

Karen Cruickshank Artist Statement:

As a young art student I was always drawn to van Gogh, and today I understand why—his use of texture and color was the subconscious genesis for my own evolution. Abstract painting has become my way of communicating power, emotion, and beauty.

My art becomes distinctive as the layers of colors bleed into each other and result in a unified canvas. Many of my creations are so thick in oils that they literally take months longer than typical paintings to dry. Sometimes I will pursue a particular vision to completion; the painting represents a specific idea. Other times, I am taken on a beautiful, magical journey that evolves as I'm working the surface with my palate knives, brushes and mind.

Having lived in the desert Southwest and Pacific Northwest, I have been exposed to an almost limitless array of natural elements that I may draw upon while creating my paintings. Conversely, my art can be so truly abstract that it begins and ends with something representing nothing beyond the wisp of a thought and the guiding influence of my senses and emotions. It is satisfying when a viewer offers an opinion about what a painting represents, or comments that they “connected” with a canvas in a very personal way.

People often ask me how I know when a painting is completed. It is a simple question with no easy answer. Some of my thickest works are painted in layers over many months, and I continue because it feels right to do so. I once painted a very large diptych that was initially meant to be a single-panel piece, but after completing the first canvas, I felt as if it were begging me to add a second, to continue the journey. So I did, and today I feel it's one of my most powerful works. A painting is completed when it tells me so.