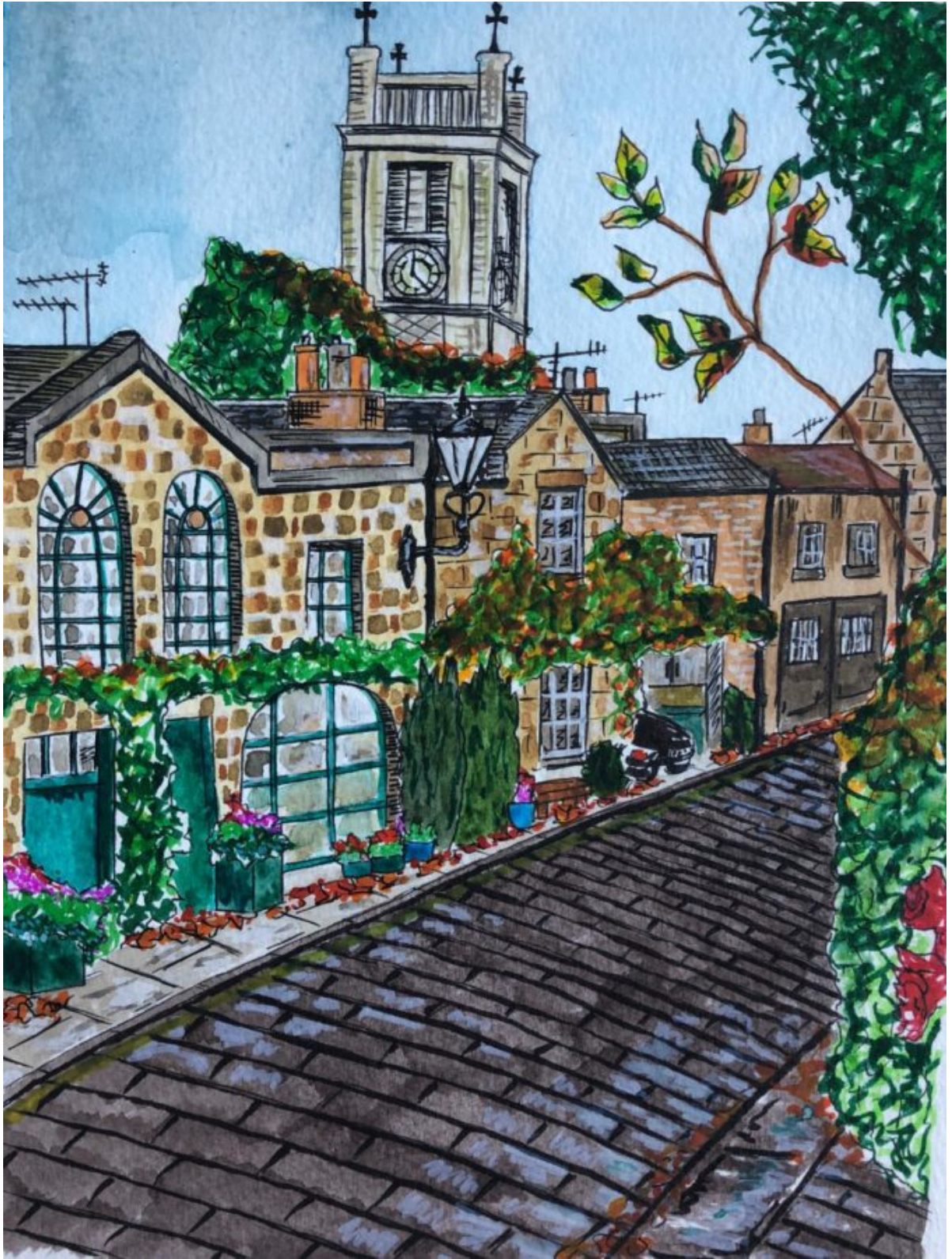
Coronary care nurse and artist Julie Fitzsimmons

"My first painting was of Circus Lane and I put it on Instagram and was really surprised when people starting asking if I could supply prints. Everywhere was closed but after

getting some advice on how I could source prints I ended up with dozens of orders.”

A delighted Julie followed up her initial success with a number of commissions, including a wedding anniversary gift and a request from a group of residents who wanted to present a memento to a neighbour who was leaving Edinburgh to take up a new posting in London.

She added: “After the initial round of inquiries someone got in touch asking if I would paint their house and people really seem to like that. Since then I have done a few pubs for owners or of people’s favourite haunts and it has just grown and I have had various requests to paint other homes and places which have special connections to people.



Circus Lane



The Raeburn



Grassmarket

“One couple were celebrating their 20th anniversary and wanted a painting of the Grassmarket which has special memories for them, while another one was of Tynecastle Stadium, so it has been pretty varied.”

Julie has produced about 20 original paintings and delivered hundreds of prints. She added: “I have a wedding and portrait photography business but during the lockdown I couldn’t go anywhere and all that stopped, so that was probably another reason why I have returned to painting.”

Julie Fitzsimmons paintings are on Insta @fuliejitzsimmons