

# MARY STEFFEN

*fine artist*

## About the Artist

I graduated from Parsons School of Design in 1990, where I studied in New York, Paris, and Italy. As a student of both illustration and fine arts, I gained an understanding of color, form, and design. Painting outdoors along the Seine, in the fields of Italy, and within the French countryside, I gained a strong appreciation of various landscapes. The colors, light, weather, land formations, plant life, and movement of the sky inspired my work.

Prior to attending Parsons I was an art director, and graphic designer. A strong sense of design aids me in developing paintings with movement, and creative forms. Graphic design experience has been an important influence upon my works.

Upon graduating from Parsons I embarked on a Master of Arts in painting from Montclair State University, which I completed in 1995. During my studies at Montclair I had two very successful exhibitions at the University, and was awarded second place at their bi-annual Westbeth exhibition. This exhibition contains a high caliber of work from both students, and alumni. The senior thesis exhibition included eight of my paintings, sharing the exhibition with four of my peers. Also, during my studies I participated in the annual Binney and Smith fine arts competition. This competition draws entrants from graduate programs in the United States, Mexico, and Great Britain. I was awarded the first place purchase award. The painting was exhibited at the American Council for the Arts in New York. It is now on display at the headquarters of Binney and Smith as part of their permanent collection.

I am currently a member of the National Association of Women Artists. Founded in 1889, N.A.W.A. is the oldest professional women's fine arts organization in the United States, continually providing a forum for women artists to share ideas and exhibit their work. I am also a member of the Lancaster County Art Association of Strasburg, PA.

I was a member of the New Art Group of Watchung, New Jersey, and exhibited extensively with other group members.

Additionally, I attended Fairleigh Dickinson University where I graduated with a Master's Degree in Corporate Communications. My studies centered upon logo design, brand management, and corporate identity. I graduated with honors in 2002.

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## Artist's Statement

Landscape painting is an observation. One usually passes through the landscape without recognizing its' uniqueness, emotion, imagination, or life. Traveling along our chosen path every day, taking what we see for granted. One fails to realize that these images will become important elements in our memories.

Reflecting upon a landscape that I have recently passed through, or recalling one from childhood, brings me images to paint. The colors and shapes are strong, yet often fragmented images in my mind. Particularly vivid are scenes observed while traveling in a car, train, or bus. These images become snapshots that blend together to create one total picture. The "snapshots" when melded together may tell a story, create a mood, or recall a memory.

Many of the final paintings result from sketches made while riding through the landscape. The motion forces me to draw quickly, without apprehension. The sketches are fresh and filled with movement.

In the final paintings I take the landscape to extremes in both color and form. I search for a sense of place, how I relate to it, and the emotions and memories which it evokes. I learn to explore my place in the world; where I have been, and where I want to go, both physically and emotionally.

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