



**JOSYBRITTON**  
—SCA · CSPWC—

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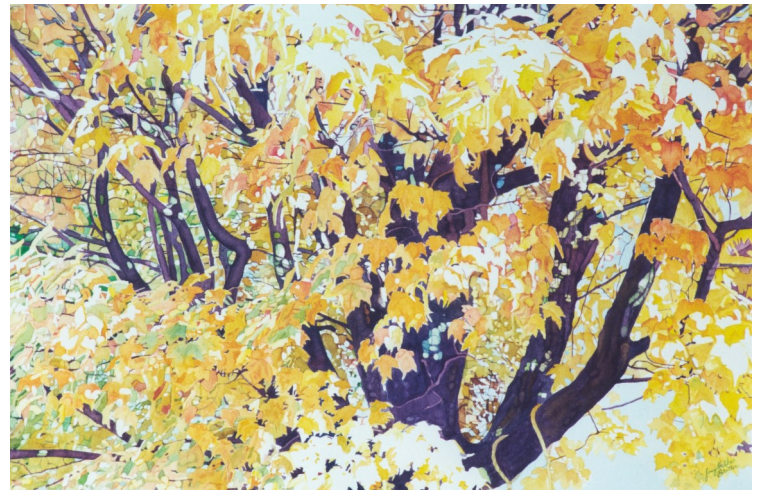
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## *Through Artist Eyes*

Josy Britton decided she was an artist in Kindergarten when she was looking at her assignment of a Fall Tree hanging amongst the efforts of her classmates and decided hers was unique. Every Christmas and birthday thereafter answered the wish for art supplies. In grade seven Josy's homeroom teacher told her parents that she should have painting lessons. Josy's parents responded with oil painting lessons and a studio in the furnace room. Her high school art teacher, Doris McCarthy, was very encouraging. Josy went on to

study art, her first year at Western and then after marrying Gordon Britton, her high school sweetheart, transferring to the University of Waterloo to study under Tony Urquhart, Don McKay, Art Green, Nancy Lou Patterson and Anne Roberts. All Josy's summer holidays as a child were spent camping, where Josy fell in love with nature. For her fourth year she chose to do create 12 watercolours of close up view of trees in four seasons. Her graduating class of just 8 students had an exhibition at Gallery Stratford and Josy had her first two professional sales, graduating with an Honours BA in Fine Art in 1979. Josy then earned her Bachelor of Education from UWO in 1980 and taught Art and Mathematics for three years, paying off University debts and imparting her passion for both subjects to her students. Then Josy retired from teaching to build a family and an art career, painting exclusively in watercolours with solo and 95 group exhibitions in Ontario.





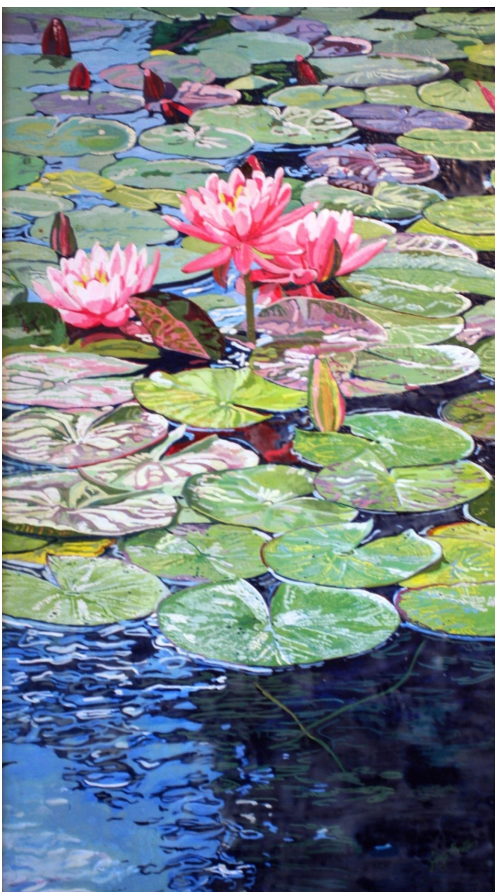


The Canadian landscape has profoundly impacted Josy's life and work. She turns to nature for rejuvenation, inspiration and invigoration, living in an oak savannah forest beside the Pinery Provincial Park. The **Look Way Up Series** was conceived on a wilderness canoe trip in Temagami after an intense portage. Josy explains, "Carrying my canoe overhead forces my gaze downwards, focused on the path just ahead. As I gently lay my canoe down at the water's edge, I was free to look up, as if for the first time. Humbled by the majestic beauty of an old growth tree, I felt connected with my purpose. My paintings capture the physical and spiritual essence of the natural world. Witnessing its complex interdependence, simultaneously fragile and robust, I am called to my studio to mirror how this reality of unity and harmony can exist within us." The paintings in this series involve looking up at trees in all seasons, but sunlight is Josy's primary subject, as light and shadow reveal the infinite nuances of colour. Josy divided the paper's surface into overlapping jewels of transparent watercolour. While suffering from whiplash Josy was unable to look down for a year so she could not paint watercolours. But Josy needs to paint so she took up oils ,using an easel and looking straight ahead, creating flowing strokes of a hand that has most often held a watercolour brush. After successful physio therapy Josy could again paint watercolours but the year of oils made Josy open to other medium and to experimentation. Josy developed a subtractive technique for painting watercolours on yupo paper.



Josy's **Water Series** was inspired by long days of paddling, gazing in the water at the reflections, and ahead at the shore in hopes of glimpsing a moose or even more illusive, a bear. Canoe tripping in Algonquin park started a fascination of water, the major constituent of life. Josy and Gord break camp in the early morning, when the lakes are still smooth as glass. It is in this stillness that the lucid water creates mirror-like images of the land and sky. Paddling makes concentric circles form. The ripples change the reflections. The adaptability and playfulness of water is a profound metaphor for the fluidity of life. In that moment, Josy realized the freedom and imaginative depth inherent in the artistic exploration of water.





Josy's **Water Lilies** celebrate a chapter of artistic transformation. After more than 30 years of painting almost exclusively in watercolour and then oils with a fluid stroke, the brush had become an extension of her hand and she found she could picture the end result before beginning. But one morning while paddling the Little Tripper Josy noticed the sunlight's dance of light and shadow on lily pads and was struck by their waxy appearance, which inspired the change of medium to encaustics. Now open to all mediums, Josy dove into encaustics. The new challenge kept Josy in the present moment asking new questions. Josy was then inspired by the lily ponds of the Van Dusen Botanical Gardens in Vancouver, conceiving *Homage to Monet*, *Resplendent* and *Water Lily Ballet* in the close up point of view she loves. The game changer was a visit to MOMA – "While standing awe-struck before Monet's mural sized triptych, *Water Lilies*, I felt compelled to work bigger and to fill a gallery with this series. Four encaustics measuring 84x 48 inches followed. Stepping back reveals a landscape of great depth, rich with details inviting close up examination. Close up one realizes that much of the paint is fragmented jewels of colour, which one's eyes transform into unified identifiable objects.

Josy served six years on the board of Directors for the Society of Canadian Artists, the last two years as President. Josy is also an elected member of the Canadian Society of Painters in Watercolours, winning their top award, the A.J. Casson Award in 2010. Josy has been part of two shows in Regional Galleries, *Fluid Explorations* at the Judith and Norman ALIX Art Gallery in Sarnia and *Inventive Women, Re-Interpreting the Canadian Landscape* at Woodstock Art Gallery. Josy is currently seeking a gallery to exhibit her *Water Lily Series*. Meanwhile she paints every-day. She has just begun an encaustic series inspired by a recent visit to the Muir Woods in San Francisco.



