

KAREN THOMSON

Passages

New Paintings

September 13 — October 18, 2025



*Art is such a relief to us because, actually, it's the real world — it's the reality that we understand on a deeper level... Life has an inside as well as an outside, and at the present, the outside of life is very well catered for, and the inside of life not at all... We can go back to books or pictures or music, film, theater, and we can find there both some release and some relief for our inner life, the place where we actually live, the place where we spend so much time.*¹

- Jeanette Winterson

¹ <https://www.edbookfest.co.uk/media-gallery/item/jeanette-winterson, 2010>

Why does anyone paint an image? I've been painting landscapes for most of my life: water in all its forms – mist, lakes, rivers, oceans – and land – mountains, shorelines, trees, plants. Some of the attraction lies in the familiarity of a place (Lake MacDonald, Qc. for example) and my sense of wonder at its changing beauty. The spectacular California coast near Half Moon Bay and Mendocino resembles Charlevoix in a way, but the scale is different. But whether in Quebec or California, I respond emotionally to those landscapes. Natural elements take on human characteristics. Trees create a barrier to be crossed before reaching a more peaceful expanse as seen in ***Through the Woods*** (p. 15) or ***Threshold*** (pp. 18-19) for instance. Or the approaching waves of the Pacific Ocean advance to embrace and be embraced.

In some paintings, the reflections of sky and water are every shade of grey and hopefully reflect a more pensive state of mind. In ***Fugue*** (p. 17), it was the resilience of the fragile bushes growing up through the spring floods in Lac Saint-Louis near my home in Montreal. In other works, particularly those of sunsets at Lake MacDonald, I've tried to capture a jewel-like quality through the choice of palette, composition and viscosity of paint. My night scenes emerged from a desire to paint subjects so dark that the viewer has to look closely to make out the image (e.g., the trees on either side of ***1 a.m., the Lake***, p. 13 and ***Nocturne***, p. 25). All these images relate to memory. By placing marks in oil into or onto hot wax that somehow become equivalents of nature's textures and light, I am trying to record a moment in a vast continuum of time. I never tire of it – there's always something new to see. In an increasingly troubled world, beautiful land and waterscapes can bring solace and a sense of resilience, reminding us of the enduring importance of nature in our lives.

Karen Thomson

Karen Thomson was born in 1953 in Montreal, Quebec. Growing up, she frequently visited the shores of Lake MacDonald, Quebec, a place that became a major source of inspiration. Thomson writes, “Perhaps it is the ancient rock and shifting light that attract me to finding a way, through painting, layering with beeswax, engraving, scraping and painting again to record the importance of this place.”

Karen Thomson obtained an Honours Bachelor of Arts in Visual Arts and French from the University of Western Ontario, a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Concordia University and a Master’s Degree from the University of Toronto. At the University of Western Ontario, Thomson studied with Paterson Ewen, her painting professor. His well-established artistic practice greatly influenced Thomson’s style. Her technique combines the reworking of the surface, such as engraving and scraping; and the layering of materials, such as paint and beeswax.

Karen Thomson’s work can be found in many private and public collections in Canada, the United States, England and France. She lives and works in Montreal and at Lake MacDonald, Quebec, and is represented exclusively by Mira Godard Gallery.

Colour Plates

Markers (West Coast)
2025
oil and beeswax on panel
8 x 12 inches



A Wish
2025
oil and beeswax on panel
14 x 11 inches



Summer Afternoon, The Lake
2024
oil and beeswax on panel
18 x 26 inches



1 a.m., the Lake
2024
oil and beeswax on panel
12 x 12 inches



Through the Woods
2025
oil and beeswax on panel
20 x 24 inches



Fugue
2024 - 2025
oil and beeswax on panel
30 x 48 inches



Threshold
2025
oil and beeswax on panel
40 x 60 inches



Frontière
2025
oil and beeswax on panel
30 x 40 inches



Moon Echo
2024 - 2025
oil and beeswax on panel
10 x 8 inches



Nocturne
2025
oil and beeswax on panel
40 x 30 inches

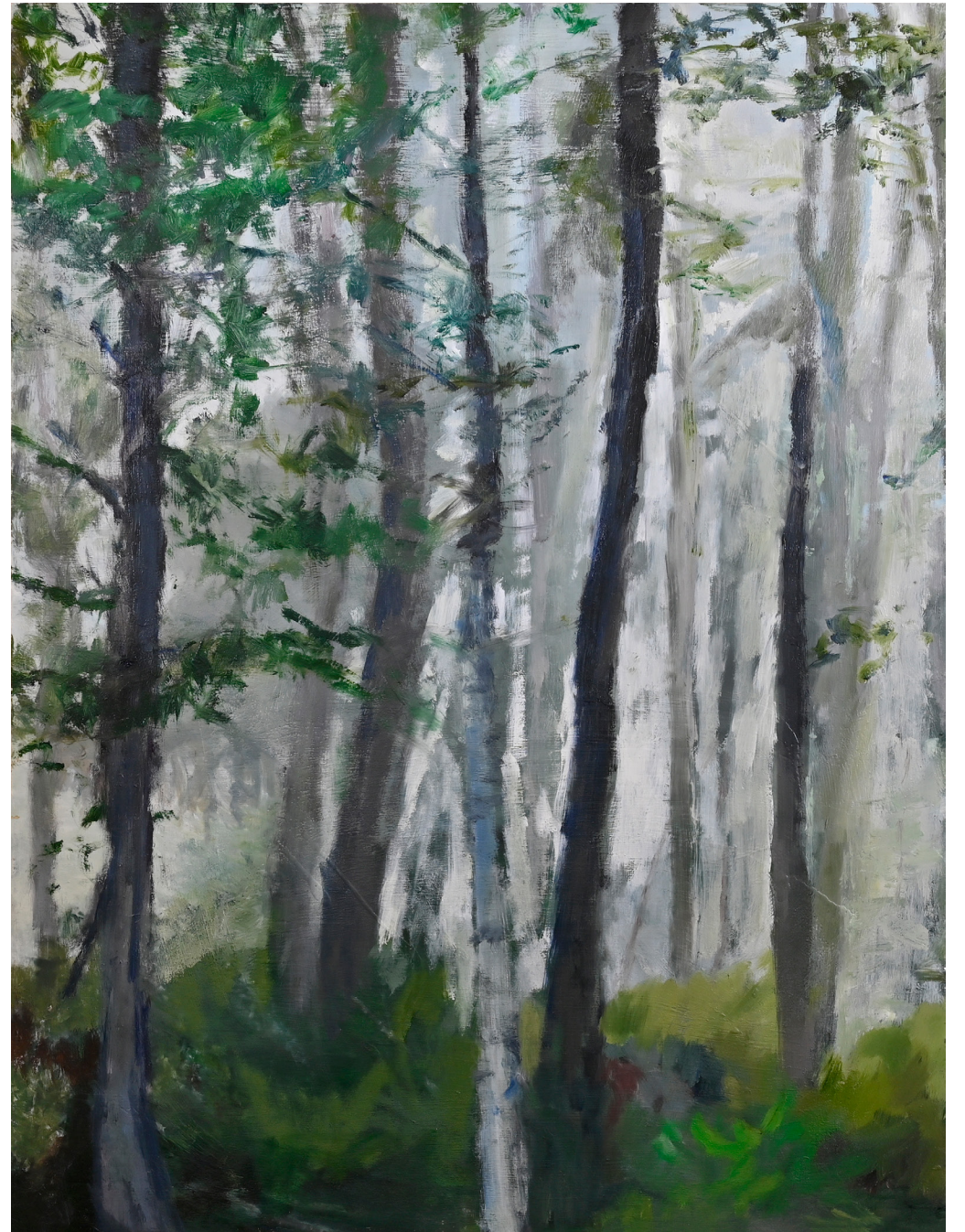


Passage

2025

oil and beeswax on panel

48 x 36 inches



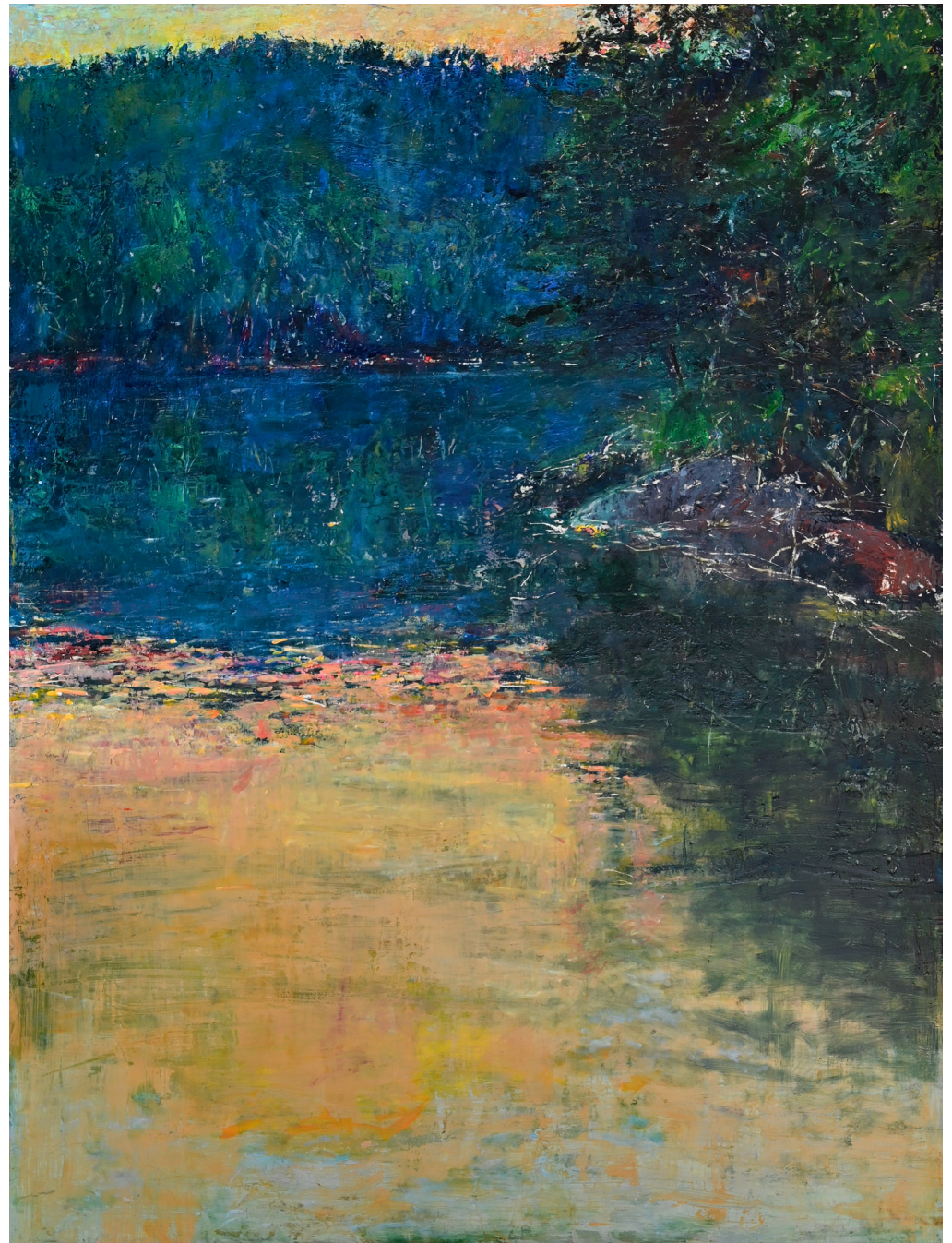
An Opening
2025
oil and beeswax on panel
48 x 60 inches



West Coast
2024
oil and beeswax on panel
48 x 60 inches



Evening Reflections, Lake MacDonald
2023
oil and beeswax on panel
48 x 36 inches



Lake MacDonald, Reflections
2023
oil and beeswax on panel
36 x 48 inches



After it Rained
2023
acrylic, oil and beeswax on panel
36 x 48 inches



Early Morning
2023
oil and beeswax on panel
24 x 29 3/4 inches



La Malbaie
2025
oil and beeswax on panel
36 x 60 inches



Three Trees
2025
oil and beeswax on panel
18 x 26 inches



After the Sound
2025
oil on paper
22 x 30 inches



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Passage 2025
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Summer Afternoon, The Lake 2024
oil and beeswax on panel 18 x 26 inches

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Three Trees 2025
oil and beeswax on panel 18 x 26 inches

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Threshold 2025
oil and beeswax on panel 40 x 60 inches

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Through the Woods 2025
oil and beeswax on panel 20 x 24 inches

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West Coast 2024
oil and beeswax on panel 48 x 60 inches

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Photography:

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