

## Karen Terry Artist Statement

### Artist Statement

I have done artwork all my life, with periods of silence. Although often painful, silence allows creativity a space to emerge. Our stories allow us to grow to who we are and who we want to become.

I find inspiration in the change of seasons and simple natural images, often observed while commuting on New Jersey roadways, which I record as landscapes of the physical and inner realms. As we, ourselves, are natural systems and embody nature, I paint what I take in of the natural world; what I hold, become or embody - and release.

The painting techniques that I use enable me to work with form and energy to create low light images of the environment, generally without the use of hard lines. My images tap into visual and sensory memory and a universality that extends beyond my own experience. My exploration of space and form, of ambiance and energy, primarily includes use of the sumi ink and acrylic mediums.

Sumi ink has been used in East Asian brush painting and calligraphy since early times. Traditional forms of sumi brush painting are still used in contemporary Zen practice today. The soft black pigment in the ink is plant-based soot. Traditional brush paintings are ink wash paintings executed in a prescribed manner on rice or mulberry paper of various sizes, including large screens and scrolls. A disciplined brush stroke approach is used to define the captured image.

I am not bound to this convention. My use of sumi ink is a departure from the classical Eastern brush painting form. I push the medium, while retaining the essential naturalistic subject matter, monochromatic ink wash tonality and minimal expressionist capture of the unseen, of spirit. I use heavy weight cotton watercolor paper that enables me to work with ink/ink washes in cumulative layers - adding, removing, texturizing; using various tools and materials for application and technique.

I employ a similar approach to painting with acrylic paint on canvas, using moderated tonality with color. I apply acrylic paint in opaque and transparent layers and sense the life held in the painting; allowing it to speak. My love of nature, combined with individual and collective experience, informs the sensitivity of my subject matter. My use of color provides a tonal representativeness in tandem with the richness of the prevailing field. I incorporate iridescence in my paintings in a subtle manner, which informs the lighting and provides a reflected glow. I transferred my training in oil painting to the acrylic medium and use a palette in the expression of my subject matter that carries the lineage of my training.

For me, painting with sumi ink and acrylics is both challenging and satisfying. I additionally create installations using found objects and natural materials. I have always loved drawing and painting the figure, which is its own landscape and provides a deep insight into the human psyche.

May the merit of my work be dedicated to peace.

Website: [www.artistkarenterry.com](http://www.artistkarenterry.com)