

CAT TESLA

artist statement

My work includes both ethereal landscapes and abstract designs. The subjects I choose to paint are organic, either originating from Mother Nature, or inspired by her. Mixing organic forms against line and space fascinate and motivate me. My artwork provides the viewer a bold graphic element from a distance, but up close they are rewarded with rich organic details and texture.

College was a toss-up between art and science. I began with the latter and obtained a Master's Degree in Human Genetics. For 20 years I worked at Emory University seeing patients in genetic clinics. Averaging 500 patients a year, I had a range of experiences: telling someone the child they were carrying had anencephaly (lack of skull formation at the back of the head) and would not live, telling someone they inherited the BRCA1 gene and had a very high risk of breast cancer, or telling someone their 4 year-old child who was not developing properly because they had an inherited neurodegenerative disease – eventually got to me. Certainly there was a lot of good news to parlay as well.



Because of the stress, I turned to yoga, hiking, and mindful meditation. My brain found peace in nature. Scientists hypothesize that being in nature allows the prefrontal cortex, the brain's command center, to dial down and rest, like an overused muscle. In fact, after just a 3 day camping trip, you can increase your creative problem solving by 50 percent. I studied art in the evenings after genetics clinic – obtaining a degree in graphic design, followed by studies/residencies with Nicholas Wilton and Steve Aimone. I was inspired to put nature to canvas – the shapes, colors, and feelings. I went part-time in genetics, and then traded genetic counseling for a full-time art career.

My paintings are abstracted nature-scapes created using wax crayon, acrylic, inks, oil pastel, graphite, & custom glazes on canvas/wood. Beginning with an automatic drawing in graphite and wax crayon, translucent layers are applied, followed by more mark making & more layers. Various mediums are utilized to build the surface. The resulting smaller paintings are windows looking outward, while the larger paintings are abstract nature-scapes you can walk right into.

In our minds we know what a hike looks like, or a flower shop, a meadow, or a waterfall. *But what do they feel like?* That's what I try to convey in my painting. 2018 is my 21st year as an international artist.

Everyone has gifts from the Creator. I believe it is the duty of each to share our gifts with the planet. My paintings are a brave look inward – revealing what lies beneath both literally and spiritually. Yogi's call it the "divine flame" – the spark that motivates you in life. In Buddha's words, "Look within, thou art the Buddha", while Jesus taught us that "The kingdom of heaven is within you". For me, painting is the most life affirming thing to do.