

Presenting a collection of limited edition giclées and lithographs by

KAREN VANCE



"Almost Home"
18" x 24"



"Waiting for Spring"
26½" x 17"



"Another Spring"
22" x 30½"



"Origins of Spring"
23½" x 21½"

Nationally known award-winning Colorado artist Karen Vance offers an outstanding collection of signed and numbered limited editions available as archival canvas giclées and lithographs on acid free paper. Over 20 images are available.



"In the Cool Beneath the Cottonwoods"
18" x 36"

karenvanceart.com

INFORMART

Annual Guide \$15
mag.com
Gateway to Art on the Web

INSIDE INFORMART

Features:

- Linda Besse
- Larry Fanning
- Mark Stewart
- Karen Vance
(cover artist)
- Terry Woodall

2006-07 Resource and web-connect Guide

Karen Vance's Landscapes



by Peggy Kinstler

Landscape artist Karen Vance talks to the paintings in her collection... and they talk back to her. "Sometimes I'll get stuck on a painting or get in a mental funk and I'll walk up to one of Quang Ho's paintings [Vance studied with Quang Ho for a number of years] and say, 'Talk to me, Quang.' The painting will talk to me, showing me how to get beyond that human mental stagnation that everyone gets into from time to time."

Many of the pieces in her collection are by artists with whom she's studied, and every piece was purchased because it speaks to her heart. Karen is one of those artists who paints from the heart first with the intellect riding shotgun, making sure everything is coming out right. A Vance landscape is designed carefully, every element chosen for its particular effect, every color and shape moving the eye where Vance wants it to go, but the real beauty of her work is more subtle. It comes from knowing her subject so well and loving it so much that she literally can paint what she feels about a scene and end up with a delicious landscape. Of course, without years of hard work honing her craft to the point where the technical skills are instinctive, this wouldn't be possible.

One of three daughters born into an artistic family, Vance says it was expected that all three would be artists. Vance didn't get there in a straight line, however. As a girl she flirted with the idea of being a secretary like the one who organized her father's days, and when she first settled in Winter Park, Colorado, she was the town clerk by day while painting landscapes into the wee hours of the morning for a local gallery.

Twenty years ago, in 1986, she felt she had enough of a following and she took the artists' leap, giving up her day job to make her way as a painter.

"If I'm just painting a pretty picture, I'm missing the point. Communicating what's in my heart, what I see and what I paint, what I hear and what I paint, that's what I'm trying to achieve."



"The older I get the more I appreciate my family and upbringing. They opened up the arts to my two sisters and me – we're all artists now." Vance's father died "way too young at sixty-four" and her mother died this past summer. "I am grateful to have had her as my mom and I'll miss her always." Of her successful and growing career, Vance says, "Oh how I wish I could share this with them. In a sense I am, as it's part of their legacy to me.

As a child they had me running to see exhibitions, art shows, and museums, showing me what was in their hearts..."

She keeps coming back to that phrase, "What's in my heart." It's central to her painting and how she approaches art in general.

"If I'm just painting a pretty picture, I'm missing the point. Communicating what's in my heart, what I see and what I paint, what I hear and what I paint, that's what I'm trying to achieve. There are things I can't express in words, but if I can express them in my paintings, then people will see my heart, they will see my soul. To me this is a life's work, a life's goal."

For Karen Vance, painting is how she makes a living, yes, but she says it's more than that. "The human spirit is

Left: *Aspen and Columbine*
Opposite Page: *High Country Meadow*

Bring You To The Mountains



“I think as an artist you have to have artwork by other artists,” she considers. “Every piece of art has its own language that you see and experience in your heart. I learn from them too.”



Winter Picnic

January Evening - Devils Thumb Ranch

and has been created by a God, who also created this amazing, amazing world of ours – a world I’m completely enamored with. I received this talent, this love, from the same Creator and I have the desire to give it to others. It’s not about pretty pictures, but when I first started collecting art, I thought it was.” She bought her first piece of art when she was fifteen – a limited edition print of a watercolor by Winslow Jones, a midwestern artist with whom she later studied. “I wasn’t quite aware of it, I thought I was buying a pretty picture, but I realize now there was something that touched my soul.” This print is still part of her collection.

“I think as an artist you have to have artwork by other artists,” she considers. “Every piece of art has its own language that you see and experience in your heart. I learn from them too. I have something from most of the artists with whom I’ve studied. While I was studying with them, I heard their words, saw their demos, and then when I would get one of their pieces, it would continue to teach me. I’ll see things today that I wasn’t ready to understand earlier. Sometimes in my studio, something will happen on my canvas and I’ll exclaim, ‘That’s what he meant!’

“I’m looking at my collection now and I feel like a little piece of their hearts are here with me. They are all very dear and they all expressed to me something of the knowledge of God... that’s truly where their talent comes from, whether they know it or not,” she giggles, smiling her radiant, dimpled smile.

The preciousness of life, the importance of God in her life, and her love of painting all became more intense a few years ago as she battled breast cancer. “Cancer changes your life,” she says. “I got very introspective when faced with something living inside my body that could kill me. I’ve been cancer free for four years now.

“It was horrible, the treatments were horrible, but my wonderful husband Jim helped keep it light. Every time we drove to Denver for treatments – two hours each way – he’d find a wonderful little place to have dinner: old diners, funky little dives, French cafés. Each time, it was like a date.”

In Jim, Karen says she’s found the perfect husband. “I don’t cook, I don’t clean, I just paint. If I get crabby when I’m not painting, Jim will say, ‘Don’t you think you need to go paint?’” In addition, he’s also become an indispensable business partner. She just came back from teaching a workshop in Fredricksburg, Texas – the first she’s taught since she learned she had cancer – and Jim was her “right-hand guy, doing all the left-brain things so I could paint and teach. And now he’s become my technical director, taking photographs of my work.”

Having a “left-brain”

partner is allowing Vance to follow the advice she got from Quang Ho years ago when she asked him for business advice. “He said, ‘Karen, just paint, just paint.’ I thought, ‘What does he mean by that, I don’t get it.’ I wanted to hear how to get galleries, how to get shows, how to do this, how to do that. What I know now is that he was absolutely right. Just paint. It’s the most important thing I do. All the business things have to be done, but they come along if I just paint.” And now, Jim is taking care of those things, so Karen can do what she does best, just paint.

That’s particularly important now. She recently received a commission to paint one hundred paintings for a five-star resort ranch “right here in the valley just below the Continental Divide.” To keep this four-thousand-acre ranch in the family and protect it from development, Bob and Suzanne Fanch have created a family foundation to run the resort. Karen says they already have cabins, a spa, and restaurant and they are building a replica of Mt. Hood’s famous Timberline Lodge. “I’m going to be painting one hundred paintings for the lodge, paintings of the ranch at different times of the year, and of Grand County, which includes the ranch, my home, Rocky Mountain National Park, and part of the Colorado River. It’s a dream commission.

“I live right below the Divide not too far from the ranch – it’s a beautiful place and my heart is here,” she says. “I think that’s one reason Suzanne chose my artwork. I think they saw my heart in what I paint.

“My life is a dream,” Vance says. “I have desires and dreams that are being fulfilled.” This commission is one. An art residency at Yosemite National Park is another. “I’ll have the honor of going to Yosemite for two

“It shook me to my bones. I walked into the mural room [murals by Joaquim Sorolla at the Hispanic Society in New York City] and my knees got weak and it took my breath away... I started to cry.”

weeks three times over the next two years. I will have this enormous experience of painting Yosemite as I see and experience it. Then I’ll put together an exhibition and one painting will be selected for the park’s permanent collection.”

Recently Vance was elected a master signature member of American Woman Artists, a group of artists she calls amazing, and she’s a new member of the National Arts Club and the Hispanic Society, both in New York City. “Being attached to the Arts Club is so wonderful, it makes me feel more connected to a bigger art world.” After visiting the Hispanic Society in 2005 to see the paintings and murals of Joaquim Sorolla, she joined on the spot.

“It shook me to my bones,” she says. “I walked into the mural room and my knees got weak and it took my breath away... I started to cry. As an artist I try – my goal is – to get to where my heart and soul are infused with the paint and all the physical elements of the painting. Sorolla is there. Was he aware of it, or did he just flow with it? Once I stopped crying, I allowed my left-brain to work and I saw that everything, every single thing that anyone has ever taught me is there. Everything. It was so masterful, so intuitive.”

Though she couldn’t return to Winter Park with a Sorolla painting, she did buy every book she could. “The books can’t come close to reproducing what was there, for these are enormous paintings, but they will remind me of what I saw.” From time to time, one can imagine that Karen will find herself looking to those images for answers as she does to the paintings on her walls. Δ

