



## Karen Richardson: Artist and Author

*By Jonathan van Bilsen*

Some artists in Durham Region have gone on to become nationally and in some cases, internationally famous. We are fortunate to have so many talented individuals within our midst and one, whom I have had the pleasure of knowing for many years, is Karen Richardson. For the last 30 years Karen has captivated and challenged the realms of watercolour painting.

Karen started her art career while moonlighting from her day job, many years ago, mostly as a result of her need to create, and her love of travelling. She still journeys a great deal, and constantly photographs objects, landscapes and seascapes, with the intent of turning them into beautiful watercolours.

Her travels take her throughout North America, including the Northwest Territories, the American Southwest and Newfoundland, to note a few. "It is not uncommon for me to head out for four or five weeks at a time, allowing me to explore and capture the beauty of this great continent," she explains.

Karen was born in Montreal, but grew up in Chalk River, known to most of us as 'Group of Seven' country. No doubt this upbringing has greatly contributed to her love of the outdoors and her passion to paint. Her specialty is capturing the tantalizing serenity of nature, but honing in on the elements of a particular scene. Most of her work is close up, focussing on the minute details. She has also made quite a name for herself in the architectural home genre, working on either commissions or just fulfilling her passion for creating.

Karen has been very successful in her career as an artist, and completes between 20 and 30 pieces a year. Her sales outlets consist of galleries and art tours. There are very few venues in Southern Ontario which are not connected to Karen Richardson.

As if constantly creating new pieces of art is not time consuming enough, Karen has taken upon herself to share her expertise and knowledge with others. Every fall she hosts workshops, which teach people all aspects of her craft, from fundamental basics through to finished masterpieces. Most of her attendees are Zoomers who have time on their hands, and have always wanted to dabble in watercolour. "I am feverishly trying to finish my new studio for my fall workshops," she explained, but as I looked around I was under the impression it was already complete. Karen's dedication to perfection and her attention to details, permeate beyond the canvas

# ARTISTS AND THEIR ART



into her everyday style of life.

For many years Karen has been answering hundreds of questions about watercolour painting, and finally came up with the idea of creating a book. "It [the book] evolved from the classes I teach. Everyone, no matter how seasoned they are, has difficulty with one aspect of art, or another," Karen explained. "I started brainstorming and decided to write down the answers I have been giving verbally to people for years."

The book, "Watercolour Toolbox: Essentials for Painting Success," is a self-help book that is structured in a 'common-sense' format. The table of contents is nothing short of a list of challenges constantly faced by artists. It then goes on to address the issues throughout the book. I did question if there were a market for this type of book, but after learning that sales have gone through the roof, both domestically and world-wide, and the fact that the book is in the midst of another reprint, cautioned me to subdue my query.

I mentioned earlier there are many talented artists in our midst, and the opportunity to meet them is one I am very grateful for. To find out more about Karen Richardson, contact her website at [karenrichardson.ca](http://karenrichardson.ca).

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