

# VERA KISSELEVA

## BIOGRAPHY

The vast, enticing Canadian landscape and, more generally, nature's dazzling colors serve as painter Vera Kisseleva's primary inspirations. A native of Russia now based in rural Ontario, Vera has always been drawn to "the great outdoors" and she has her fill, living amongst endless corn and wheat fields, along with parks and lakes, where she and her family spend much time hiking, cycling, and kayaking—all of which constantly fuel her artistic inspiration. Indeed, it's no exaggeration to say that she "lives her art."

Vera studied fine arts and applied arts in college and worked for years as a graphic designer and commercial artist. Moving to Canada, though, and rediscovering nature's vibrancy on such an immense scale drew her to painting, which she immediately saw as the ideal means for conveying the visual splendor of her new home.

Vera's work, while influenced by Impressionism, combines a universalist appreciation of the landscape as artistic subject with more local, immediate concerns. From one piece to the next, though, what emerges is her individual perspective—her singular eye—capturing her *response* to this all-encompassing environment rather than simply recording her surroundings with mechanical precision. Nature's essence, so to speak, is not only how it looks—its visual imprint, the spaces it fills (or leaves empty)—but its dynamics: the infinite ways it changes and renders every moment both absolutely unique and utterly familiar. Vera's work emerges from such moments, ultimately celebrating and expanding them.

"In my paintings, I try to express something that catches my eye at a specific point in time," says Vera. "There are dramatic moments happening constantly in nature, which are infinitely varied not only visually, but also emotionally. It's this personal impact—between what I see and how I feel—that's really at the core of my work."

Vera's bold colors, thick brush strokes, and the quick pace at which she works are the means through which she is able to deftly capture and express some of the many sublime moments she experiences. She often does pencil and watercolor sketches outdoors—*en plein air*; and then uses these sketches and/or reference photos to make her finished pieces on canvas with oil or acrylic paint.

Fundamental to Vera's work is a paradox, her embrace of which clearly elevates her art beyond the norm: nature changes by the second, and painting can reveal such changes and sensitize viewers to the inherent wonder of the natural world's constant flux; yet it also preserves the *memory of the emotions* associated with these changes—which, in our mind, is usually, interchangeable with nature itself.