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Imagine

Visual Art in Greater Cincinnati

Trish Weeks

Landscapes that explode in color and joy

*Imagine Spotlight on Cecile Baird, Cynthia Kelly
Overlord, Ken Landon Buck, Terri Kern*

Cecilia Brendel, How to Paint Light

Bruce Neville, Architecture to Watercolor

Marlene Steele, The Art of Drawing

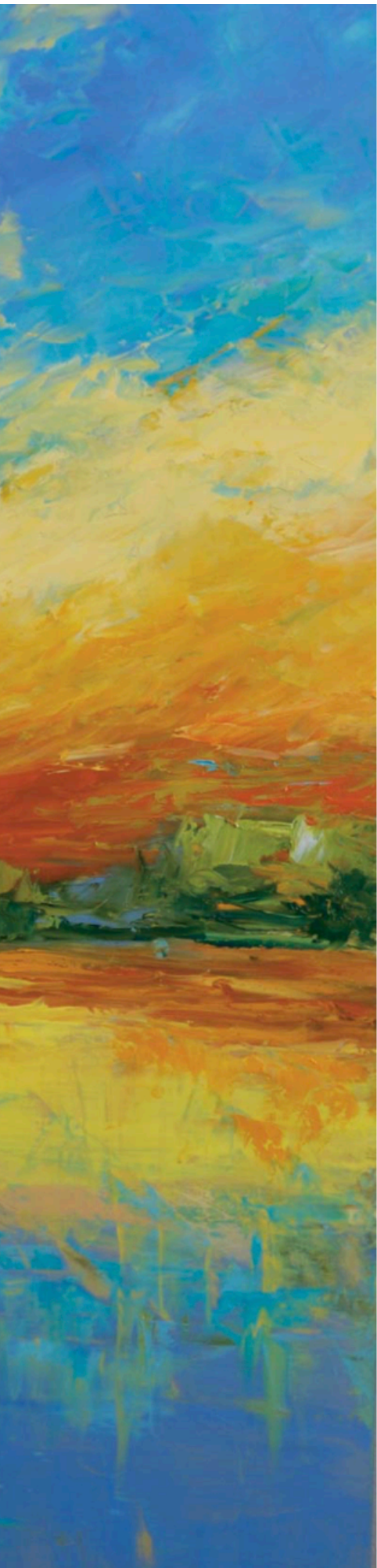
The Last Word by Ray Hassard

Fall 2020

Trish Weeks

The Joy of Painting





By Dale Wolf

Most days, since she was a child, Trish dances through the day immersed in the joy about all that is around her. It is this joy that spills out in her pastoral paintings. Her approach defies being pinned down in a world that corners us as a realistic, representative, impressionistic, or abstract painter. The valleys, fields, and gardens are real and form the basis for her paintings. Like all successful plein air artists, she has mastered the basic techniques of composition, color, value, and edges. But the way she extracts color from nature is her own personal statement about what is happening – out there, and inside her.

“I wonder how I could paint anything if I didn’t feel it.”

For Trish, art is not so much replicating the scene as it is capturing the feeling she experiences when looking at what is in front of her. Her paint is applied in generous sweeping and darting strokes using a palette knife like a maestro’s baton. Her knife is not much larger than a finger—even when working on a canvas six feet wide.

Broad and deep surfaces are packed with thick paint and pure colors. They often vibrate against each other to create the sense that grass is blowing, leaves on trees are shimmering in the wind, clouds are scurrying across the horizon, or the sky is collapsing into the reflections of water – as they actually do in nature. The viewer still sees the grass, the leaves, and the flowers, but also the dance of joy that she feels as she spreads her paint across linen or aluminum surfaces.

She grew up in a world piled high with bolts of colorful fabric. Her mother was an expert seamstress who loved color in the clothing she sewed together. Trish could run a sewing machine at a young age when she was still studying grammar and arithmetic in grade school. She worked in her dad’s dry-cleaning business until she graduated high school, then became an executive secretary at P&G and married Ron Weeks. Art was always a yearning, but not yet a significant part of her life.

Summer Sunrise
oil on aluminum
36" x 36"

Years later, with two pre-school children, she went full-time to UC DAAP to study fashion design 8 to 5 daily in classes while her husband worked as a software engineer. Graduation led to a choice: move the family to NYC where the fashion opportunities were best, or stay in Cincinnati doing retail fashion. She stayed locally but applied the knowledge from her degree during her 40-year career as an interior designer creating room compositions and spatial designs and using lots of color in her work.

Getting to where she is today was a slow process.

She dabbled in art, but work crowded it down to a sideline passion. A friend got her back into drawing, and she took classes with her. But it was Steve Perucca, a retired Miami University art professor, who saw her potential and encouraged Trish to pursue oil painting. He watched as she painted landscapes and one day challenged her: Why do you want to paint like everyone else? He suggested she try working with a palette knife. Trish fell in love with the palette knife and the freedom it gave her. But still, most of her days were spent designing commercial and residential interiors, not painting.

In 1999, she attended her friend Katie's wedding in the Abaco Islands. Four days after the wedding, while Trish and Ron were still celebrating with Katie and her new husband, Katie had a heart attack and died suddenly, leaving everyone wondering about the frailty of life. Katie's tragedy was also Katie's gift as it finally drove Trish to consider a career as an artist.

Katie's loss helped Trish begin to see art as her passion.

"None of us know how long we will live, so why am I not doing in life what I most love doing? If not now, when will I find time to paint?"

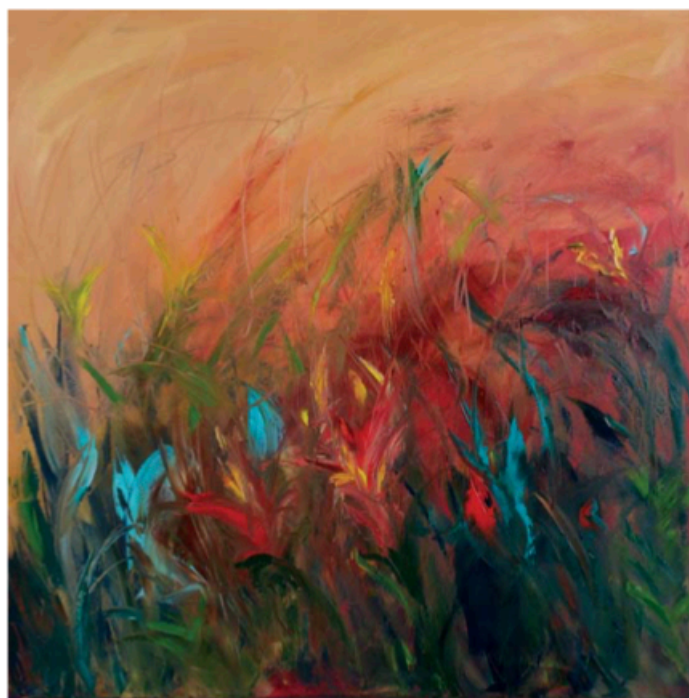
She decided to push her interior design business aside and make art her full-time vocation. She leased a studio at Essex, and now finds joy and satisfaction every time she heads into her studio to "put paint." Usually, Trish does landscapes based on a plein air study and photos of the scene. Sometimes an occasional architectural image will capture her fancy, but it is mostly the scenes created by God instead of man that inspire her work.

"Color is what drives me! It's there. I just have to find it."

Trish works casually with the knife. She dabs then spreads but keeps each color pure. She works fast, then slows down and stares at the work. A theme is forming in her head as much as from the reference photo. Her knife slashes again, across the sky, wipes, grabs paint off the palette, and establishes more dark areas. She works some viridian into the field, keeps stepping back, seems to compare the canvas to what's in her head. She pokes some pink from alizarin and white into lower edges of descending clouds and makes quick upward strokes from the bottom that begin to build the foreground with what feels like tall grass. Layering color. Perucca said, 'I use paint like I am a millionaire, but don't stop!'"



The Pond
oil on canvas, 36" x 36"



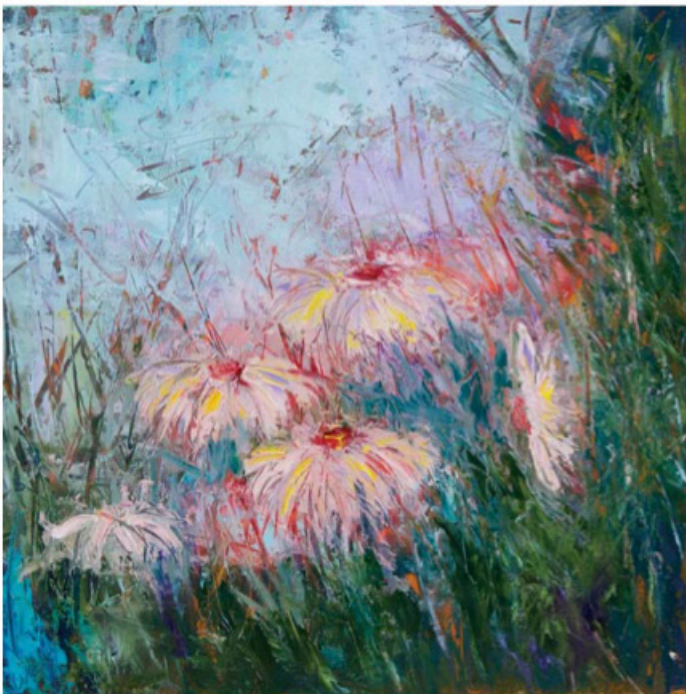
Asiatic Lillies
oil on canvas panel, 36" x 36"



Trish Weeks at work in her Essex Studio

"I need to learn something each time. I try to paint every day in the studio, always looking for fresh ideas. Sometimes I use white or a complimentary color like teal with cad yellow to knock down the pure color. The knife forces you to simplify and to see what happens.

The Z-form begins to unfold in her composition to pull the eye across the scene. "I am never trying to be realistic, always expressionistic." You can see her working her entire body, especially from her shoulder. "When I am finished, the muscles in my neck and arms are very tight and tired."



Reaching for the Sky
oil on linen birch panel, 12" x 12"

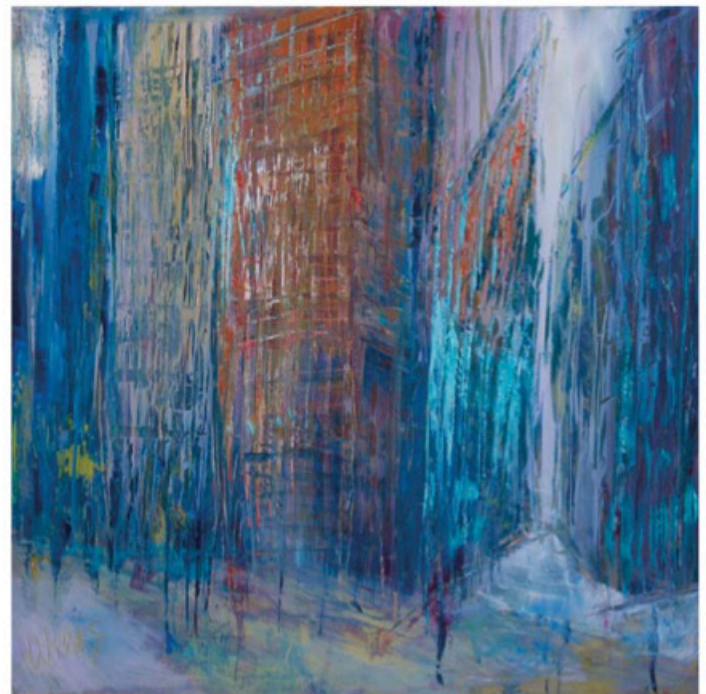
She mixes some color on the canvas but usually works from the pure color on the palette. The knife is working faster now ... smack, smack, smack, the sound of the knife hitting the board crosses the room as her energy has come to a rapid pace.

Trish works smaller when painting plein air, but in the studio, she usually she works large; 48" x 48" or paintings that are six feet long—all with her finger-long palette knife. She works on stretched canvas, a sturdy linen board, or aluminum panel. Each surface has its own feel.

She's staring at the painting again. "Hmmm!" She tells us that she has spotted an area in the corner that needs work. She lays the color on thick but not overly textured. The reference photo has a lot of darks, and she seldom uses black but prefers a deep purple to make the darks pop. She sees a spot with opportunity for a soft orange to perk up what would have been just a grassy green field. "Use pure paint and don't smear it around, or it will become muddy. Put it down like you really mean it!"

At the end of her workshop, every student has one thought in mind. "To get outside and start a new painting." And that is precisely what Trish wanted to inspire. And it is precisely what Trish herself will do. She can't wait to start a new one.

Trish's paintings always jump with color and dramatic sweeps of paint from her knife. The result is stunning bold abstractions of landscapes as she sees them and as she wants to paint them. It is how she expresses her joy in life. It is Katie's gift.



City Lights
oil on aluminum, 12" x 12"



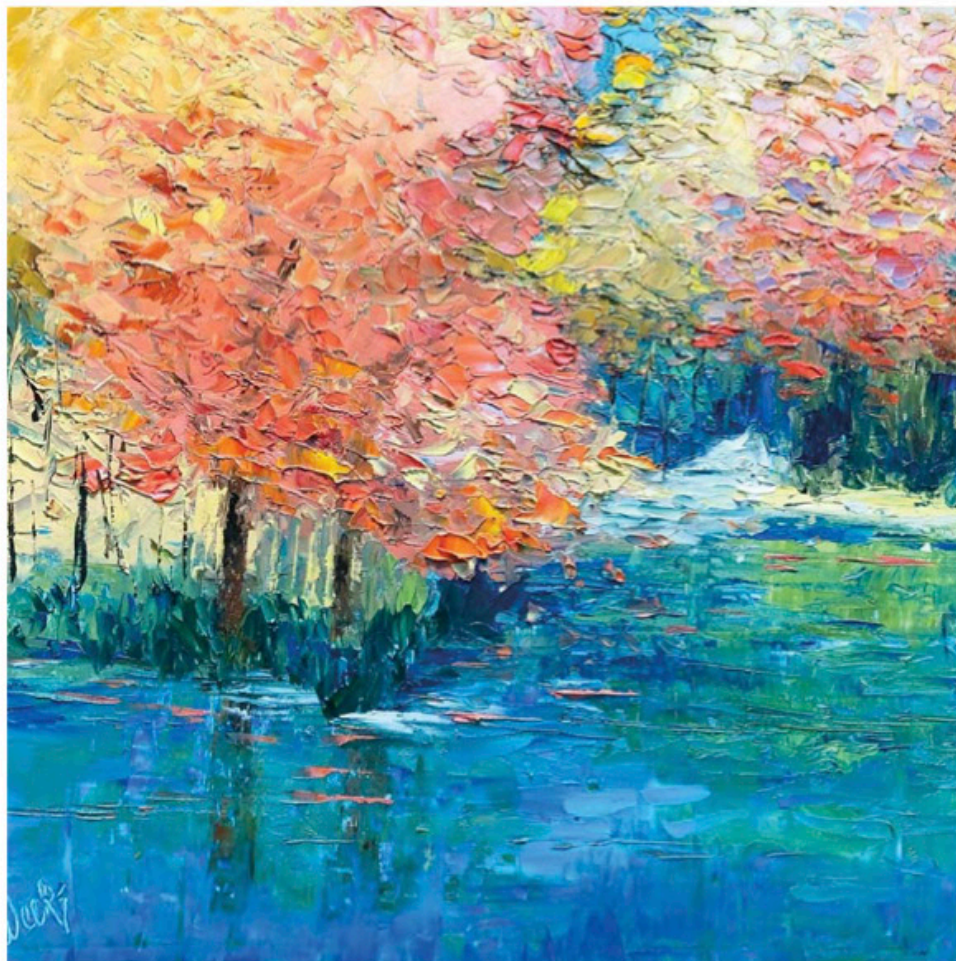
Trish Weeks

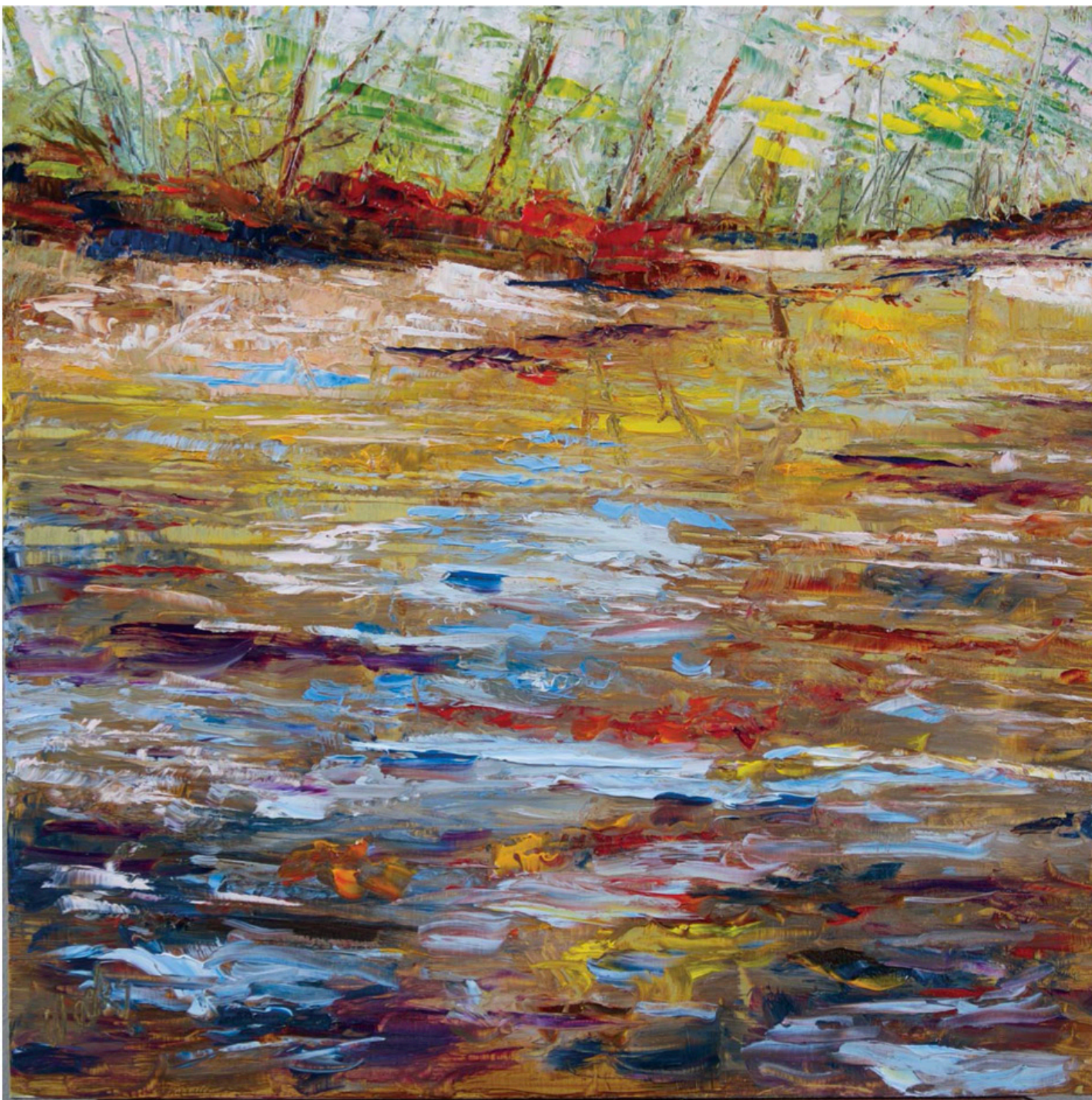
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Season of Change, oil on canvas, 40" x 30"

Holding onto Summer, oil on canvas panel, 12" x 12"

Lilies of the Field, oil on canvas, 24" x 24"





Reaching for the Sky
oil on linen birch panel, 12" x 12"



