



**Karen Kurka Jensen**

My philosophy as an artist derives from my studies of sumi-e and its history, beginning in China where the people have long held that their magnificent culture was a gift from the heavens. Art was primarily a means to explore the connection between humankind and God. Artists cultivated virtue in themselves because they felt that to create art worthy of the divine, there must first be inner beauty. Part of my daily discipline is in waiting. It is dwelling, quiet and patient. It is prayer. Prayer as the absence of wanting and asking. Prayer as emptiness, prayer as silence, prayer as stillness.

Sometimes I just sit and look. I look at the majesty of the sky, all the amazing drama, its moods, shapes and colors. Or I look at water, the shifting surface, reflecting, revealing, hiding, disclosing. One minute, still and peaceful, showing me the secrets of its depths; the next, rippling with the breath of an oncoming storm when all images are swept away. I let these things be, I simply dwell in this presence. It's where I've always felt closest to God. I receive the moment and embrace it, finding in nature, peace and healing.

John Muir wrote, „Going to the woods is going home.“ My abstract landscapes are taking the viewer on a similar journey – away, to mystical worlds where you can get lost and feel at home in the same breath. When I discovered the medium of sumi-e, where the importance is on connecting spiritually to your subject, I found the language of my soul. Clients who purchase my work say it's inspirational, peaceful - that they feel “something” whether it's beauty, thoughtfulness, or mindfulness speaking into their souls. One of them wrote to me recently, “It's like looking at a Florida sky before a storm or a Colorado mountain stream churning with energy. Your work is organic, filled with passion, spontaneity and harmony. At first glance seeming chaotic but then the balance and beauty shows itself, just like life, if you're really looking.”

I use traditional methods in combination with an impressionistic style creating sumi-e inspired paintings, combining my skill in gesture and contour with a heightened sensitivity to my subject matter. I use scenes in nature as my inspiration, not as direct representations but as feelings and impressions from experiences that left a memorable impact on me. The flow of ink on the paper brings insight into my world by inviting you in, to share in the moment or mood created by my work; magical, mysterious, ecstatic, or divine.

