

Briefly describe the work you do.

My work stands on nearly three decades of dedication to photographic and meditational practices, along with a fascination with watercolor. The paintings are part of my ongoing series' entitled *Love, Passion, and Prayer*. These are intimate and personal works, created to express longing and emotion through color, layers, and suggestive forms. I see both the practice of painting and the paintings themselves as meditations. When I work, I'm in a meditative state, with clear, soft focus that allows me to respond to the flow of the paint in an instinctive, improvisational way. Ultimately I work to create paintings that evoke deep human feelings and struggles, through the beauty and honesty of handmade marks of paint on paper.

Tell us a little about your background and how that influences you.

I've been a full-time studio artist for nearly 30 years. I went to art schools, studied both painting and photography, then lived in big cities and small towns in different parts of the world. I've published books and created large-scale public art installations. And I've worked almost equally with traditional and digital media. All of this has obviously influenced my work, but underneath of the projects and training is a never-ending hunger for making images that was inevitably incubated in my childhood. I spent a lot of time alone in the suburbs, in a home without art or books. I wasn't lonely. I lived so much of the time in my imagination, on my bicycle, and of course, watching television. This was the '70s and this was suburban America. I was a latch-key child of divorced parents. And one thing that had a profound influence on me was a game my father created for me and my sister. He would pick us

up on weekends so we could spend time together. Outside, in front of his apartment, we would each pick a direction in which to walk. Our task was to find something, anything, and then meet back in the middle to tell a story about it. This was a highlight of my weekend. It transported me into a place in my imagination where things were not what they appeared to be. They were much more than their physical selves, yet their physical selves evoked a poignant and exquisite story. In many ways, I feel that my art-making practice grew directly from this exercise. It taught me about metaphor and it sharpened my focus for intricate visual nuances. It ultimately helped me to understand that I would spend my life perpetually constellating around art and artists. And it gave me wanderlust.

Those many walks alone, inside of my mind with eyes to the ground searching for treasure, were excellent training for decades of travel. Wandering foreign streets, I was never without my camera, alone, looking for images which I would then print and paint with watercolors. This further cultivated a love for solitude and life in an art studio.

For the past few years I've spent nearly half of each year working on cruise ships around the world, as a watercolor teacher. This has been a tremendous opportunity for obvious reasons (travel, being out at sea) and for reasons not so obvious or predictable. I love working with an older demographic of students, and I love working with people who do not consider themselves to be artists. It's a beautiful experience for me to introduce people to the magic of watercolor...it's instantly calming and meditative and the simple act of creating layers of colors that merge and interact is equally compelling from the perspective of the maker or the observing teacher.

**What is the most challenging part about working with traditional media?**

What's most challenging is less about the specific media and more about the basic stumbling blocks when making visual images of any kind: avoiding cliché; repeating myself; remaining in a "beginner's mind" so that I'm constantly in a state of wonder and discovery. Working in any other state of mind inevitably leads to work that's self-conscious, inelegant, and mundane.

Name three artists you'd like to be compared to.

I admire so many artists, living and not living, and the ones I admire most, I don't think I'd want to be compared with. To tilt the question to a place that's more comfortable, I'd say that I would like to think that I'm living as integrated and inquisitive an art life as a few of my heroes: Paul Klee, Hilma af Klint, Matisse. Each of these artists spent their lives developing their own visual vocabularies to create uniquely expressive works in uniquely expressive voices.

How would you describe the art scene in your area?

Vibrant. Growing every day. Inspiring. Coastal Maine has always been a mecca for artists. It's serene and beautiful and somewhat remote, like an oasis just beyond the clutter and distraction of more highly populated areas.

What advice can you give to those who are just starting out in the arts?

Read literature. Go to museums. Listen to excellent music. Cook delicious food. Turn off your computer. Create a studio space (size is not important) and use it. Every day. Solitude, your own clear, uninterrupted dialogue with your work is most important.

Read Rilke's "Letters to a Young Poet." Then read it again.

What are your future plans?

To continue doing what I'm doing...to pay close attention to my paintings and let them be the guide.