



## SUZANNE JACK

### **Location:** Do you like to work in a studio or outside?

I paint both inside the studio with meditative music and en plein air. I particularly enjoy mountain and scenic venues which stir the senses as I immerse in the generous feelings of the day. The meditative music enhances my engagement into the art-making process.

### **Technique:** What type of medium did you use? How important is your choice of medium to the expression of the piece?

To create *Water Gems* I used Arches cover paper (soft surface) and Rembrandt and Sennelier pastels and fixative for pastels. With the side of the pastel, I lightly lay in Rembrandt caput mortuum red 343.3, 343.5 or 343.7 thoroughly over the Arches cover surface and soften with a cloth as the ground area for the painting. The light areas are gently erased and the dark areas defined lightly to evaluate the value pattern, focal point and placement of movement in the composition. The pastel side is the predominant way to apply by lightly layering color over color to create form and harmony throughout the composition. I continue refining by focusing on soft and hard edges, gradual transitions and strengthening the focal point with value contrast. Tips of Rembrandt pastels, light fixative spray and fingers all play a role in the building process to a completed work of art.

### **Theme:** Do you think of a theme before starting your abstract piece? How do you choose your theme?

My body of artwork has been a continual theme of awakening and a journey of understandings along the pathway of enlightenment. I have experienced increases of energy and joy flowing to the heart and spirit. Titles such as *Rocky Road*, *Cry of the Heart*, *In the Spirit*, *Touch of Soul*, *Heart's Cove*, *Morning's Trumpets*, *Elkmont's Eloquence*, *Water Gems* and *Reverence* are descriptive titles of my work.

### **Color and Expression:** When creating this piece, did you use local color, or did you alter the color selection to express an idea, mood or concept? How important is color in conveying your message?

In a painting, the value structure remains constant; however, color, color relationships and expression through color are intuitive to the image as they relate to the feeling of the day and my response to the painting as it unfolds. I love color and often save my disposable painting palettes during the painting/mixing process because beautiful abstract designs are often revealed.

### **Personal Experience:** Is there a story connected to this piece?

*Water Gems* is a topographical view looking down into and through the flowing water over the riverbed of gems. *Water Gems* is a metaphor for the flow of life's energy to my heart and spirit. I perceive myself as a work of art in progress and believe that understanding one's emotions, character and passions increases the flow of energy to the human heart and spirit. Looking through the water symbolizes introspection and evaluation of the realities and abstractions that have governed my life. Creating art has been a personal journey of awakening and stirring the spirit to a new journey toward light and energy and harmony.

### **Inspiration:** What historical movements, periods or artists inspire you? Do you find inspiration from the things around you?

Four artists have inspired me: Vincent van Gogh, Henri Matisse, Jan Vermeer and John Singer Sargent. Van Gogh's intuitive emotional approach to painting alla prima landscapes with vigorous marks and color palette was my first inspiration. Matisse's paper cutouts convey simplicity and clarity of design with undulating harmonic movements. As I venture into portraiture, Vermeer's *Girl With the Red Hat* and *Girl With a Pearl Earring*, with their alluring gazes and Sargent's portraits, with abstract mark making with realism, are timeless in beauty and reflect the artist's ability to convey so much with so little information.

### **Composition:** How do you plan the composition for your piece, if at all?

I plan by drawing directly on the painting surface, and mentally and physically make adjustments as I evaluate emphasis based on the golden section idea, plane placement, proportion, movement and value patterns. I like to feel the way light moves through form and how shadows fall across areas, and note how areas flow into one another, responding to the flow and energy of light and harmony. It is like choreographing a ballet.

### **Abstraction:** What does abstract art mean to you? What can it teach us about life and art?

Abstraction is bringing forth the essence and the spirit of an artist's sensitive interpretation of content as expressed through the language of design. Abstract images subliminally communicate in another dimension of thoughts and feelings that words can not describe. We remember what we feel.

### **Advice:** What advice do you have for aspiring artists?

Eliminate the negative thoughts and paint, paint, paint. It's a magnificent journey! If you have never painted or picked up a camera, give it a try. Explore a painting class and experience the joy of the arts.

◀ WATER GEMS, Arches cover paper with Rembrandt and Sennelier pastels, 29" x 41" (74cm x 104cm)