# Beauty That Surrounds Us

written by Valerie Kent

"If you truly love nature, you will find beauty everywhere." Vincent Van Gogh

There is a poignant truth to what Vincent Van Gogh said about nature, and Dawne Brandel has acknowledged this and added her own reality in her paintings. She has been immersed in the arts during her entire adult life. She studied drawing and composition at The Alberta College of Art in Calgary, then spent the next ten to twelve years working with her husband Merv in their commercial art business. This was followed by fifteen years working as floral designer.

Ten years ago she ventured back into her own painting again, and for the past five years renewed her commitment and dedicated time to pursue the arts as a fine arts professional, this time as a career goal. She has found the painting process probably the most difficult career choice to-date. She loves

what she does and her passion becomes a channel for the creative forces informing what she creates, that swirling excitement that she so cherishes.

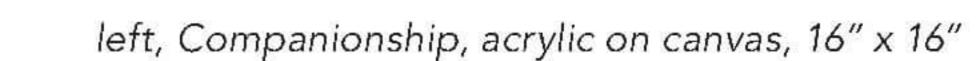
### Relationship to Nature

Many artists who love painting their natural surroundings strive to include a personal and complex song and dance of originality in their paintings, to make certain their own expressions of nature are unique, exciting and as fresh as they can be, thus making it their own.

Edward Hopper said about nature, "There will be, I think, an attempt to grasp again the surprise and accidents of nature and a more intimate and sympathetic study of its moods, together with a renewed wonder and humility on the part of such as are still capable of these basic reactions."

Nature has also always been Dawne Brandel's inspiration to paint. The first years she painted flowers







because that is what she knew. As she expanded her views and her knowledge of composition grew, she started painting trees and landscapes. Dawne continues to be inspired and entranced by two large Himalayan birch groves. She can see them from the studio loft overlooking a pond close to home and they appear and reappear in her work frequently.

Dawne examines the world around her more closely now than ever: She sees the lushness, sometimes its simplicity and purity, at others the complexity and wildness, the great internal spirit of beauty. Her use of prisms of light and colour is mesmerizing, and it chooses to envelop her world in its pure brilliance. Nature is a celebration and Dawne aims to reveal its glorious secrets in her artworks.

### Inspiration and Admiration

There are many who cite Richard Schmidt as being instrumental in their quest to paint. His work is long known for its luminosity, its vivid soundness, phenomenal strength and power. Dawne had the opportunity to be in Las Vegas at an art gallery and she saw a huge Schmidt painting of a mansion, with snow and a wrought iron fence. The painting was so genuine. It had such an incandescence, a loose, yet exact touch. Richard knew where to apply every stroke, where to place each significant detail. She was around twenty-one years old. She could have looked at it forever.

Russian Impressionist artist, Alexi Zaitsev, was a window on European landscape and someone she





left, Mosaic, acrylic on canvas, 24" x 24" above right, The Short Cut, acrylic on canvas, 20" x 20"

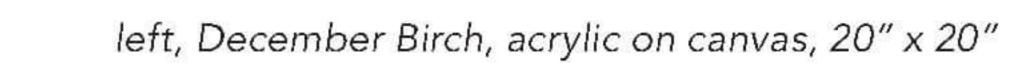
the supernatural universe takes over and introduces elements that I could not have preconceived."

In the beginning she had to acquire the foundation rules, to learn if she wanted to accomplish any expertise in the journey she was on. She truly believes you have to work very diligently at something you

have a passion for, and be open to the love for it that comes silently to give you the will to excel.

She selects themes such as birch trees, pine forests, Victorian homes, and most recently, crows. Some of the paintings are infused with mystery. Dawne's paintings are awash in her distinctive

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quality of colour, a distinguishing element that many collectors have liked.

# What's Important in Life?

In the loft studio shared with her artist husband, Merv Brandel, who was instrumental in helping her develop her painting repertoire, she loves to listen to both classical and rock and roll music when she paints. Dawne and Merv, each on their own art, have worked well together for many years and have developed a comfort and a rhythm in how they use their loft studio with its big skylights.

About five years ago she joined a number of arts organizations in British Columbia and has become connected with artist-run and commercial galleries that represent and exhibit her works.

The pursuit of pleasure and growth in the work encourages an artist, like Dawne, to spend many hours perfecting it. Being a working artist brings with it rewards like calling her own shots and also facing the challenges of consistently producing excellent work. In fact, it becomes ever more important to learn to trust and believe in your own capacity and capability of creating. This confidence may be especially hard to develop in the art world where an







Previous Page, left, Last Light, acrylic on canvas, 24" x 24" top right, The Old Apple Tree, acrylic on canvas, 24" x 24" bottom right, Longer Nights, acrylic on canvas, 16" x 16" This Page, right, Anyone Home, acrylic on canvas, 16" x 16"

artist must have the courage to hang art on the wall for all to see, to critique and to evaluate. The whole process is so subjective. Of necessity is a solid selfesteem, inner fortitude and a willingness to learn, to change and develop.

"For me, becoming an artist is a life lesson worth learning. I really believe if you work hard at your craft, pass on what you have learned from others, life will provide you with what you need. The greatest lesson I have learned about painting is just to keep at it. It takes time and patience building the foundation of skill that is necessary, and to practice...probably a few lifetimes. You never stop learning in this work.

Amazing people will come into your life to help you along the way. We need to remember that we are all connected. Work hard at what you love and it will all come together in the end."

To see more of the amazing work of Dawne Brandel please visit:

## **Tutt Street Gallery**

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