



Kristen Candice Frances Alcantara

December 24, 1980 - December 21, 2021

Kristen Alcantara (Kris Loya), age 40, passed peacefully on Tuesday, December 21, 2021, surrounded by loved ones. Born on December 24, 1980, in Trinidad, she was the daughter of Jan Sirjusingh.

A talented artist, instructor, and illustrator, Kris moved to northern Virginia to marry her husband Steve, another artist and educator, in 2009, and cultivated a love and a bond with him that was inseparable. Kris was a well-loved member of the local arts community, teaching painting at the Round Hill Arts Center, and filling up watercolor classes while also exhibiting her beautiful work at the Loudoun County Public Libraries. She also managed Tryst Gallery in Leesburg, taking it to the number one spot in Loudoun, and making it a hub of art and creativity, bringing in artists from all over the DMV and beyond.

Upon moving to Virginia, Kris pursued a life that was rich, colorful, and full, making lots of friends and teaching herself how to knit and crochet. She also brought Trinidad cuisine to her stateside home, learning how to cook and bake a wide array of traditional foods native to her beautiful island homeland.

A warm, vibrant, generous, humorous, and compassionate young woman, Kris loved, and was loved dearly by all who knew her. One of her favorite places to go since moving to Virginia, was Ida Lee Park, where Steve proposed to her, where they got married, and where they often went on dates before and after tying the knot. The park was also an endless source of inspiration for Kris, where she honed her photography skills and gleaned creative inspiration from the surrounding natural beauty.

May we all strive to honor Kris' life by being kinder to each other, more compassionate to all living things, and finding beauty in what often gets overlooked.

Kris is survived by her loving husband Stephen Loya, mother Jan Sirjusingh, brother Ryan Alcantara, father-in-law Kenneth Loya, sisters Selene Alcantara and Renee Russell, and many aunts, uncles, cousins, nephews, nieces, dear friends and beloved family members.

In lieu of flowers, please make a donation to the American Cancer Society or The National Endowment for the Arts.

Kris' ashes will be scattered along places that have had very special significance to her, in both Trinidad and Virginia, and a celebration of her life is planned for May, 2022, in the Leesburg, Virginia area, with more details to come.

Online condolences may be made to the family at www.loudounfuneralchapel.com

Comments



“ In early 2006 I had “met” a girl online, however it was not on a dating site, but instead on a blog called Illustration Friday, where every Friday, a word prompt would be posted for artists, both amateur and professional to interpret visually. I recall one that grabbed my eye - a striking digital drawing made for the word “music”, and I decided to leave an encouraging little comment below the post. Little did I know that this comment was about to ignite the spark that would begin a beautiful relationship and marriage filled with love, laughter, creativity, and adventure for the next fifteen years.

Fast forward to May 17, 2009 - the day Kris and I got married at Ida Lee Park (also the birthday of her beloved grandmother), in Leesburg, Virginia. For a little while Kris came out to stay with me to see how things would work out, before tying the knot, and not only did she fall in love with this art teacher guy from Pittsburgh, but she fell in love with northern Virginia, and Ida Lee Park in particular. Here we would go on many a cheap date - Kris with her big Cannon Rebel camera in tow, and I with my sketchbook. We shared a mutual love of nature that inspired much of our artwork and tightened our own personal bond. I loved how Kris was always so enamored and utterly fascinated by the little things - things that often got overlooked in this busy, gadget-obsessed world. For the rest of our life together, we would return to this park on dates, as our love for each other and connection to this little place that had so much significance in our world, never waned.

While Kris never got around to changing her maiden name, preferring to simply go by Kris Loya, she was busy cultivating an artistic practice that would take on many twists and turns. It wasn't until a few years before she left this world that she began to finally find her footing and gain some forward momentum in the local art world. I have no doubt that my amazing wife's kindness and genuinely warm personality played a large role in her success and popularity, as she paid attention to everyone she spoke to, and listened to them closely, even remembering their names, and details about their work and their lives. Kris was the kind of person who people were very comfortable with sharing something about their lives to, whether it was in the aisle of a Michael's arts and crafts store, or in line at the local coffee shop. Kris made friends everywhere she went.

I'm going to miss so many things about my sweet Kris - the nicknames she'd instantly come up with for the both of us, off the top of her head, the late night snuggles, the trips to the beaches of Delaware, the visits we'd take to see family and places in Pittsburgh, her sweet and innocent smile, her heartfelt kisses and hugs, her big and beautiful brown eyes, the quick little nose kisses, the mini-dates we'd take to a local park, library, art store, or coffee shop, her love of all things Christmas, the face and the sounds she'd make when she thought something was “too cute!”, her introducing me to silly tv shows that I might not have otherwise watched, her embrace of Star Wars and Miyazaki, her expertise on all things Sesame Street and Fraggle Rock, us singing sappy “lite FM” love songs (from the 70s and 80s) together at random times, driving around aimlessly and exploring new places, her comments about the way light would land on the branches of trees, her love of flowers, squirrels, chipmunks, clouds, and even cicadas (!). I'll miss our mutual love and admiration for each other's art, and the encouragement we gave to each other, with ease. Most of all, I'm going to miss Kris for just being Kris. When she'd ask me how

she got so lucky to have found me, I'd tell her, by just being you. When she'd ask, what did she do to deserve me, I'd tell her that I should be the one asking her that question.

All of this because I left a silly little "comment" on an art blog in 2006. Until we meet again, my sweet love.



Stephen Loya - December 28, 2021 at 09:53 AM



“ Sending so much comfort from Southern VA. She was truly a gem and will be missed

Jonelle McLeod - January 02 at 11:10 AM



“ A sweet, honest, simple, artistic and humble girl I brought into this world at 4 mins past four PM on December 24, 1980 who weighed 4 lbs 4 ounces. She was due Feb 4, 1981 but being the exuberant person she was, she decided to pop her head out early. Her first Christmas was 1980 and her last Christmas was 2020. She crossed the rainbow just three days before her 41st birthday. God had His plan and we thank Him for giving her to us when He wanted to and taking her back when He wanted to. She attended Curepe Presbyterian School before moving to St. Joseph's Convent in Port of Spain Trinidad. She then went to The Art Institute of Fort Lauderdale, and then did Computing and Information Systems, University of London. Kris lived a short but extremely meaningful life. Many friends and loads of family who adored her. Her only brother Marc Ryan Alcantara was her 'partner in mischief' while growing up with an unbelievable bond that cannot be broken. Her legacy will live on. Her unfortunate illness was very short lived and we are thankful that she accepted it and prepped us a week prior on how to move on, celebrate her life and her work which we will do. Her indelible mark is and will be here for a lifetime. Sleep peacefully precious Kris with the angels and your grandmother whom you loved so dearly. Love you and always all from Mum and your loving brother. Our world is altered but your treasured memories, love and knowing we will meet again will keep us afloat.

Jan Sirjusingh - January 13 at 08:21 AM



“ Such a loving and beautiful daughter any mother would be so proud off. A gentle soul which was displayed in all of her art pieces. A wonderful and devoted wife and friend to many. Kris, God wanted you to be by his side and he took you to be among his angels in the heavens. We now know that mommy, Ryan and your loving husband Stephen have an angel in the heavens looking down and protecting them. You will always be in our hearts. Rest in eternal peace my little Trojan. Auntie Sophie

Sophie Tung - January 14 at 11:15 PM



“ Every once in a while, we are lucky enough to meet one of those rare individuals who just spread light, laughter and joy to all around them. Kris was one of these people. She went out of her way to make everyone around her feel comfortable and included. She was so kind, so thoughtful, a true joy to be around.

Although I didn't know her really well, Kris was really supportive and generous with her time and her experience. She really was one of those people who make the world a little better just by being in it, and it was a real privilege to know her.

To Steve, Jan, and to all of Kris's siblings and extended family and friends,
May she live forever strong, healthy, happy and beautiful in your memories.

With much love and wonderful memories,

Nancy Kfoury
(Friend from Tryst Gallery)

Nancy Kfoury - February 16 at 05:55 PM



“ So sorry to hear this news. "May her memory be for a blessing" is what people say, but her life sounds like it was a blessing to you and everyone she knew. May you hold her in your heart forever.

Joe - January 19 at 03:04 PM



“ Thank you, Steve, for sharing the story of you and Kris with all of us. Kris was clearly an exceptional human and artist, too. Her loss will be felt by so many. We are so very sad to hear this news. Our thoughts, prayers and support are with you and the rest of Kris' family. Clearly, Kris' life has positively changed the world and left it in a better place than it was before. May Kris' memory be for a blessing. We wish you peace.

Love and Hugs,
Amy Reich, John Pracher, Annika & Zachary Pracher

Amy Reich - January 06 at 01:08 PM



“ All of us will miss that sunny personality. I was honored to know her.

Jill Evans-Kavaldjian

Jill Evans-Kavaldjian - January 03 at 01:55 PM



“ I had the privilege of knowing Kris through Friends of Leesburg Public Arts and Tryst Gallery. What an absolutely lovely, fun, warm, funny and caring person. She was a light in the day and a very talented artist. We had fun working on Gallery Game together and 5 X 7 art show and it is a privilege to have known and worked with her. She will always hold a special place in my heart and will never be forgotten. Steve, I am so very sorry for your loss and my heart aches for you. I hope you know, and that I sincerely mean, we are here for you.

Donna Torraca - January 03 at 08:26 AM



“ Kris, thank you for mentoring our teen contributors at Loudoun County Magazine and for helping us feature artists in our Summer 2021 issue. We are heartbroken to learn of your passing.

Prayers for your family and all who loved you,

The Team at Loudoun County Magazine and Loudoun Community Press

Jessica Monte at Loudoun County Magazine - January 02 at 03:32 PM



“ Steve, we are all hurting for you terribly. Unfortunately, I never really knew Kris, but know you! Life is so, so fragile, and we still go on like it's not. I pray it hits all of us that wakes us up to reveal the sacredness of life. I don't pretend to know how you are feeling, but you are immensely loved.

Marhea Ruzanic - December 30, 2021 at 07:17 PM



“ Kristen grew up with my daughter for some years long before she migrated and all the girls were like sisters! This is such a shock as Kristen was such a sweet and kind girl with big dreams that I am so happy she was able to fulfill! She was so happy with her love Chris and was creating her art as was her next love! God spoke and we must respect his word! Rest In Peace Krissy, You made an impact in this world and will always be lovingly remembered! My deepest condolences to Jan, Ryan and Chris. May you all find peace eventually after all the pain, hurt and emptiness!



Aneesa Mohammed Ali - December 28, 2021 at 10:16 PM



“ I got to know Kris and Steve through my sister. She gave my daughter a tshirt with a splotch monster and I couldn't stop going on about it. Then my sister has these beautiful watercolors In her condo by Kris and thus started my Loya Fangirl stage.

During the pandemic A LOT was going for me and my family and Kris started these zoom art sessions that helped lift me out of the despair. She encouraged me through every mistake and helped me to lose my fear of the watercolor medium.

I looked forward to joining the monthly zoom whenever I could and we'd all share our art. Not one of those sessions focused on the negativity going in around us. Kris' energy, kindness, humor shone like a beacon and I would end the zoom feeling so relaxed and happy. That's was Kris's great gift and it is in her art. It's Joy and warmth and love. She will be missed but not forgotten. My prayers for all her family and friends is to be able to breathe in each day with Kris's voracious light and beauty.



jeannette De Filippo - December 28, 2021 at 12:45 PM



“ I met Kris through her wonderful and loving husband Steve when he was on the WLAST studio tour. I was struck by her exotic beauty, dynamic personality and kindness. I loved her sense of humor and would often find myself laughing out loud after reading an observation she would make on Facebook. She was one of those extraordinary people who touched everyone she met. Ann Andre

Ann Andre - December 28, 2021 at 11:55 AM



“ I had the pleasure of hosting Loudoun County Public Library's Watercolor Workshops with Kris Loya, something I looked forward to almost every Friday afternoon. During the worst days of Covid, when things felt dark and our hearts were full of angst, Kris soothed us with her sweet, calm voice, and lifted our spirits with swirls of color and happy images of palm trees reaching toward blue skies, flowers bursting with joy, and sun-touched olive branches and lemons. I'll never look at a flower again without thinking of Kris and the beauty she put into the world. Miss you, my friend. Lorraine Moffa

lorraine - December 28, 2021 at 10:18 AM



“ Kris had so many talents. She inspired me to do watercolors. She will be missed by many. Her obituary is beautiful as well.

Felicia - December 28, 2021 at 09:38 AM



“ All I can do is echo what everyone has said. Kris was a blessing and a light and taken way too soon. Her encouraging words will be heard anytime I attempt something outside my comfort zone. I miss her.



Kile Casey - December 28, 2021 at 06:20 AM



“ Thank you for brightening my days. I will stop and smell the flowers and say a prayer for you.



Susan Welch - December 27, 2021 at 09:38 PM



“ I have two pieces of Kris' artwork in my home and see them every day. They always brought a smile to my face as there is so much joy in her work. I treasure our conversations and fun times; I mourn the loss of her laugh, her smile and her friendship. Still trying to wrap my head around this tragic loss...forever young, forever beautiful. A light dimmed but one that lives on in all of us. Love you Kris

Elizabeth Bracey - December 27, 2021 at 09:08 PM



“ Kris taught me my first watercolor class in 2017. It was pure joy! She was open hearted, skilled, knowledgeable and hilarious all at the same time! I took more classes from her and thus began a HUGE change in my life. Through Kris, I found out that the soul can be healed while creating art, for arts sake. Not for perfection (what is that?), not for precision, but just to paint and create for the pure joy of making color and water come together. Of course, we did use lots of permanent rose, rose madder and quinacradone red! There was a definite love of pink in both of our paintings. A friendship with her & Steve began after going to her opening at a nearby vineyard. My husband, daughter and I collected her work and now those original paintings mean even more to us.

Kris was my fellow introverted art friend & we would often say how "peopled" out we were after big events. Memories of her are now sealed in my heart. I am so very grateful that I was able to tell her how much I loved her, how I would continue to love her and find ways to spread her love of art to more people.

It was no coincidence that she passed away on the Winter Solstice. As light was coming back to lengthen our days, her light would be joined in the great Light which shines eternally.

I know that she is at peace now, resting in the greatest Light, & most beautiful Love of all.

God bless you, my dear friend Kris.



Kira Skala - December 27, 2021 at 08:56 PM



“ I met Kris on Instagram. Years ago we collaborated and put together a printable greeting card. She did the beautiful watercolor and I did the calligraphy. From then, I always looked forward to her funny or encouraging comments that would pop up when I shared something online. She kept it real and we bonded over our insecurities, running a creative business, being introverts, and our plants.

We were going to write and send mail to each other but time would get away from us and we'd laugh together brushing it off saying how busy life gets.

I can still hear your voice from our Zoom calls, laughing and catching up while you did watercolors and I practiced calligraphy. It doesn't feel real that you're gone, my friend. I never told you how much you've impacted me but I know how much you will continue to do so.

With every bright, beautiful flower, I will think of you. When I try again to just have fun and paint watercolors, I will hear an encouragement from you.

You are so loved. And we are all so blessed you left each of us a piece of you. It's bittersweet to continue on creating without you, but I know you'd want us to carry it on and share it with the world. I love you, Kris. Till we meet again, my beautiful friend.



Paulene Cruse - December 27, 2021 at 08:52 PM



“ I met Kris through her work. I feel in love with her art, sense of humor and fun loving personality. She also had a giving heart. Many of her art pieces hang in our home which thankfully will always remind me of her. She was a force that left her mark on this world.



liz campbell - December 27, 2021 at 08:19 PM



“ Steve, we are all hurting for you terribly. Unfortunately, I never really knew Kris, but know you! Life is so, so fragile, and we still go on like it's not. I pray it hits all of us that wakes us up to reveal the sacredness of life. I don't pretend to know how you are feeling, but you are immensely loved.

Marhea Ruzanic - December 30, 2021 at 07:15 PM



“ Krissy, as most of the cousins would call her, was the light of my life and this family's life. The life of the party and family! She was simply the best human I know. She was my twin and we she would call me. She's the one I would call for any makeup tricks or hair advice or just to make me feel better. The only one that can make me laugh so hard. We laughed through texts so hard lol. Oh my goodness she was my everything. She loved my son so much which made me love her more. She got me and I got her. She was a light on this earth that shone so brightly and I always tell her I was so proud to be her cousin! She found her perfect partner in life and I was so happy for her. I adored her and right now I may not be sure as to how to move on from this but I think about her voice telling me 'come on Sammy you are strong and you could do this!' My heart is broken so badly , but I can proudly say I knew one of the best persons God created and I was related to her and I was so lucky to have spent our childhood together and some years after that when she visited NY on many occasions. Did anyone know how much she loved Manhattan?



Ambika Harracksingh - December 27, 2021 at 07:54 PM



“ I met Kris during covid. A blessing of the virus is having met such a beautiful soul. She and I connected right away. She was so caring and positive. Her art was amazing. I remember gushing to her over how i connected to her work. Her ability to reflect her personality in her art was something most artists strive for and she achieved. I will miss our FB messages and Zoom chats. Love to all who knew her. Hugs and comfort to her family.

Amy Graves - December 27, 2021 at 06:53 PM



“ I have had the honor of working along side Steve for more than 20 years. The love and affection he had for Kris was unmatched. A true match made in Heaven. Steve, I am deeply sorry for your loss and will keep you in my thoughts and prayers in the coming days. Kris' light was contagious and her spirit will live on each day as her art continues to make others happy when they see it. Sending you peace on your heart as you forge ahead... xoxo

Mikaela Wojick - December 27, 2021 at 06:27 PM



“ I met Kris a few years ago when I purchased a watercolor from her. I wanted flowers and she asked me for my favorite colors. When I went to pick it up, she said she had never done anything in red and yellow before and was pleased with how it turned out. She was very generous with her time and showed me some of her work and also her husband's work. I later took one of her classes through the Loudoun County Public Library and sat in one of her work sessions. She was talented and caring, and I was privileged to have had the chance to meet her. Sending love and prayers to her family.

Norma Davis - December 27, 2021 at 06:21 PM



“ Kris was an extremely special person in my life. I met Kris during a time when I didn't know what plus size was. I was extremely uncomfortable in my body and wasn't at all sure how to dress my shape. Kris used her kindness superpower and showed me that it's okay to be plus size and that there are ways to dress that are flattering. From that moment I knew I had to have her in my life. That was just one of the many ways she guided me through life and taught me how to be a strong woman. I truly felt that, with Kris by my side, I could figure out anything I needed to in life. Any time I had a question or problem Kris was the first person I texted (we both agreed the only time we called was for emergencies cause ain't nobody got time for that). Kris also helped me tap into my own artistic side! We attended so many crafting classes together and enjoyed every single one. Kris was already a brilliant artist, but she always wanted to learn more, and I was more than happy to tag along in that journey. She was my source of laughter and gave me a safe home away from home. And like big sisters do, Kris kept it real with me, even when I didn't want her to, and was tough on me when she needed to be. We didn't always see eye to eye, but I always valued her opinion and knew she always had my best interest at heart. Kris understood me better than anyone else in my life. We shared so many things in common that I often didn't even need to tell her how something made me feel - she already knew. Now that she's gone, I feel like there is a large, gaping hole in my heart that can't be filled. I think, at this point, I've run out of tears to cry. I loved Kris with every fiber of my being, and told her that every single chance I got towards the end. I will carry the lessons she taught me and the memories she gave me everywhere I go.



Hayleigh Chambers - December 27, 2021 at 06:20 PM



“ Kris, you lit up our lives with your beautiful watercolors and artwork. My fledgling artist daughter followed you and delighted in your work and loved seeing your posts. Seeing your and Steve's love made us so happy. We will always remember you with so much love.

Bettina Lanyi - December 27, 2021 at 06:17 PM



“ You lit up our lives - and so many many others.

Bettina Lanyi - December 27, 2021 at 06:18 PM



“ I don't know where to start. Kris and I met through work and grew our friendship over the years. She was always a phone call away encouraging me or laughing at me and with me. I will miss her deeply. I will always treasure our time we spent together and the "talks" we had. My friend you finally get to meet my sweet Allison and you two will be great friends. Steve you will be in my thoughts and prayers. You were her love, her beat friend and her life!

Teresa Smith - December 27, 2021 at 06:15 PM



“ I met Kris in an online pattern design class earlier this year. She was our peer group leader, and she was perfect for this role. She inspired all of us. I truly enjoyed talking with her and I loved all of her artwork. Her style and colors felt like a piece of herself painted onto the page. Kris was so willing to help in any way she could and she was always there to cheer each of us on in our own artistic endeavors. I never got to meet her in person, but I feel blessed to have connected with her even for a short time. She will be greatly missed, but I know Kris will live on in all of the artists she has taught and inspired, and all of the art that she has created.

Monica - December 27, 2021 at 05:49 PM



“ I never met Kris in person, but she was generous and a wonderful support of animals. She donated her artwork every year to the auction that I manage for Wildlife SOS. Her pieces reflected the beauty and colors of Trinidad. Largely self-taught, Kris played with watercolor for more than twenty years, which she said became kind of a meditation practice. Her images have brought so much joy to so many people. Thank you Kris and may you rest in peace and love.



Sunny Branson - December 27, 2021 at 05:45 PM



“ It doesn't seem real that she is gone. I keep expecting my phone to ring so we can do dishes or laundry together over FaceTime. She was a bright light in my life, as well as in many others. She was there for me when I was a new mom and alone all day. She gave me a reason to get out, taking my daughter and her on many crafty adventures in Loudoun County. She was such a talented artist, I would even trade purses for paintings lol. I will miss you, my friend. I will miss talking with you, sharing inappropriate jokes with you, your generosity, your heart.



Jessica Moore - December 27, 2021 at 05:38 PM



“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Antoinette Marrero - December 27, 2021 at 05:37 PM



“ Kris was bright, funny, goofy, silly, kind--a beautiful soul and light that has left this world too soon. I am grateful to have basked in her warmth in the years we've known each other. There are not enough words to capture how much my heart hurts for having lost her too soon. She will live on in the hearts of those who knew and loved her and in her beautiful works of art that never fail to make me smile. I love you my dear girl. You will be so so missed.



Antoinette Marrero - December 27, 2021 at 05:35 PM



“ Kris was just the sweetest girl, and whenever I saw her she always encouraged me to jump on utube to learn to knit or crochet. She was so creative and I loved going to see her art work at the different venues . She always greeted me with a smile and a kind word, no matter how busy. She will be missed.

Deidra Kokel - December 27, 2021 at 05:19 PM



“ Charmaine lit a candle in memory of Kristen Candice Frances Alcantara



Charmaine - December 27, 2021 at 04:42 PM



“ Dear Steve, and Kris's Dear family - Kris has been a bright light in our art community, and as a close friend. Kris's positivity, sunshiney disposition, and love for her family drew everyone like a magnet. As an artist, gallerist, and curator, we shared so much in common and we will all miss her so much. The lady who fell in love with cicadas. Kris was adored by so many, most especially by Steve. Sending love and support.
Judith and Virginia

Judith HeartSong - December 27, 2021 at 04:25 PM



“ Kris is an amazing friend & artist, kind & creative. She will continue to be an inspiration to me & many others, I'm sure. Her legacy has unknown reaches. I will hold her in my heart & feel her love with me forever. She will be sorely missed, but is not gone. Thank you, Kris for your beautiful light.

June - December 27, 2021 at 04:20 PM



“ Steve, you and the family and in my thoughts. I miss Kris terribly. She was a wonderful friend and just a magical person.
Jan

Jan Stribling - December 27, 2021 at 03:56 PM