

HEATHER MEHRA-PEDERSEN

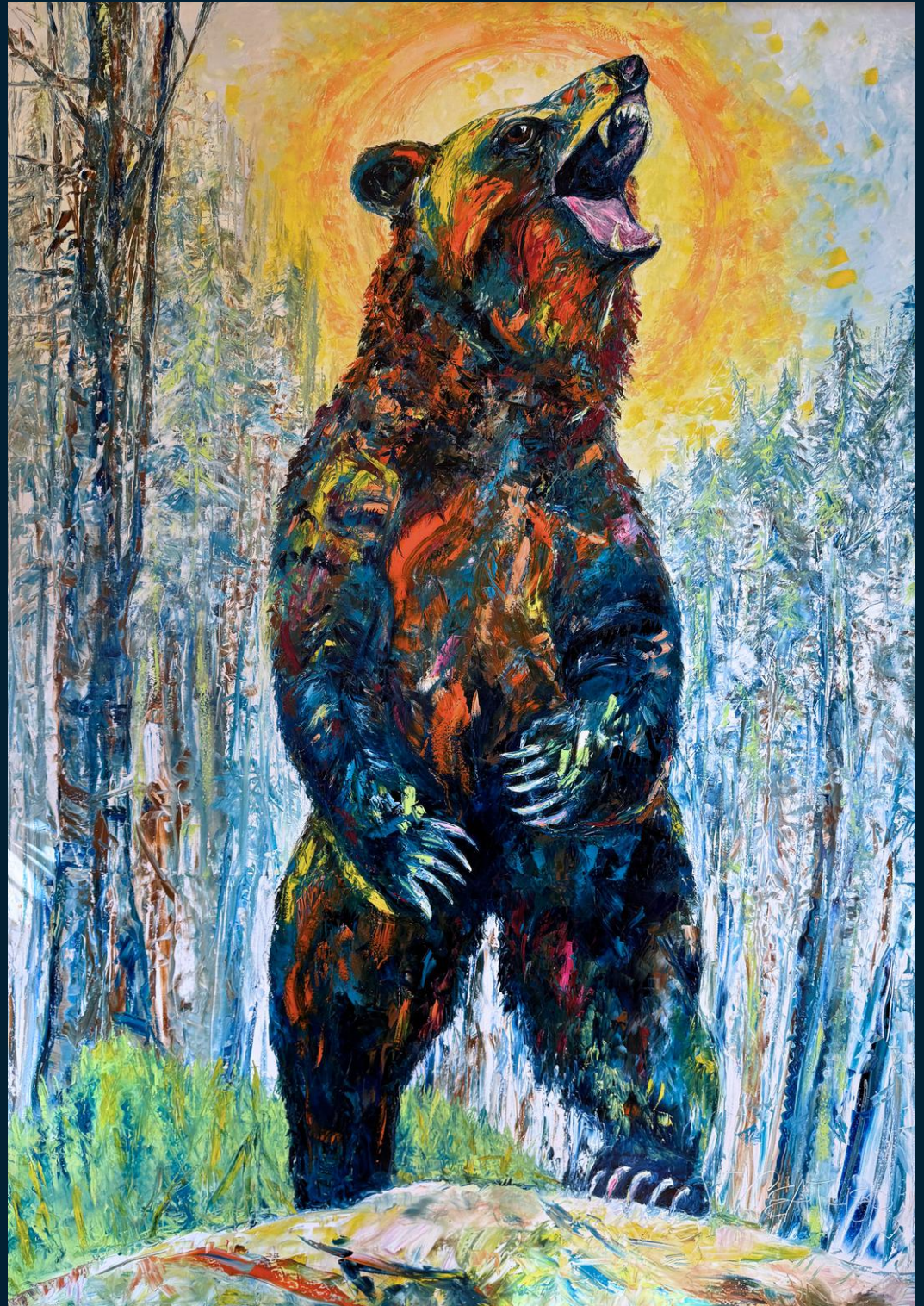
PALETTE KNIFE ARTIST

WILD. FREE. UNTAMED COLOR.

Griz Almighty

Medium & Size: Oil on Canvas, 66"w × 90"h

Location/Inspiration: North Idaho





ABOUT ME

I never liked painting inside the lines. I use large knives, paint fast, and layer until the canvas sings. I don't plan too much—just respond. I let color lead and texture follow. Some artists paint stillness. I paint stormlight. Sunbursts. Moose at dusk. Things moving toward something.

I am a mother, a mountain girl, a believer, and someone who has known heartbreak.

Painting is how I pray, praise and process.

“My talent and passion are gifts from God. I’m simply a tool in His hand.” —Heather Mehra-Pedersen

More about the Artist...



She began painting...

Heather began painting at 14, first picking up watercolor—a medium her artist mother called “the most unforgiving”—to learn patience. Over the years, her creative path wove through design and architecture before she returned to fine art, trading fine strokes for bold, textured swipes with a palette knife once her children left the nest. Her work straddles Impressionism and Expressionism, blending abstract energy with realistic form. Drawn to nature as her muse—“the most forgiving and beautiful thing I know”—Heather creates richly colored, large-scale paintings full of movement, texture, and emotional depth. Deeply inspired by Leonid Afremov, her vibrant palette-knife style invites the viewer not just to look, but to feel and enter the scene.

Her background...

Heather’s background lies primarily in the creative arts, marketing, and business. Formally educated with degrees in Marketing and Fine Arts from Lehigh University, Heather initially followed her East Indian father’s advice to prioritize business over art. Yet artistic excellence runs deep in her lineage—her mother, an alumna of the esteemed Philadelphia School of Art, and her grandparents were both painters. While she has studied the works of French and American Impressionists, Heather draws her strongest inspiration from the late Russian impressionist Leonid Afremov, particularly in palette knife technique and bold use of color. Her large-scale, vibrant paintings reflect both her artistic heritage and her global travel experiences.

A true creative...

When not painting, Heather is also a creative art junkie, delighting in transforming discarded items into treasures using unconventional methods, parts, and pieces she finds in abandoned ranches and junkyards. She aims to appreciate the beauty of nature through upcycling, taking inspiration from wildlife, travels, and everyday objects. Occasionally, she comes across old paintings in fantastic antique frames and paints over the pre-framed canvases. Heather signs her artwork using only her first name, a tribute to the artists who have influenced her. Incorporating a cross in the first stroke of the letter 'H' symbolizes Jesus Christ the ultimate Creator, while the curvy 'E's are reminiscent of her mother's handwriting, honoring her inherited artistic genes.

Carved in Color

The surface comes alive with thick, expressive swipes of impasto, where the palette knife leaves behind ridges and valleys of color. Built in layers, the texture adds movement you can almost feel—like frozen motion captured in paint.



Festive Harbor

Medium & Size: Oil on Canvas, 30"w × 50"h

Location/Inspiration: Lake Pend Oreille, Sandpoint, ID



Mountain Magic

Medium & Size: Oil on Canvas, 16"w × 20"h

Location/Inspiration: Bald and Schweitzer Mountain (Sun Valley and Sandpoint, ID)



The Wild Ones: A Triptych of Untamed Spirit



Griz Almighty. Rainbow's End. Mighty Moose.

These three paintings form a fierce and reverent ode to the wild—majestic animals rendered in thick, fast strokes and unapologetic color. The moose stands grounded and powerful, keeper of the quiet forest. The grizzly commands the canvas like a storm on legs, raw and sacred. And the eagle, caught mid-dive in a burst of prismatic light, reminds us to rise. Together, they represent strength, presence, and the freedom that still lives in the untamed corners of the world—and within us.

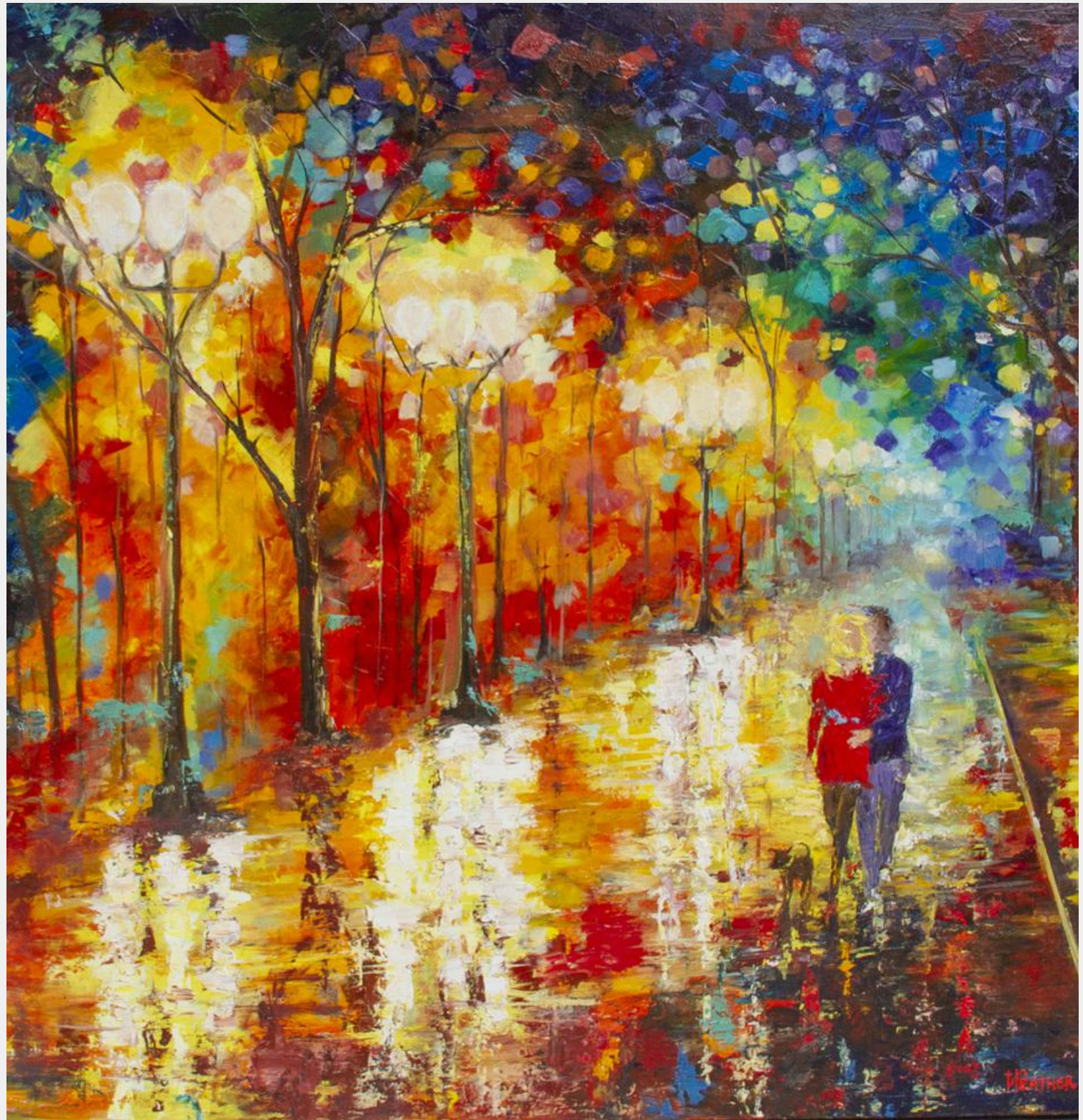
Pictured left to right:

Oil on canvas
66"w x 90"h

Griz Almighty
Rainbow's End
Mighty Moose

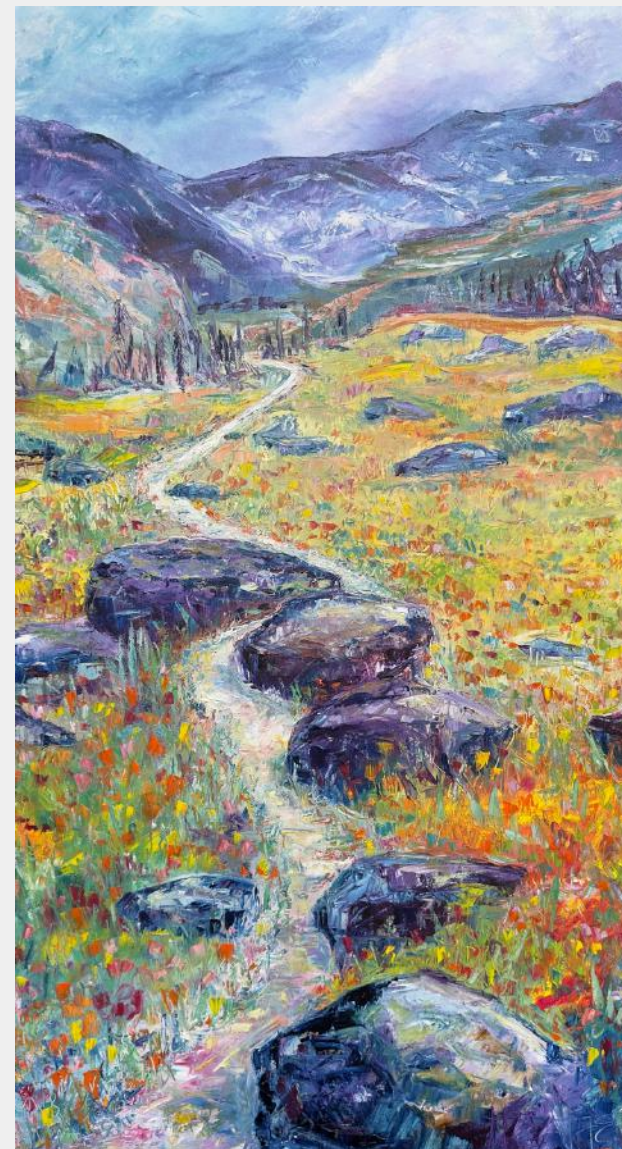
Fade into You

My first serious painting, inspired by Leonid Afremov's colorful style with palette knives, 'Fade into You' was created for my son, Kipling Pedersen and his wife, Kristy Friesen. I aimed to capture light on wet pavement and pictured 'Measle', our beloved dog with the bent ear enjoying the evening stroll. A serendipitous palette knife accident across Kipling's shirt resolved figure challenges, and I completed the windy theme by abstractly burying the couple's faces together subsequently naming it, 'Fade into You'.



Medium & Size: Oil on Canvas, 35"w x 35"h
Location/Inspiration: London

Tracks in the Quiet: A Journey Through Stillness and Surprise



Rio's Run. Hidden Hare. Where To?.

This page presents three distinct glimpses of outdoor adventure. In *Rio's Run*, a solitary skier hikes through untouched powder, dwarfed by towering alpine trees with a distant ski-mountain backdrop—a nod to the artist's daughter and her fearless spirit in the backcountry. *Hidden Hare* invites the viewer to pause and look closer; nestled in the snowy brush, a rabbit waits, barely visible in its stillness. In *Where To?*, a winding trail threads through boulders toward far-off peaks, evoking the quiet thrill of choosing your own line through wild terrain. Together, these works reflect movement, awareness, and the quiet tension between being seen and staying hidden.

Pictured left to right:
Oil on Canvas

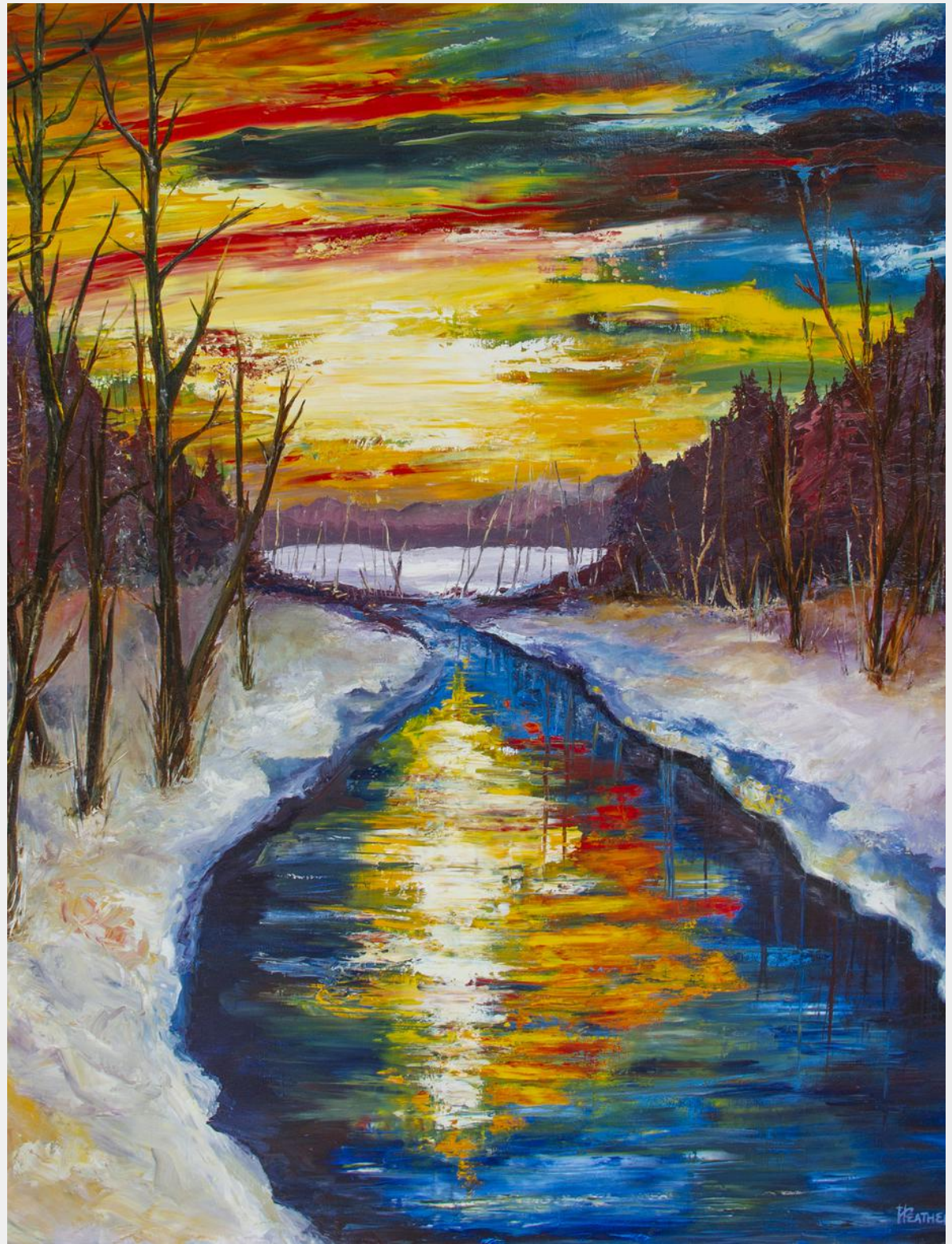
Rio's Run (8"x36")
Hidden Hare (12"x36")
Where To? (30"x50")

Be Still

*Medium & Size: Oil on Canvas, 47"w × 58"h
Location/Inspiration: Sandpoint, ID*

Frosted Note

*Medium & Size: Oil on Canvas, 16"w × 20"h
Location/Inspiration: Bucks County, PA*



Fly Zone

Medium & Size: Oil on Canvas, 24"w × 18"h

Location/Inspiration: Project Big Wood, Ketchum, ID



Summer Love

Medium & Size: Oil on Canvas, 22"w × 22"h

Location/Inspiration: Pioneer Mountains, Ketchum, ID

Sun Valley Barn

Medium & Size: Oil on Canvas, 20"w × 24"h

Location/Inspiration: Sun Valley, ID

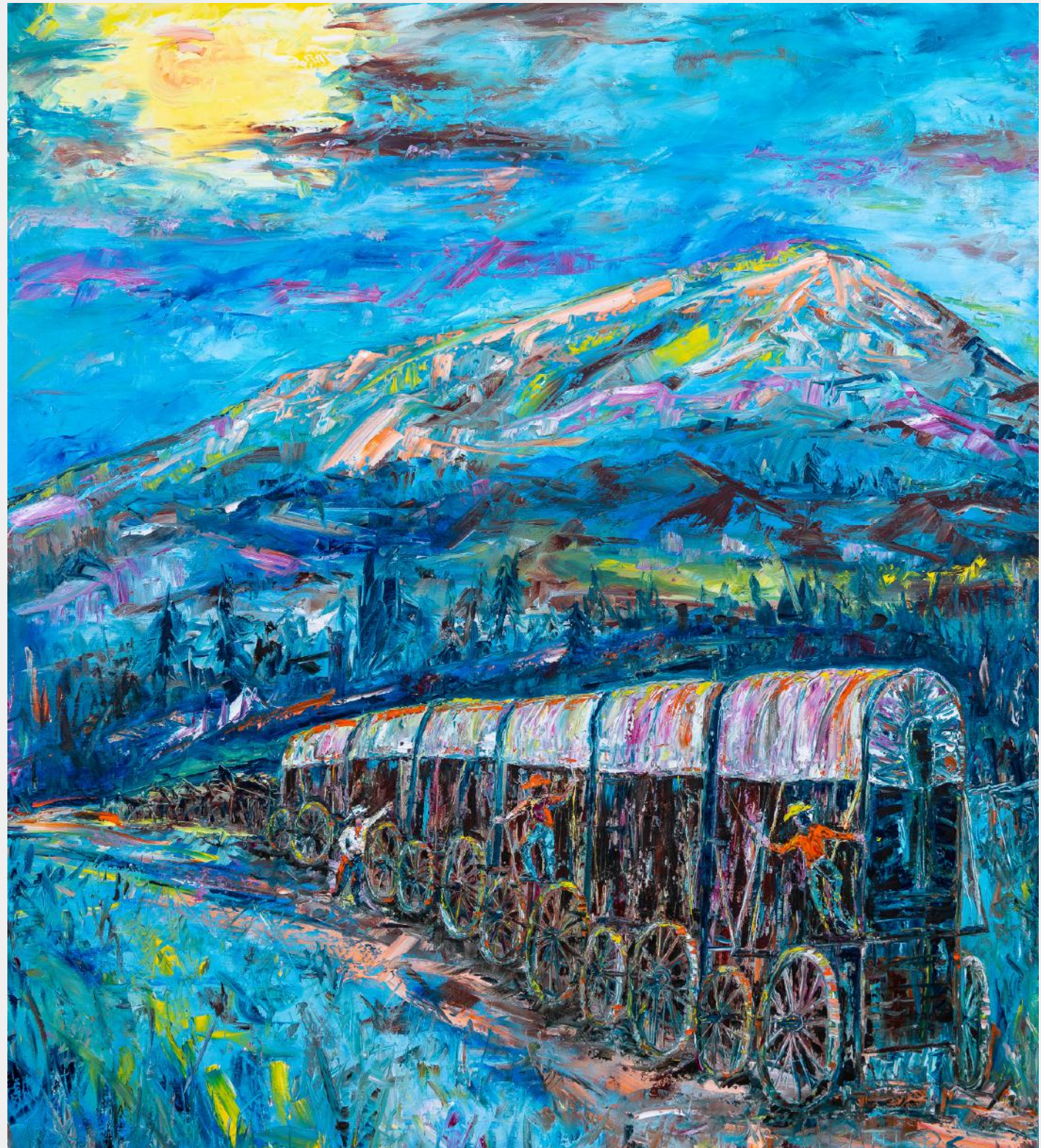


While visiting my parents in Sun Valley, Idaho, local shopkeepers urged me to feature more of the town's landmarks in my art. Inspired, I began with the iconic red barn—set in spring grass beneath a purple-blue sky, with a winding fence leading the eye. As I painted, the cool air and familiar scene stirred my imagination and nostalgia.

Wagon Days Be Gone

Being awarded Sun Valley's 2025 Wagon Days poster art was both thrilling and humbling. Inspired by the event's deep history, I chose to depict the iconic six massive ore wagons, originally pulled by a 20-mule team, journeying through the rugged Idaho wilderness rather than the modern parade.

I crafted a palette of alpine glow apricot, golden yellows, and three shades of blue to capture the warmth of the blazing sun and the grandeur of the iconic Bald Mountain in the backdrop. The scene is alive with dust, determination, and nostalgia—a tribute to the pioneers who shaped the West and the enduring spirit of Wagon Days.



Medium & Size: Oil on Canvas, 48"w × 60"h
Location/Inspiration: Sun Valley, ID

Wrong Way

Medium & Size: Oil on Canvas, 16"w × 20"h
Location/Inspiration: Schweitzer Mountain, Sandpoint ID

Stuck on You

Medium & Size: Oil on Canvas, 16"w × 20"h
Location/Inspiration: Hidden Lakes Golf Course, Sandpoint, ID



Steel Wind

Seeking a fresh subject to invigorate my landscape-focused work, I turned to a spirited pony in a dynamic scene. A mix of horizontal and vertical elements forms the backdrop, painted with vibrant colors that convey a sense of movement. Capturing the untamed essence of the pony mid-leap, its wild mane and tail flowing energetically, I aimed to evoke a feeling of speed and wind. Drawing inspiration from song lyrics "Pancho & Lefty" by Townes Van Zandt, I named this artwork Steel Wind.



*Medium & Size: Oil on Canvas, 40"w × 40"h
Location/Inspiration: Butte, MT*

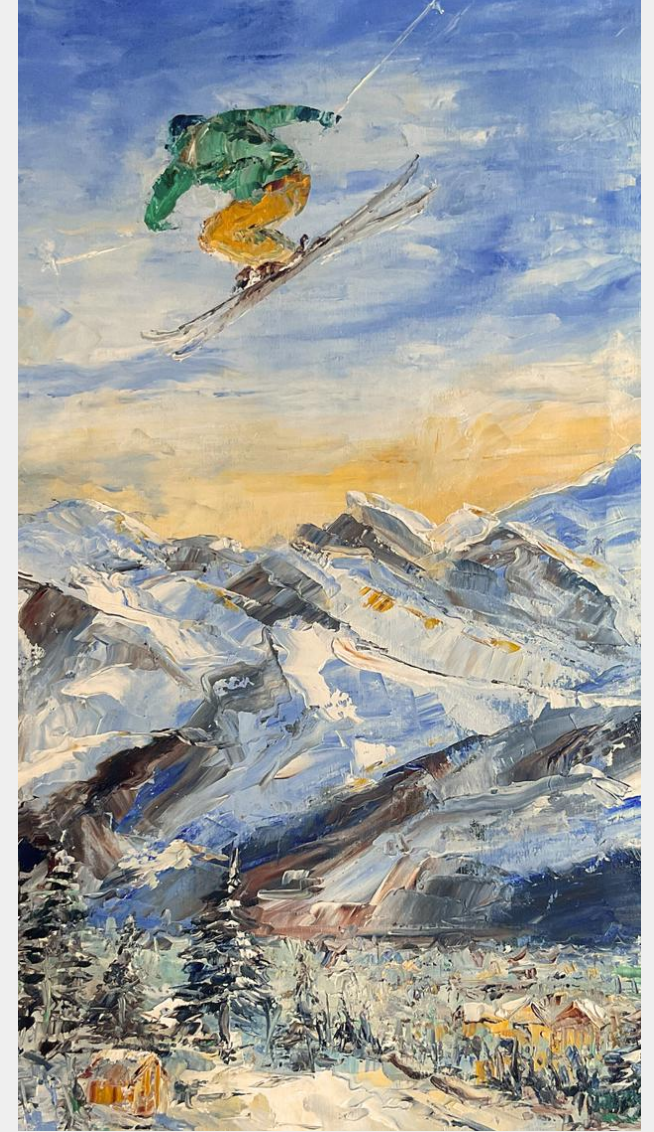


Stormlight

In *Stormlight*, a limited palette of metallic Prussian blue, ultramarine, spring green, iridescent silver, and earthy brown captures the uncanny brilliance of the calm before a storm. The sky looms dark and heavy, while the foreground glows with that fleeting, electric green unique to spring's final moments of light before rain. Three small horses stand in the open field, quiet beneath the weight of the sky, and stark trees rise against a silver mountain backdrop. This piece holds the tension between serenity and volatility—the breathtaking stillness of nature as it braces to be undone.

Medium & Size: Oil on Canvas, 16"w × 16"h
Location/Inspiration: Salmon, ID

Chasing Speed and Sky: A Tribute to the Mountain



Great Start. Steep & Deep. Send it Like Selkirk.

Commissioned as the official poster artist for the 2025 FIS World Cup in Sun Valley, Heather Mehra-Pedersen created this series to honor the speed, power, and poetry of alpine sport. *Great Start* explodes with motion—a skier punching through a blast of snow. *Steep & Deep* dives into the heart of powdery terrain, where bold lines are etched in shadow and snow. *Send it Like Selkirk*, named after her son who grew up skiing Schweitzer Mountain, celebrates fearless descents and a life lived full tilt. Together, these works reflect the wild rhythm of the mountain and the spirit of those who race it.

Pictured left to right:
Oil on canvas

Great Start (48"x60")
Steep & Deep (24"x36")
Send it Like Selkirk (14"x28")

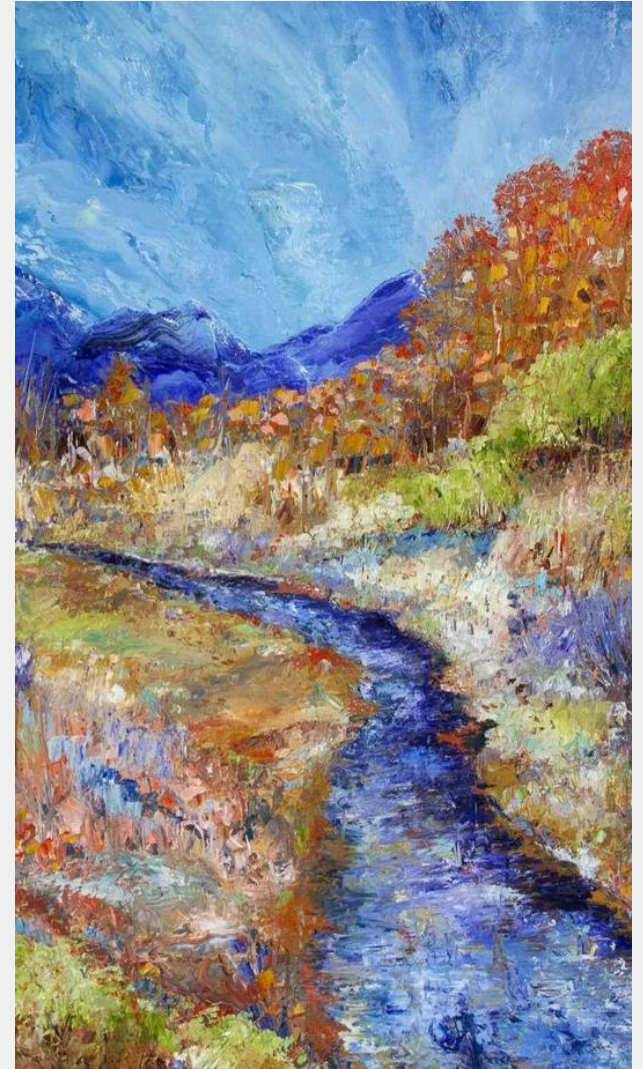
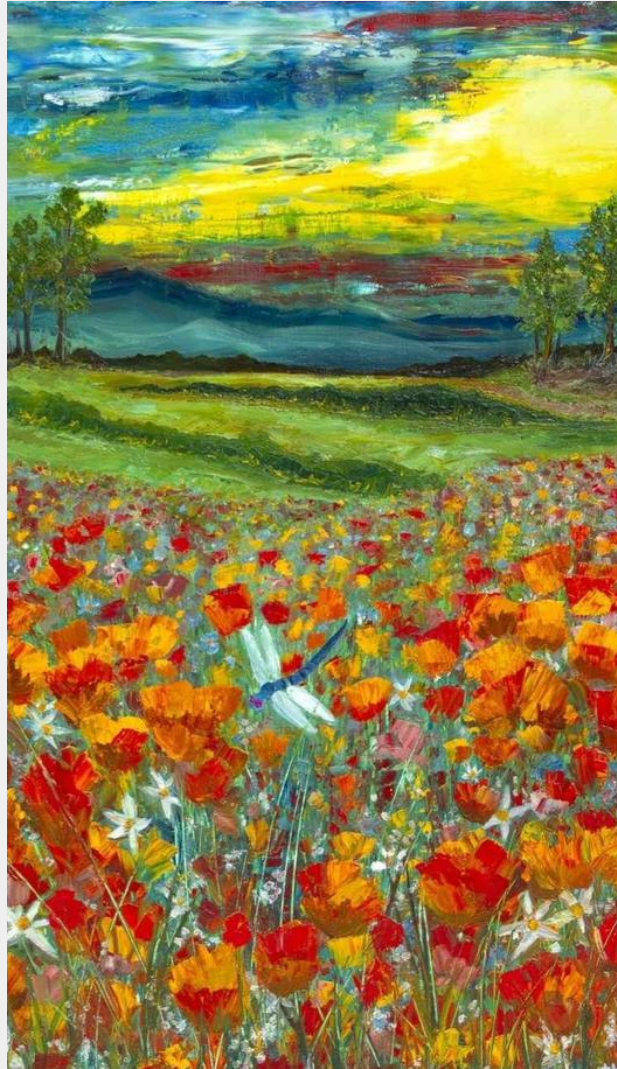
Cherry Beginnings

Cherry Beginnings was a delightful journey of discovery and surprise. What began as a textured waterfall slowly transformed into layered zig-zags of abstract motion, eventually revealing a quiet country path and a blossoming cherry tree. The pink blooms stood out vividly against cool blue mountains and mustard-yellow bushes, all beneath a richly textured teal-blue sky. The painting came together like a memory unfolding—capturing the soft stillness and quiet joy of a spring day in the countryside.

*Medium & Size: Oil on Canvas, 22"w × 22"h
Location/Inspiration: North Idaho*



Seasons in Bloom: A Color Symphony



Daffodil Sunrise. Poppy Fun. Fall Rhapsody.

From the soft blush of spring to the fiery crescendo of fall, these three works celebrate nature in all her blooming brilliance. *Daffodil Sunrise* captures that fleeting moment when winter exhales and golden light breaks over new life. *Poppy Fun* is pure joy—wild, loose, and dancing with the freedom of summer's peak. And *Fall Rhapsody* brings it home with a bold, textured finale of amber and rust, as if the trees themselves are singing their swan song. Together, they form a vibrant chorus of color, energy, and renewal—each one a season, a story, a song.

Pictured left to right:
Oil on Canvas

Daffodil Sunrise (12"x19")

Poppy Fun (26"x40")

Fall Rhapsody (36"x48")

Mid-Day Howlers

At the heart of this piece, three fluffy wolf pups—impossibly endearing—stand nestled together in a golden patch of Black-Eyed Susans. Their eyes are closed in unison, small noses lifted skyward in a tender howl—an ancient echo of instinct drifting into the warm midday air. The vibrant yellow blooms sway gently around them, a sea of summer innocence that softens the wildness in their nature. It's a moment suspended between play and primal yearning—perhaps a call for their mother, or simply a song of being.

*Medium & Size: Oil on Canvas, 24" w × 30" h
Location/Inspiration: Watford City, ND*



Cinnamon's Roll

Medium & Size: Oil on Canvas, 40"w × 16"h

Location/Inspiration: Lake Pend O'reille, Sandpoint, ID



Paying homage to my North Idaho roots, I envisioned a vibrant bear portrait on canvas. As I painted, my mother's input from watching "Yellowstone" led to adding snow-capped peaks, transforming the scene into a peaceful lake surrounded by a meadow. A bubble on the canvas prompted the addition of a fat moon, which posed a challenge in grounding the bear. After experimenting with colors and strokes, the snowy white foreground emerged after hours of layering paint. The bear itself took under an hour, but the entire painting consumed hours of work. It was named "Cinnamon's Roll," reflecting the bear's color as she rolls across the snowy landscape.

Sorry Night



This artwork emerged as a cathartic tribute to my beloved terrier, Measle, who departed unexpectedly at just 4 years old. His playful spirit and sudden loss were the driving forces behind this painting. Amid tears and color, I channeled my grief into each brushstroke, creating a poignant scene capturing his essence. With an independent spirit, Measle's memory lingered, inspiring the title Sorry Night, influenced by the song "Vincent" and Van Gogh's Starry Night. The challenge lay in painting his likeness in as few strokes as possible. His signature features emerged in bright primary colors against the night sky, evoking reflection and longing for a life cut short.

Medium & Size: Oil on Canvas, 44"w × 44"h
Location/Inspiration: My beloved dog, 'Measle'

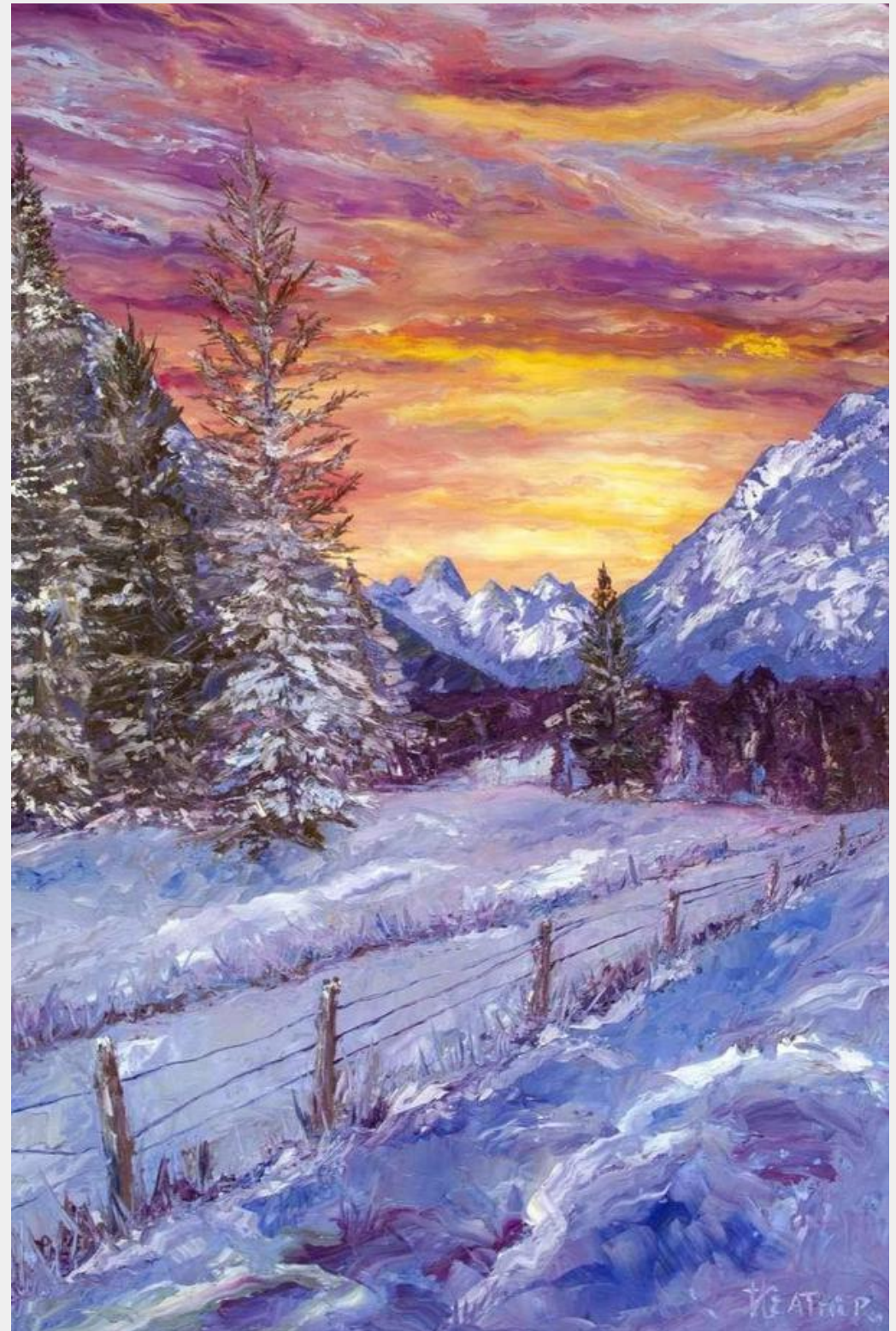


Purple Road Home

*Medium & Size: Oil on Canvas, 24"w × 36"h
Location/Inspiration: North Idaho*

Where To?

*Medium & Size: Oil on Canvas, 30"w × 50"h
Location/Inspiration: Western USA*



Marsh Mellow Moose

Being in North Idaho, I felt compelled to paint a vibrant moose, a staple among local artists. Initially struggling with foreshortening, I worked through proportion issues, misshapen legs, and frustrating shadows. At one point, I nearly abandoned the piece after five days. Changing tack, I focused on one problem at a time. A bold swipe of chocolate brown brought the moose into proportion, reigniting my hope. After hours upon hours of work, I considered it finished, a rare instance where I resisted over-refining. This moose became a testament to patience, reminding me that a fresh approach and determination can conquer even the toughest artistic challenges.

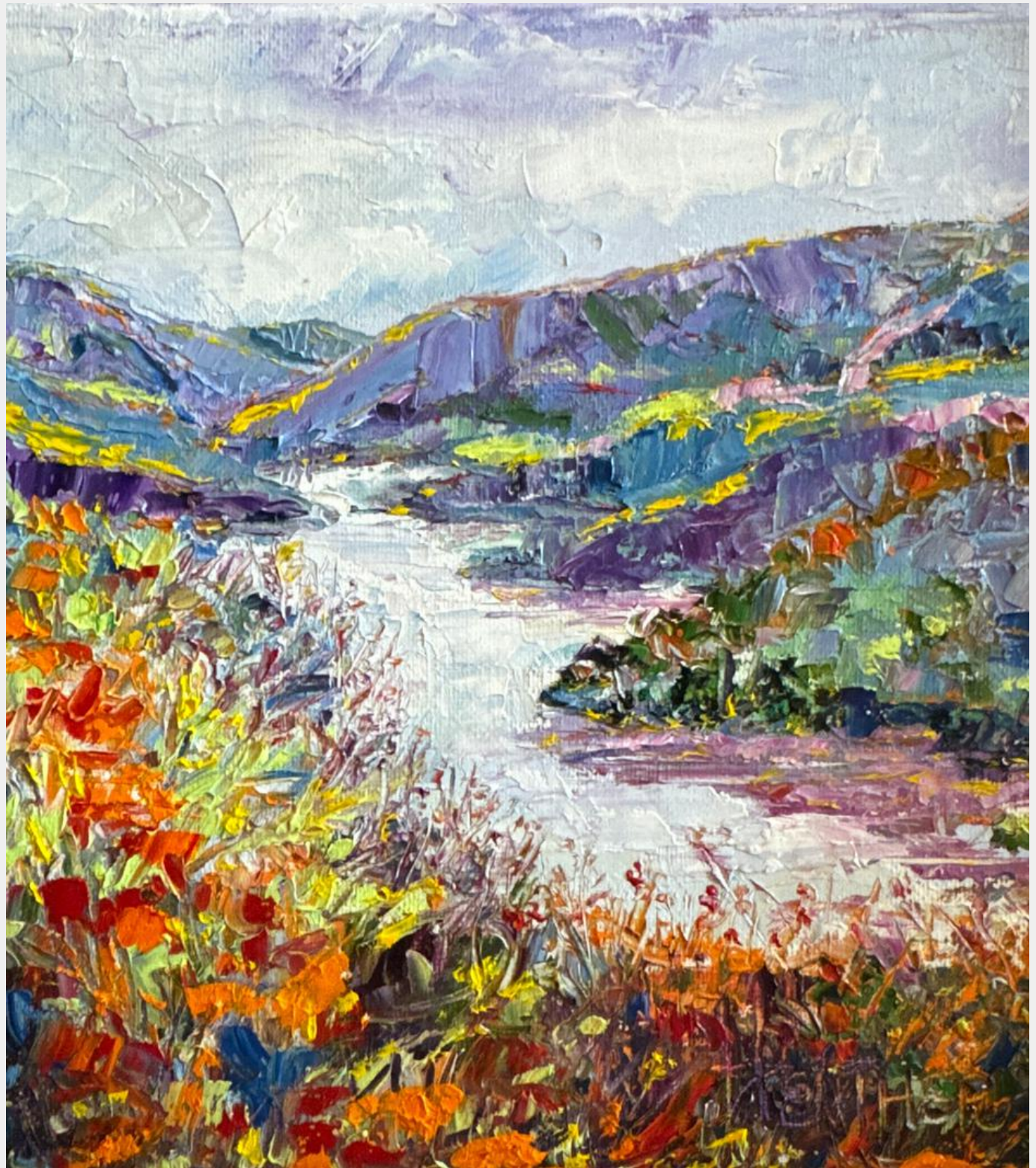
*Medium & Size: Oil on Canvas, 39"w x 39"h
Location/Inspiration: Sandpoint, ID*



Corkscrew Creek

Captivated by the tranquil scenes while hiking Trail Creek Trail in Southern Idaho, I painted the peaceful creek as it meandered gently through an ever-changing array of colored mountains, creating a kaleidoscope of natural beauty. Each bend in the water reflected a different hue—earthy reds, purples, and soft sage greens—while the sky shifted with the light, adding depth to the scene. In the foreground, vibrant Idaho wildflowers burst forth in vivid color, their delicate forms enhancing the charm and liveliness of the landscape. As I painted, I found myself imagining which hill I'd like to climb first, letting my mind wander to the idea of someday conquering them all. This small yet colorful scape is teeming with floral life and layered textures, quietly beckoning me to explore deeper into the mountains, to discover what lies just beyond the next ridge.

*Medium & Size: Oil on Canvas, 8"w × 8"h
Location/Inspiration: Trail Creek, Ketchum, ID*

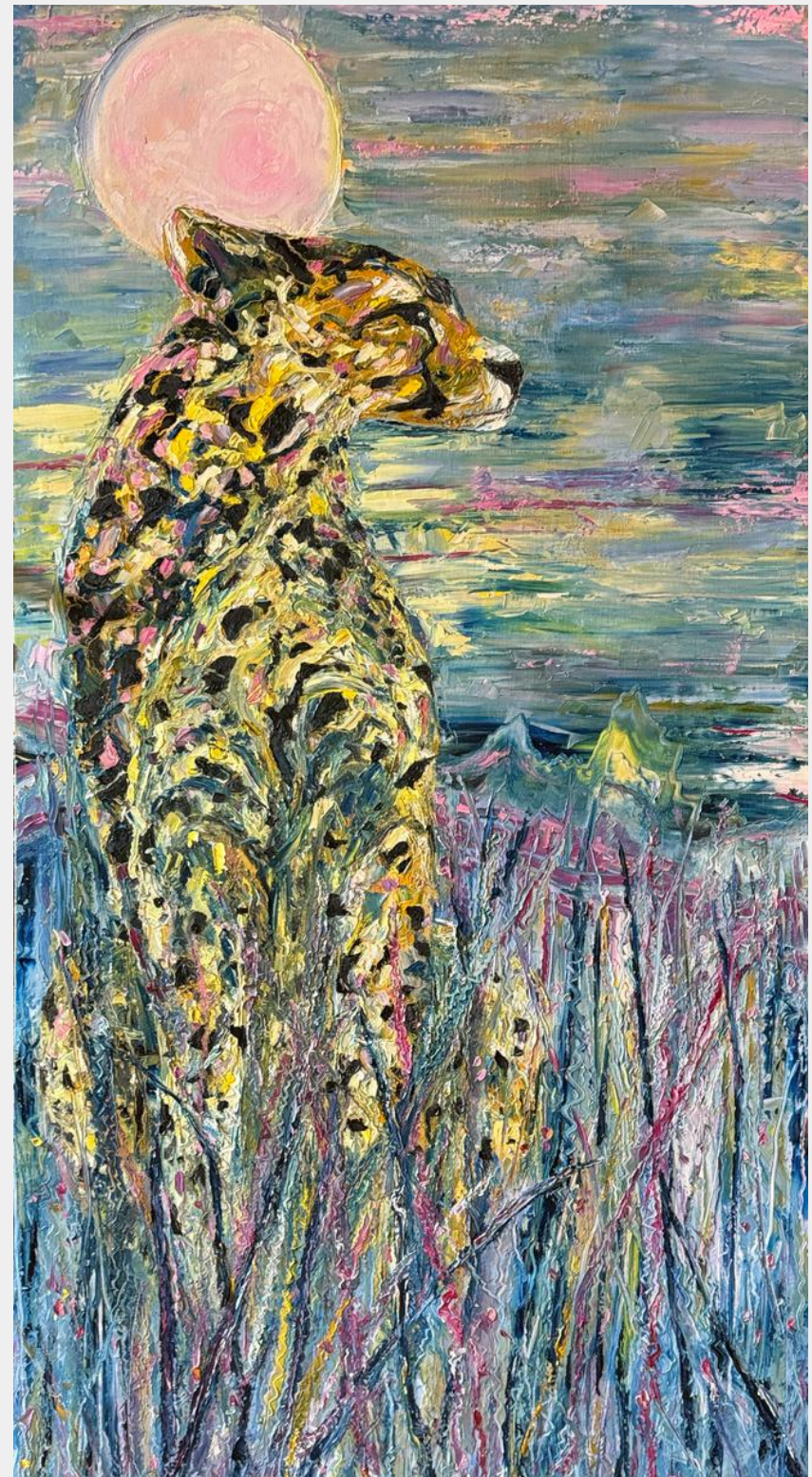


Still Watch

*Medium & Size: Oil on Canvas, 31"w × 64"h
Location/Inspiration: Johannesburg, South Africa*

Coming in Hot

*Medium & Size: Oil on Canvas, 13"w × 13"h
Location/Inspiration: Bucks County, PA*



Love Never Forgets

Medium & Size: Oil on Canvas, 39"w × 49"h
Location/Inspiration: Corbett National Park, India

Those Lion Eyes

Medium & Size: Oil on Canvas, 32"w × 40"h
Location/Inspiration: Eswatini, Southern Africa



Mimi's Jig

Commissioned to create a wine label, I aimed for it to be fun, colorful, and bright. Starting with a pink and blue palette and working from the top down, I painted the colorful sky against a backdrop of layered mountains and distant hillsides. The festive and playful scene is set along a fence line of grapevines, with an old barn farmhouse in the background. In the foreground, a whimsical lady kicks her feet in the wine barrel while indulging in stomping grapes while drinking wine from the bottle—a playful homage to my crazy, wine-loving mother, Barbara Pressler, (aka 'Mimi'). Despite wearing a garden hat, her face has a sunburnt glow, which might, indeed, be due to the merry wine.



Medium & Size: Oil on Canvas, 16"w x 20"h
Location/Inspiration: My Mom, Barbara 'Mimi' Pressler

On Pointe

Reminiscent of my tall and graceful daughter in high school, I painted a young ballerina poised in a perfect on-pointe stance. She's caught in a moment of beauty and strength, arms lifted high, palms turned upward as if holding the light. The piece bursts with color—peacock blue-green swirling around her, contrasting with a fiery orange underskirt and a yellow and blue-green backdrop. A cascading pattern of squiggly lines suggests music, flow, and energy, from which she seems to draw calm. Like a dance of color and light, her fluidity, grace, and beauty are palpable.



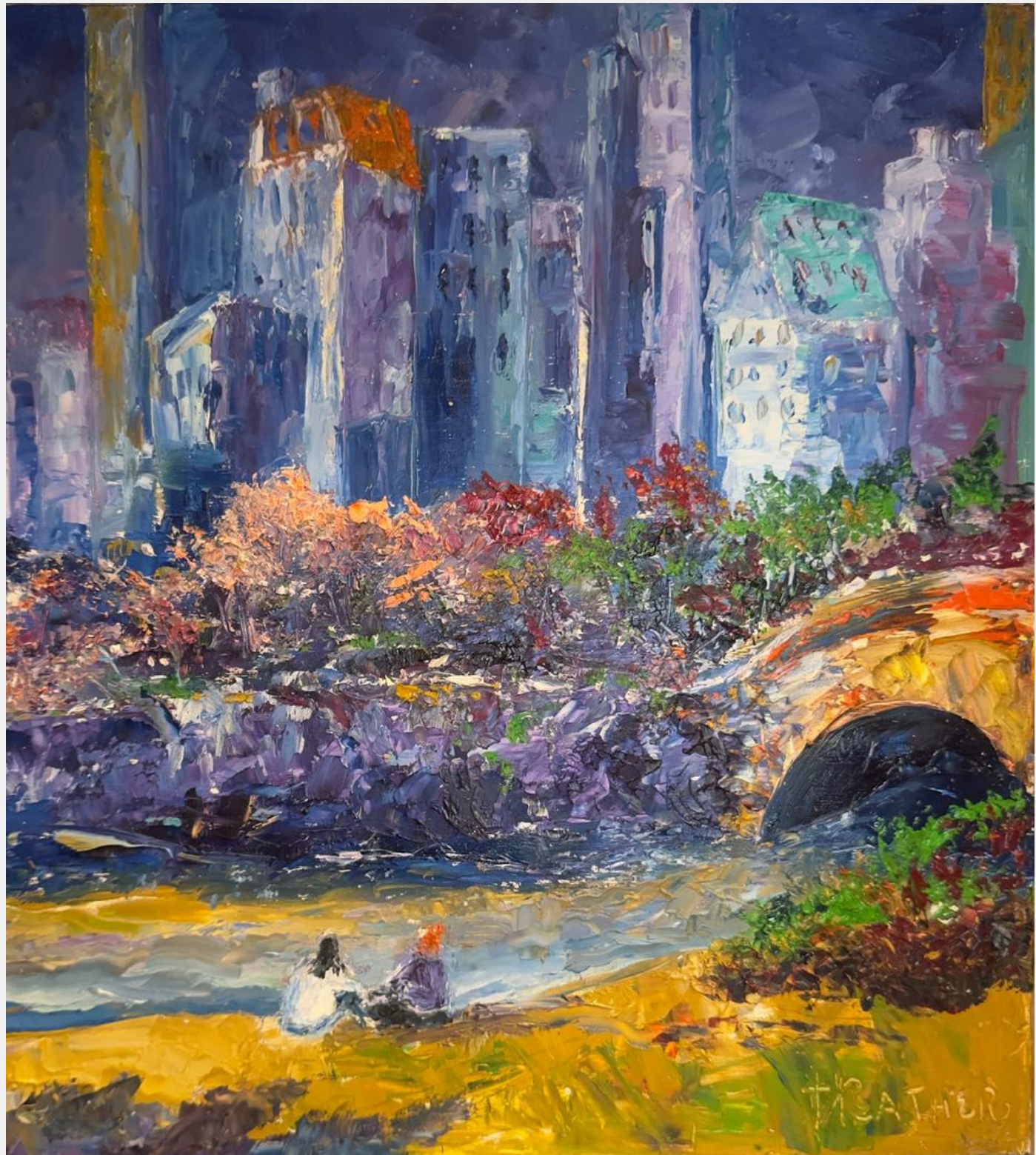
*Medium & Size: Oil on Canvas, 48" w × 60" h
Location/Inspiration: My daughter, Rio*

Kip & Me in NYC

For my son Kipling's birthday, I painted a New York Cityscape, placing us by one of its iconic bridges. The complementary purple and green tones against the golden skyline and rock wall provide a scenic backdrop as we engage in conversation by the flowing river. In the painting, Kipling dons an orange ski cap, a nod to the hat we once used to hang in the car as a makeshift swing for 'Squiggles', our family pet ferret.

This artwork evokes memories of our outdoor escapades in the picturesque streams and nature of Idaho during Kipling's homeschooling years. Titled 'Kip and Me in NYC,' it playfully celebrates Kipling's unexpected journey from country roots to Big Apple city life, highlighting the enduring connection between a mother and son despite the distance.

*Medium & Size: Oil on Canvas, 13"w x 13"h
Location/Inspiration: My son, Kipling, in NYC*



Calling Home

*Medium & Size: Oil on Canvas, 35"w × 23"h
Location/Inspiration: Royal, NE*



I painted this scene with a vibrant five-color palette, capturing the nostalgia of the Midwestern landscape. Swaying grass guides the eye to a distant homestead along a winding road, bathed in the brilliance of a late evening sky. The receding telephone poles frame the scene and drew me to name it "Calling Home." Keep a keen eye, and you might spot a small blackbird perched on one of the telephone poles, adding life to this serene moment, where only the gentle whisper of the wind is heard.



LEARN MORE...

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- Facebook: Heather's Colors
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In the beginning, God said, "Let there be light..."
Genesis 1:3 (as expressed by five-year-old Heather Mehra-Pedersen, with paint)
...and a little artist saw rainbows and color.