

## Through Kate Thayer's Eyes Flat Rock Together 8.14.22

When Flat Rock artist Kate Thayer thinks about her painting, she is always mindful of a favorite quote from Andrew Wyeth:

“I can't work completely out of my imagination. I must put my foot in a bit of truth; and then I can fly free.” — Andrew Wyeth

For Kate, that foot in a bit of truth involves spending time in the solitude of the woods of western North Carolina. It is in those woods that she encounters the muse that inspires her captivating landscapes.

Kate's paintings are her way of interpreting what she sees and feels when she is immersed in the natural world. “I like to go when there's not a lot of people and walk very slowly and just listen and look and think about the colors,” she explains. Having internalized those feelings she returns to her sun-lit studio and paints - again in silence - to capture on canvas all that she has seen and felt.

After 30 years of painting, Kate Thayer has evolved into an award-winning painter and is a featured artist at The Gallery at Flat Rock. She is best known for her captivating, almost dream-like paintings of North Carolina mountain scenes. “Nature is life-giving,” she says. “We need to



connect with nature to enrich our souls. Painting the magnificent colors within the seasons in these western North Carolina mountains connects me to these special places.”

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“There Is Nothing More Challenging As A Painter Of Nature Than To Capture Her Moods, Her Forms And Colors, And To Translate What I See And Feel Into A Painting. I Relish The Ever-Changing Real Thing.” *Life Giving* **By Kate Thayer**

Kate grew up near Milwaukee, Wisconsin in a community very different from her current North Carolina home. An only child, she played outside with friends a lot but she was a city kid who didn't know about hiking or camping. It wasn't until she and her late husband, Lee, moved from Wisconsin to North Carolina that Kate began to more fully explore her relationship with the natural world.

The move to North Carolina spurred an urge to create and Kate explored a number of creative outlets before settling on her life as a painter. She expressed her creative side through intricately knitted designs, culinary artistry, and garden design.

The cooking, knitting, and gardening were never quite right, however, and Kate decided to take her first painting class in 1995. It was then that she discovered her artistic home and she's been painting ever since. "My commitment to my art was accidental as if it met me in mid-life after gardening, knitting, and flower arranging. These were all about textures and colors, and they all had the same intent: to create sensory and spiritual experiences that are personal, provocative, and life-enriching."

Kate started with pastels and loved the beautiful colors arrayed across her palette. For her, pastels were like knitting, a matter of working with the colors given to you. But she was looking for more and began to experiment with oils that allowed her to mix and create her own colors - colors that she would see during her hikes but which couldn't always be replicated with the fixed colors of pastels. "When I went to oils, I found that mixing the colors is very much like cooking - combining ingredients to get the perfect flavor of color."



“I Want Viewers To Feel What I Experience When Painting A Scene. I Want To Rekindle The Spirit And The Sense Of Wonder We All Have When We Witness Nature’s Sorcery.” *Touching Almost* **By Kate Thayer**

The process of mixing oil paints to create unique colors takes Kate back to her childhood and memories of her mother. “My mom always brought flowers into the home - even if it was from the roadside. There were always vibrant colors in our house.” Kate’s mother was also a great

cook. “All that process of mixing the foods and the colors translated later when I found painting.”

Kate holds degrees from Marquette University and the University of Wisconsin but she says that her “classroom” has been the major galleries and museums around the world. She paints scenes — mountains, rivers, woods—that are at the same time ordinary and enchanting, reminding the viewer to slow down and appreciate all that is around us. “My work is intended to cast an enchanting spell on the imagination of viewers by seeing the beauty of nature through my eyes.”

Kate uses a very distinctive layering process of applying oil paints with a selection of palette knives. Working in her Flat Rock home studio which backs up to the property of the Carl Sandburg Historic Home Site, she will add layers upon layers that give each work a sense of depth and create a subtle sense of movement in the natural settings she loves to capture.

The layering process also allows each work to evolve as she paints. “When I return to an unfinished painting, it becomes a different painting filled with new ideas, colors, and marks. After looking into my paintings, the viewer may see the trees and rivers in a way they have not seen them before.”

Kate says that she is often looking at trees as they change, over the course of a day or multiple seasons. “My technique is to create colors and textures with oils that represent the movement and vitality within the forests through all the seasons.”



“I Try To Capture Nature’s Ways. Her Beauty, Power, Mysteries, And All The Nuances Therein. Painting The Landscape Connects Me To The Vitality Of Nature And Enriches My Soul. It Is My Way Of Preserving The Places That Called To Me To Be Painted As I See Them.” *Kaleidoscope*  
**By Kate Thayer**

As Kate walks up the steps to her mountain studio a transformation occurs. “I become a painter. I look at my paints and something makes me want to start mixing the paints to see what will happen when I add certain colors in certain places.” In a real sense, Kate Thayer finds herself and

a sense of place when working in her silent sunshine-infused studio. “My happiness is coming from the inside out in the form of experimenting with my painting.”

Kate’s art is on exhibition locally at The Gallery at Flat Rock. Gallery owner, Suzanne Camarata, is particularly drawn to the emotional response the paintings can elicit in the viewer. “Seeing a painting by Kate Thayer is like reliving a walk through your favorite spots in the forest. Light dances through the canvas, and you can just feel the texture of the trees. This woman has a deep reverence for nature. We are so pleased to represent an artist with such a generous soul.”

Ultimately, Kate Thayer believes that beauty cannot be explained. It has to be experienced. And thanks to her exceptional skills as an artist, those of us fortunate enough to see her work in person have that opportunity with every painting she creates.

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You can see Kate’s art in person at [The Gallery at Flat Rock](#) and online at [katethayer.com](http://katethayer.com).