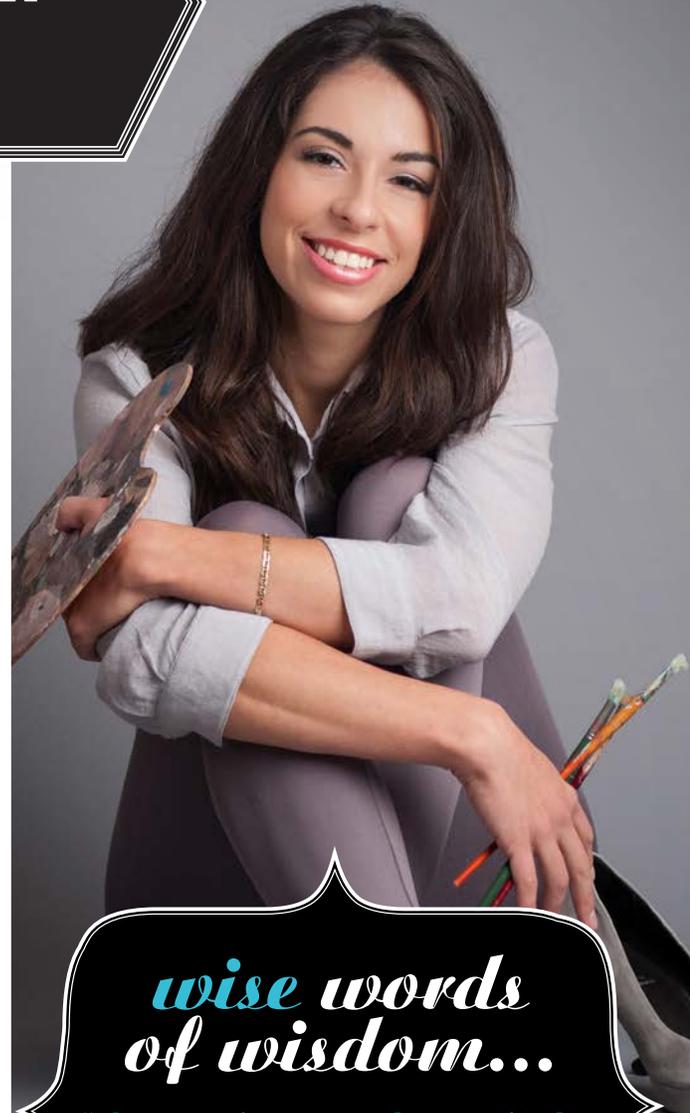


**FEATURED
ENTREPRENEUR**

Maria Rizzo
Owner/Operator, Maria Rizzo Art



Growing up in Italy, Maria Rizzo found her “aha” moment of wanting to become an artist/entrepreneur at age nine. Her teacher, who was also an artist herself, told her that she could be an A+ student if she would just apply the same dedication and talent to her homework rather than her drawings. From that moment forward, she knew she wanted to make a living as a professional fine artist. For the past five years, Maria has been living this dream and specializes in acrylic painting on canvas, which she executes using a skillful and polished technique.

In the early stages of the business, Maria was facing some challenges, including high price points, lack of an e-commerce website and could not accept payments by credit card. Determined to succeed, she decided to invest in herself as an artist and entrepreneur and hired a business coach to help turn things around. “Once I learned the ABC’s of running a business, I started shifting my mindset to be more client-focused.” Investing in herself taught her how to discover what makes her unique as an artist and soon she was able to diversify her product line, accepting all forms of payment and selling online.

Not so long ago, Maria faced the greatest challenge of her career when her husband, also an entrepreneur, was seriously injured in an accident at work. Already a stay at home mother of two young boys, Maria was now faced with the emotional and exhausting challenge of managing the household, supervising her husband’s recovery, and working on her business. At one point, Maria wasn’t able to sustain her family with her business alone and was considering finding another job. Her family made sure she didn’t give her dream up. After their support and encouragement, she again invested in herself by working with a business strategist who helped her find purpose again and a way to stand out from the competition. Business and family are both thriving once again, and Maria’s vision is to become an expert in acrylic painting and also in business strategies for creative people.

“I love the challenge of being an entrepreneur,” says Maria. “There is nothing like setting goals, achieving them and getting closer to realizing your dream.”

PHOTO BY ALICE G. PATTERSON
PAGE DESIGN BY ISCA DESIGN STUDIO

*wise words
of wisdom...*

“The proactive approach to a mistake is to acknowledge it instantly, correct and learn from it.”

– via Stephen Covey

WISE HAPPENINGS:

► Check out wisecenter.org/events for a complete list of upcoming events!

Women in Creative Businesses Roundtable Discussion

August 6, 12:00 - 1:00PM
August 20, 12:00 - 1:00PM

The Building Blocks for Starting a Business

August 4, 12:00 - 1:00PM
August 19, 5:30 - 7:00PM

“Feminine/Masculine Business Tango” Women in Business Against All Odds Roundtable

August 13, 12:00 - 1:00PM

“Time for Time Management” Women in Business Against All Odds Roundtable

August 27, 12:00 - 1:00PM

A women’s business center... run for women, by women.

All events, unless otherwise indicated, are held at the **WISE Women’s Business Center @ The Tech Garden** // 235 Harrison Street // Syracuse, NY 13202
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