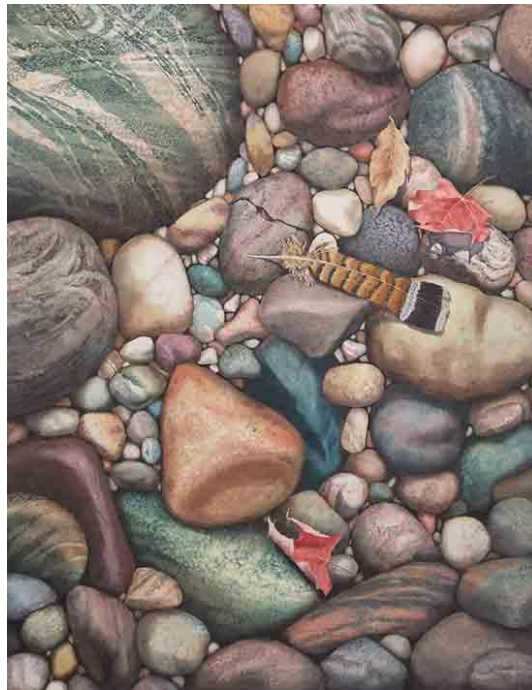




Adventures Set in Stone | Karen Richardson

What is it about beach pebbles that draws us to search for the perfect one to take home? Why do we place beautiful stones around our homes and in our gardens? Is it merely a fascination with colour, pattern, and texture? Or is it their ancientness that makes us curious about their story?

Fine artist Karen Richardson has felt the magnetic pull of stone - from mountains to boulders to pebbles to grains of sand - from as far back as she can remember.



Beach Treasures

Having grown up near Algonquin Park in northern Ontario, surrounded by the terrain of the Canadian Shield, Richardson is instinctively drawn to rock-filled wilderness scenery. The landscape of her childhood, characterized by extensive forests, with massive outcroppings of smooth bedrock, interspersed with hundreds of pristine lakes and rivers, was a region made famous by the paintings of the Group of Seven. She finds harshly beautiful places such as these to be energizing as well as

restorative. To date, over 400 of her paintings include stone in some form - from exquisite pebbles to massive rock cliffs.

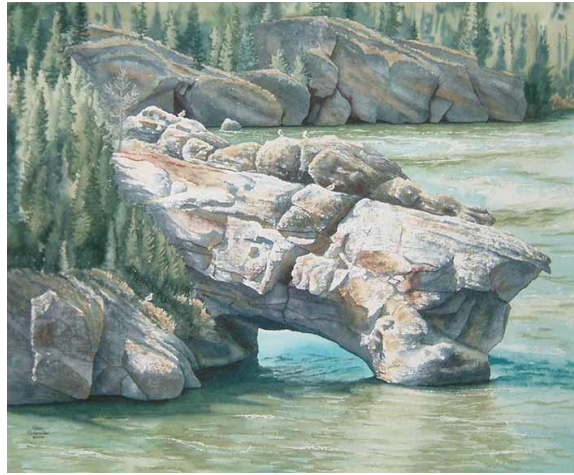
Richardson and her husband John, married in 1977, enjoy active holidays spent exploring the North American continent. Whether travelling by RV, motorcycle, snowmobile, kayak, or on foot, she encounters limitless concepts for her artwork.

A pocket camera is a must for compact convenience, with frequent shots snapping up inspiration en route, and visually documenting cross-country excursions as they unfurl.

An adventurous spirit steers Richardson and her husband to mountains and prairies, tundra and desert, and dirt roads and snow trails. Their travels have taken them from coast to coast, with the Yukon and Northwest Territories, Newfoundland, the Gaspé, and the American Southwest being among their favourite targets for exploration.

Closer to home, Richardson has designed, constructed, and maintained the perennial gardens in all three homes in which she has lived, and often uses her own flowers as references in paintings.

"When I see something in Nature that is worthy of



Carved by the Yukon (Yukon Territory)

An adventurous spirit steers Richardson and her husband to mountains and prairies, tundra and desert, and dirt roads and snow trails.



Desert Compadres (Arizona)

*"Your paintings are a quiet oasis for me."
~A. Janes, Collector*

celebration, I want to capture that feeling of heartfelt awe and wonder in a painting", she explains. "My artistic mission is to uplift, to share a moment of focused calm; in short - to make the world a happier place, one painting at a time."

Many of her collectors share the same feelings about her work, with responses such as, "I'm lucky enough to have a few pieces of your art throughout my home. They bring me a smile and quiet joy every time I look at them. It absolutely does 'nurture my creative soul' and when life throws in a curve ball, your paintings are a quiet oasis for me.

Thank you for sharing your art!"

Another collector sent Richardson a photo of her painting, hung in its new home, and confided "Here is a picture of your artwork of water lilies on my living room wall. It reminds me of the lilies in my own backyard on Lake Scugog. I get to see them every day and smile, summer or winter! I just love it."

For several decades, Richardson protected her watercolour paintings in the traditional manner, with museum quality matting, glazing, and framing. In recent years, she has changed her presentation to a more contemporary look, taking advantage of advances in technology.

She still paints on 300 lb. acid free 100% rag watercolour paper, but now it is mounted on an archival panel with a UV- and moisture-resistant coating. The archival panel is then mounted in a simple wooden float frame.

This new process protects the painting, yet allows it to be hung without the glare and weight of glass.

When asked if she had any artistic connections in her family, Richardson recalls her father's technical drawing ability, and her mother's strong organizational skills and attention to detail, all traits that now serve Richardson well in her art career.

She was born in Montreal, Quebec, but her upbringing in the bucolic Ottawa Valley, east of Algonquin Park, nourished her innate bond with the outdoors. Her parents built a house on the outskirts of the small village of Chalk River, and she merely had to cross the street to gain access to countless acres of wilderness forest.

She has fond childhood memories of scrambling up erratics, those enormous boulders left behind by ancient glaciers; teaching herself to swim at a nearby lake; picking wild berries for her Mom's pies; and climbing



Pinecone Journey

“Maybe I always was destined for this artistic path. Looking back and looking forward, the journey feels absolutely authentic to me.”



You Are My Sunshine

“My artistic mission is to uplift, to share a moment of focused calm; in short - to make the world a happier place, one painting at a time.”

tall pine trees, clinging precariously to the tallest branch, just for the view.

Artistic intrigue was cultivated from a young age. As a child and teenager, she was consumed with drawing.

Richardson was fortunate to have the benefit of a thorough arts and science education in high school, with many lessons taught at college level.

Her art studies encompassed perspective drawing, life drawing, and painting in oils, acrylics, watercolour, and pastel.

Other lessons included art history, composition, colour theory, architectural design, furniture design, illustration, packaging design, collage, sculpture, printmaking, pottery and glazing, weaving, calligraphy, flower arranging, candle making, enamelling, and batik.

Despite excelling in this sophisticated high school arts program, Richardson did not envision a practical career path in that direction. Instead, she established careers in the dairy and electrical industries, and pursued her creative interests during evenings and weekends.

At age 29, a chance night school water-colour class rekindled her love of that challenging medium, and she began showing and selling her paintings, and winning awards.

The expertise she gained in her day job – such as computer skills, communications, inventory control, project management, and marketing – were put to good use in her professional art business.

Richardson honed her watercolour painting skills at various art classes as an adult learner, and eventually mastered her personal painting style, through a hybrid blending of learned techniques and self-directed experimentation. Her major influencers were watercolour painters Jack Reid, Gordon MacKenzie, Arleta Pech and Birgit O'Connor.

With paintings acquired by collectors spanning 19 countries, and participation in over 100 solo and juried shows, Richardson's resulting regional, national, and international awards are equally impressive. She has been involved in many regional arts councils and studio tours over the years, volunteering on executive committees and organizing juried art shows.

After growing her art career for almost two decades, and with her husband about to retire, she left her day job in 2004, and created a new



Sunbathing Swallowtails (detail)

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Woodland Waterfall

and then an author by accident. But if I really think about it, maybe I always was destined for this artistic path. Looking back and looking forward, the journey feels absolutely authentic to me.”

Richardson's painting studio is in the lower level of her home, overlooking peaceful farmland in Lindsay, Ontario, near Toronto.

life. Now, taking advantage of a self-directed schedule, one third of each year is spent travelling and searching for new painting inspiration.

At the invitation of a local public art gallery, Richardson began teaching watercolour workshops in 2006. She finds that break-

ing down the creative process into 'teach-able bites' is very helpful to her students, and also aids in her own artistic development, questioning each step in the formation of a painting.

Her students applauded her approach and encouraged her to capture her strategies and advice in book form. This resulted in the 2013 publication of *Watercolour Toolbox: Essentials for Painting Success*. This how-to book, illustrated with 40 of Richardson's paintings, went on to win several international awards.

“I have been heard to say, jokingly, that I became an artist by accident, then an art instructor by accident,