

Biography of Kathryn Steffen

Kathryn Steffen grew up on California's rugged Central Coast, an area of uncommon beauty. Infused with a love of nature and of art, her pursuits in the Fine Arts program at San Diego State University found the young artist moving among theories and mediums, breaking and following rules, seeking connection through wheel thrown and ceramic sculpture and the infinite possibilities inherent in color and material.

In 1983, Kathryn and husband Bruce moved to the Pacific Northwest, beginning a family and settling in Portland, Oregon. With less time to devote to art, Kathryn moved from the three-dimensional applications of ceramic, and began painting in watercolor and mixed media. The lure of the Northwest's beauty and her passion for all things natural steered her to the outdoors, and her focus shifted further. She began work in oil, where her love of texture compelled each stroke on canvas and panel. Serene and peaceful on the surface, the examined mind traverses the perspectives of artist and viewer, discovering wholly subjective layers of meaning.

Kathryn has found home in rural studies in oil. Ultimately completed in the studio, the landscapes featured here are inspired by photographs and plein aire sketches of rural areas, those surrounding her studio in the Pacific Northwest and in regions beyond. Scouting locations and making the preliminary drawings for these works allows her to incorporate work and family; her saturated canvasses reflect the fulfillment she finds in her art. Utilizing layers of molding paste, gesso, fabric, and oil, the final work exhibits diverse, almost haunting elements, drawing the observer's eye deeper into the work.

The wealth of textures, the depth of color, the serenity and surprise of composition: all offer the viewer the luxury of personal association and interpretation. This combination of anonymity and connection in design is part of her conceptual approach. Steffen paints with intention, and the wash of that intention across panel or canvas is signature.

More recently, Kathryn's portraits of animals have garnered acclaim. With the same intensity she brings to landscape, she captures the essence of beloved animals. These latter works can be seen in coming exhibitions, or commissioned directly. As with all her pieces, a likeness is captured with elegance, mirroring, most importantly, the spirit and personality of the pet.

Again, welcome, and enjoy.



KATHRYN STEFFEN