

Judy McSween – Artist Biography

Judy McSween is a Charleston-based painter whose abstract works capture the beauty of lived experience. A native of Warren, Ohio, she earned her BFA in Painting from Bowling Green State University before spending over two decades teaching art to elementary and middle school students in Ohio and South Carolina. She credits her students with reminding her to see the world with fresh eyes and to infuse her work with a sense of joy and discovery.

McSween's process moves fluidly between realism and intuition. She begins with a drawn image, then deconstructs its composition to uncover its essence. Through a layered approach—applying paint, wiping it away, drawing into it, and scraping through—she creates luminous pathways that guide the viewer's eye. Her signature is light: whether glowing beyond a horizon, spilling across a field, or catching fleetingly along an edge, it anchors her paintings in a spirit of wonder and renewal.

Influenced early on by the underwater abstracts of her professor Bob Mazur, McSween continues to draw inspiration from the landscapes that have shaped her life—from her Ohio roots to her current home in Charleston, as well as from countless road trips across the country.

Her work has been recognized with numerous awards, including the People's Choice Award in *Perspectives: The Art of Abstract* (2024), Best Painting in the Piccolo Spoleto Juried Art Exhibit at Charleston's City Gallery (2022), and the Design Award for the 2017 City of North Charleston Arts Fest, where her painting *Scraping the Sky II* was selected to represent the festival and became part of the city's permanent collection.

Beyond the canvas, McSween is passionate about art's ability to educate and uplift. Through social media and her monthly newsletter, she shares behind-the-scenes glimpses of her process along with reflections designed to inspire and inform. She is represented by Dare Gallery in downtown Charleston and Sandpiper Gallery on Sullivan's Island. McSween is also a member of the National Association of Women Artists and the National Oil and Acrylic Painters Society.

