

Artist's Statement

I have been a classroom teacher, an after-school art teacher and an environmental educator, but above all, I have always been a painter. For me, the creative process is similar in all of these endeavors. I loved discovering how to successfully reach a particular child by building up knowledge layer upon layer through constant evaluation, experimentation and revision. As an artist, I create each piece by building it layer upon layer, constantly evaluating and revising until I am satisfied that what I have created is true. It is almost a form of meditation. I love the concentrated stillness of making marks on a page or canvas and I love playing with those marks to create interesting layers, texture, and visual energy.

Although I sometimes paint portraits, I am primarily a landscape painter. My paintings are always paintings of light and atmosphere and I strive to capture the ephemeral nature of light at a moment in time that transcends the subject and captures a mood that is timeless. Some of my landscape paintings are "traditional", some are abstractions which grow out of the more traditional pieces. In both I seek to discover the essence of a subject and to create exciting, thought provoking visual metaphors that celebrate the incredible beauty and diversity of our world.

A sense of space and the geometry of the landscape are also important elements in my work and while many of my paintings look recognizable, I primarily paint from memory arranging the elements to create an interesting composition. Regardless of the genre, I find myself seeing and feeling the space, the light, the time of day, the temperature, and the weather in my mind's eye and letting what is on the canvas direct my hand. Each piece begins with a loose idea that evolves gradually and intuitively. I always have an idea of what I want to explore but I find that at some point the painting takes on a life of it's own and I'm never sure where it will end up. I find this experience exhilarating and, at times, confusing. I think it must be much like the experience of a writer whose characters take over and force the direction of the story.

I work both in oils and in pastels and regardless of the medium, I work the same way: by applying countless scumbled layers of pigment one on top of the other. I find this process gives a wonderful richness to the surface. In the case of pastels, I use a fixative between the layers so that each layer remains bright and the piece doesn't become muddy. To get the same result with oils, I must let each layer dry before the next is applied. Painting in oil, therefore, is a slow process so I work on several canvases and sometimes also a pastel at the same time. I also move back and forth between landscapes and the abstractions based on those landscapes. I find switching gears in this way keeps me from "getting stuck".