

Artist profile; Kerry Stoker

Former teacher Kerry was always destined to become a painter and is relishing every moment since becoming a full time artist.

by Haigh Simpson
Editor

From her earliest memories Kerry knew painting was her calling. With a brush in her hand she felt at one with the world and never questioned her fate or considered any other career option. She won every art competition, both local and national, whilst at school and was awarded a prestigious Art History prize.

Kerry graduated with a BA Honours in Fine Art from Reading University where she was a pupil of Sir Terry Frost and then, after obtaining a PGCE, became Head of Art at Rockport Preparatory School in Northern Ireland.

Settling in Yorkshire in 1987, after having lived there for some years

previously, she married, brought up her two children and taught at Westville House School in Ilkley. Then, after ten years as Art Co-ordinator there, Kerry retired from teaching and now paints full-time in her studio in Ilkley.

She has enjoyed success with the Society of Women Artists in London, with the Ilkley Art Trail, the Saltaire Arts Trail and Art for Youth, London, Sheffield and North. She has exhibited widely at galleries across the UK and paints commissions for private clients.

Kerry has always painted but the opportunity to paint full time is relatively recent and she is embarking on this life enhancing future with relish. A Leeds gallery has shown interest in exhibiting Kerry's work in 2014 and there are very exciting times ahead.



Kerry fell in love with the local landscape on her first visit to Ilkley

Photo courtesy of Kerry Stoker

Q and A

How would you describe what you do? I am a painter and enjoy the challenge of producing different styles of art for different purposes, keeping my work vibrant and fresh. My abstract paintings and contemporary landscapes are made by dripping, splashing and applying paint onto canvas and watching how the colours mix and merge. Conversely, many of my garden and landscape paintings are created from observation, from beautiful corners of my garden, hedgerows or places I have visited. Some interpretations are more of an abstracted, softened version of reality to depict, for example, the drowsy feel of a summer's day rather than an exact rendering of what is actually there.

What inspires and influences the work you do? Anything and everything has the potential to inspire me, from a beautiful day walking on the moors or by the sea, nature's colours, shapes and moods, another artist's work, travelling to far off lands, something I have read or a comment, or a laugh or phrase overheard. Memories and experiences inform my paintings, each is a gently evolving creation. Sometimes they are completely imaginary, sometimes based loosely on a memory or an image of somewhere I have been, others depict exactly that which is in



Dappled shade (acrylic on canvas).

Photo courtesy of Kerry Stoker

front of me if I find it visually interesting.

What mediums do you work with? I paint mainly in acrylics combined with household paints, but have recently worked in oils. I also use oil pastel and watercolour.

What is your relationship with Ilkley? The moment I set foot in Ilkley many years ago I fell in love with the place and felt an immediate connection, it was home. I have lived here or in villages nearby since 1987 and have settled in Ilkley itself for the last 13 years and intend to stay.

Why do you think the area is such a haven for artists and creative types? Ilkley is a magical, peaceful and stunningly beautiful place. I have travelled widely and there is nothing like coming home over the moors and seeing Ilkley nestled in the valley below. It provides inspiration for everyone I know including non-artistic types.

When do you do most of your work? I love the quiet and light of early mornings but will quite happily work for 14 or more hours a day when I have the opportunity.