

KATHY MASON LERNER



Kathy Mason Lerner derives her inspiration from the quiet beauty and lush abundance in Marin County, where her home, located near a secluded area of the San Francisco bay, is surrounded by lush gardens. It is from this environment and its rhythm over time, through seasons of dormancy and rebirth, that she derives the inspiration for her art.

Moved by a vision, Mason Lerner's paintings re-explore a key theme, the garden, the woods, or the sea; and through this process of discovery, a work emerges through many layers of oil on canvas, in a rich spectrum of vibrant and pulsating color. Beginning as plein-air studies that are then finished in the studio, the painting's principal origins are rooted in the natural world. "The value of nature as our primary foundation," is the leitmotif of her work.

"Brushstrokes transmit pure gesture...density is form and energy... colors are healing, and the picture must come to a place of peace or resolution with chaos and beauty." "The light pastel hues I use have a healing effect on the mind and the core of the self: in the process of layering colors, I create a radiance for myself and the viewer. Flower petals, gemstones, rainbows and pigments are the only true colors the eye perceives. "I work on my paintings over a long period of time until they resonate. When everything works in a painting there is a special moment. This is an awakening or a transcendental sort of consciousness. The reason I keep on painting is to experience these moments of extraordinary reality."

Mason Lerner began developing her artistic skills as a child, working next to her aunt, Polly Wagner, a professional modernist landscape watercolorist in Oakland, California. As an adult, her path into the art world began by studying Art History at UCLA. An interest in making art, rather than just studying its history, caused a move to San Francisco where she began an apprenticeship with expert lost wax jewelry maker S. Paul Gee. During this time she attended both The Art Institute and San Francisco State University and majored in Studio Arts. Establishing a career as a jewelry maker, she enjoyed success as her jewelry was collected and commissioned by such notables as Salvador Dali and Spencer Dryden, (Jefferson Airplane drummer). Her work was also featured in the exhibition, "*Far Out: Bay Area Design, 1967-1973*," in 1999 at the San Francisco MoMA.

In the late 70's, while raising three children, Mason Lerner shifted her focus to painting. To increase her knowledge within this discipline, she studied under former Harvard Fogg Art Museum instructor Barbara Pierce, and Sumi Master of Japanese Brush Painting, Hiro Sakai. In the early 90's, she was awarded a Diebenkorn scholarship at the Santa Fe Institute of Arts, where she became a master at capturing light and layering colors under the tutelage of the acclaimed American colorist, Wolf Kahn. While Kahn's influence is visible in her color choices, Mason Lerner has developed her own unique palette through the use of a full color spectrum.

"I consider Ms. Lerner to be a very fine painter, gifted with a unique color sense and great freedom of execution. Her screens are objects which go way beyond the decorative. Her work in general has great sensuous presence and stands as a demonstration for a spontaneous love of light and air."

Wolf Kahn, January 1, 2003

Her observation and translation of the natural world place her paintings in the stream of strong impressionism and expressionism that easily moves into the abstraction of the action painters. Working with oil on canvas or board, many of her paintings' unique rendering of light comes from a masterful application of gold or silver leafing; a technique acquired from many years of jewelry making.

Mason Lerner's exhibitions include: a solo exhibition at the de Young Museum in 2000 as part of its artist-in-residence program; a solo exhibition of over 60 paintings and mixed-media screens at the Los Gatos Museum of Art in 2003; a juried group exhibition at The San Diego Museum of Art in 1998; The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art in 1999 and The National Academy of Design, New York in 1994. Her work has also been on solo exhibition at Stanford University, Palm Beach Polo Club, American Express Headquarters in San Francisco and Warner Brothers Studios in Burbank, CA. She was nominated to the Institute of Arts and Letters in New York City in 1994 and the National Academy of Design in 2004.

Her collectors of paintings and jewelry include Salvador Dali, Hunter S. Thompson, Dizzy Gillespie, Howard Hawks, Howard Hesseman, Wavy Gravy, Dr. Alexander Theroux, David Berry, Albert Morse, Maxwell Meyers and the Papyrus Corporation.

“In the studio Kathy’s paintings evolve, as she experiments with the treatment of space and the relationship of forms to the surface of the canvas. She has extraordinary skills as a colorist and a gift for rendering atmospheric effects. Though her landscapes often approach abstraction, they draw the viewer into a recognizable, felt environment. The landscapes are meditative but invigorating, serene spaces captured in vibrant color.”

Ruth Keffer, Assistant Curator, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art

Dr. Alexander Theroux, author of *The Primary Colors and The Secondary Colors* wrote eloquently of Mason Lerner’s work in 2004:

When Gerard Manley Hopkins wrote in his splendid poem, “pied Beauty”
Of the spectral wonders of the versatile world,
The striped world, the speckled world,
The vast unending multicolored world of creation,
He might have just seen the paintings of Kathy Mason Lerner,
Whose work I first saw in 2003 at the Vermont Studio Center.

She inhabits that same eloquent world, walks familiarly along its ramparts to pause,
To notice, to breathe its air – but she is an original.
Borne up by her own sweep of landscape and it is in no other light,
That we see her.

I am delighted to see the extraordinary explosion of color that so epiphanizes her paintings
– color, color, color – work so masterfully organized to state and restate
That pied world, the nap of it, which multifarious creation.

The genius sees the pied aspect of this world, is ready for its shocks,
Its power, its variations, its virtues, its heart-stopping beauty.
Look complex and bewildering days,
Can still so eloquently midwife that majesty.
And be only astonished that someone in these complex and bewildering days
Can still so eloquently midwife that majesty.

Collectors

David Berry, Special Effects Artist
Salvador Dali, Artist
Dizzy Gillespie, Jazz Musician
Wavy Gravy, Cultural Icon
Howard Hawks, Film Writer and Director
Howard Hesseman, Actor
Wolf Kahn, Artist
Pete Sears, Keyboardist, Jefferson Starship
Dr. Alexander Theroux, Author, Harvard Professor
Hunter S. Thompson, Author
Albert Morse, Industrialist, Philanthropist
Maxwell Meyers, Philanthropist
Papyrus Corporation
Sharon Heights Country Club

David Biendny, Idig, Inc.
Ruth Brinker, Founder,
San Francisco’s Project Open Hand
Sam Dakin, Philanthropist
Mark Darley, Architectural Photographer
Joseph DiVincenzo, Portrait Artist
George Driver, Environmental Activist
Robin Gamblin, Gamblin Artist’s Colors
David Garrison, Netcom
Anna Hawken, Smith and Hawken
Kim Stringfellow, Assoc. Professor,
San Diego Univ., School of Art
Nicholas Ukrainiec, Curator,
Graduate Theological Union
Metalithics, Inc.

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Exhibitions

Solo, Juried and Ongoing

2007 Present	Noel-Baza Fine Art, San Diego, CA
2007 Present	Mars Gallery, Chicago, IL
2007 Present	James Harold Galleries, Tahoe City, CA
2007	Fine Art Etc., Sausalito, CA
2006 Present	La Fond Gallery, Pittsburgh, PA
2005-2006	ZYT Gallery, Solo Exhibition, Los Altos, CA
2004-2007	CFA Gallery, Solo Exhibition " <i>Witnesses of Beauty</i> " San Anselmo, CA
2004	Montclair Gallery, Solo Exhibition, " <i>Summer</i> ," Montclair, CA
2002-2003	Los Gatos Museum of Art, Solo Exhibition " <i>Without Boundaries</i> ," Los Gatos, CA
2001, 2002	Bolinas Gallery, Solo Exhibition, Bolinas, CA
2000	American Express Headquarters, Solo Exhibition, San Francisco, CA
2000	Marin Ballet, Solo Exhibition, Artist-in-residence, San Rafael, CA
2000	de Young Museum, Solo Exhibition, Artist-in-residence, San Francisco, CA
1999	San Francisco MoMA, " <i>Far Out, Bay Area Design 1967-1973</i> ," San Francisco, CA
1998	San Diego Museum of Art, Juried Exhibition " <i>The Best of California</i> " San Diego, CA
1998	Sebastopol Center for the Arts, Juried Exhibition, " <i>California Design</i> ," Sebastopol, CA
1997	Limn Gallery, San Francisco, CA
1995-1996	Neville Sargeant Gallery, Chicago, IL
1995	Studio Seven, Pleasanton, CA
1995	Palm Beach Polo Club, Chisolm Gallery, Palm Beach, FL
1994	Garzoli Gallery, San Rafael, CA
1994	The National Academy of Design, Juried Exhibition, New York, NY
1993-1999	The Galleria, San Francisco, CA
1993	Stanford University, Solo Exhibition, Palo Alto, CA
1992	Warner Brothers Studios, Group Exhibition, Burbank, CA
1992	American Express Headquarters, San Rafael, CA
1992	Bank of Marin Headquarters, Group Exhibition, San Rafael, CA
1990	Deborah Hudgins Gallery, Santa Fe, NM
1988	Smith and Hawken Headquarters, Solo Exhibition, " <i>Garden Paintings</i> ," Mill Valley, CA
1963-1965	San Francisco Juried Art Festival, San Francisco, CA

Grants and Honorariums

2002	National Academy of Design, Nomination, New York, NY
2002	Vermont Studio Center, Fellowship, Johnson, VT
1994	Institute of Arts and Letters, Nomination, New York, NY
1994	Mountain Island Ranch, Artist in residence, Glade Park, CO
1993	Santa Fe Institute of Fine Art, Diebenkorn Scholarship, Santa Fe, NM
1993	Gamblin Artist's Colors Scholarship, Portland, OR

Education

1993	Wolf Kahn Master Class, Plein-air Oils, Santa Fe Institute of Fine Art, Santa Fe, NM
1991-1993	Hiro Sakai, Sumi Master of Japanese ink Brush Painting, San Rafael, CA
1979-1986	Barbara Pierce, Oil Painting, Old Masters through 20 th Century, Marin, CA
1966-1968	San Francisco State University, Sculpture, Drawing, San Francisco, CA
1964-1967	San Francisco Art Institute, Painting, San Francisco, CA
1961-1967	Apprentice to S. Paul Gee, Lost Wax Jewelry, San Francisco, CA
1960-1961	UCLA, Art History, Los Angeles, CA