



Q&A with Award Winner H.K. Anne

📁 Artist Interviews 🕒 November 20, 2013

🖼️ large works show, oil, Q&A



Wetlands, Silver Lake, Haymarket, VA, oil on canvas, by H.K. Anne

If you've been to The Art League Gallery this month, you remember seeing the painting above. H.K. Anne paints large, and this triptych easily fit the criteria for "Large Works" at 5 feet tall by 12 feet wide. *Wetlands, Silver Lake, Haymarket, VA* was recognized with the Cora Rupp Award for best in show, and you can see it in person through December 2. We asked the artist to tell us more about large canvasses, her art career, and her love of paint. It's in our Q&A, below.

Why are you a painter?

H.K. Anne: I love paint. I love drawing with the charcoal on the stained canvas. The colors excite me. When I mix the pigment and mixing medium together to a soupy consistency, but with some body, and mop it on the canvas, I love it!

Why landscape? What's your goal with any particular landscape?

I have always been all over the map with the subject matter. In 2005, I returned to school for a MFA in Painting at Western Connecticut State University. I had a lot of success in plein air painting there. When in the studio, Professor John Wallace encouraged me to paint large canvasses. Professor Margaret Grimes suggested that we landscape artists were in the lineage of the Hudson River Artists of the nineteenth century. It took me a while to associate myself with these American landscape artists, but I have now.

Many of the Hudson River artists' paintings were panoramas of the landscape used as a metaphor for the possibilities of this new country. Most of my landscapes are up close and complicated, which I feel reflects our time in history. We are confronted with so much information, locally, nationally and internationally.

"You enter the forest at the darkest point, where there is no path. Where there is a way or path, it is someone else's path. You are not on your own path. If you follow someone else's way you are not going to realize your potential." — Joseph Campbell, The Heroes Journey

I invite viewers to journey through my landscapes finding their own paths. My paintings have a lot of energy and sometimes one has to step back to take it all in. Just as in life, sometimes you have to take yourself out of the picture. Take the long view before you engage again.

I hope viewers enjoy the journey.



Detail from the painting's center panel.

What's the story behind the wetlands in the painting? Are all your paintings this large? What makes the large size work for this one?

I work from photographs which I take (still using my 35 mm 800 film). I kept reading about Silver Lake near me here in Haymarket, Virginia, and wanted to take some fall photos. In October, 2012, I woke up to the radio which was reporting that Hurricane Sandy was coming through that day. I thought I want to get to Silver Lake before all the leaves are blown off the trees. When I arrived, there were no trees...at least not many. The landscape was an open field, water, high grasses, deer droppings, light rain, wind and a threatening dark sky. I felt like I could have used an orange jacket. The area was wide open. I was the only person around.

I take many photos whenever I go to an area. I want to get a real feel for the place. When I received my photos (4" × 6"), I was very pleased with

the results. I did a series of Silver Lake paintings — 36×36 , 30×40 , 36×48 , 48×60 — and then decided to do the triptych to give the viewer the feeling I had when I was out there. I think the 60×144 conveys it well.

I do paint large canvasses (60×48 , 48×48 , 40×30 , etc.). My daughter encourages me to paint 30×40 , so that I can get them in my car. By the way, if anyone would like to see more of this series, they are available in Studio 512 at the Workhouse Arts Center in Lorton, Virginia. (H.K. Anne's website)

When did you know you wanted to be an artist? Any advice to an artist just starting out?

I do not know when I wanted to be an artist. I could draw as a child. Took my first oil painting class at eighteen. More classes at John Herron Art School in Indianapolis, Indiana, and the Indianapolis Art League. Was a docent for fifteen years at the Indianapolis Museum of Art. Went to Sarah Lawrence College in the 90s, where my focus was on nineteenth century European art history and studio arts. Back to school in 2005 for a MFA in Painting at Western Connecticut State University. Moved to Virginia in 2008 and was fortunately juried into the Workhouse Arts Center in Lorton, Virginia, where I have a studio. I always kept my fingers in art, and it came together for me.



H.K. Anne's studio

I would advise an artist starting out to take all the art history available to them, any studio art (they feed on each other), and never throw anything out. You never know when you will need to put a portfolio together.

Are there any artists in particular who have influenced you?

Professor John Wallace, WCSU, who encouraged me to paint large.

Professor Margaret Grimes, WCSU, who suggested that we are in the lineage of the Hudson River School. Professor Marjorie Portnow, WCSU, for her great critiques and en plein air instruction.

I reference Vincent Van Gogh for his unusual choices of color (and I just like to read about him).

When I had a residency at Vermont Studio School, Johnson, Vermont, the artist critiquing my work suggested that I take a look at Joan Mitchell's paintings. I have been reading and studying her work. I think she has more "air" in her paintings than I do. But I will continue.

What are you working on now?

In early November I visited River Bend Park and Great Falls National Park to take some fall pictures. I have six 48 × 48 canvasses in my studio and four 60 × 108 canvasses in my garage. I am doing a series of Great Falls, Virginia landscapes.