



*"Tide Pools"*

## SUSAN J. BERG Watercolor Artist

### *A Lifetime Journey...*

As a child, my dad encouraged me to paint by occasionally bringing home large sheets of white butcher paper and mixing water with powdered tempura paint colors in empty tuna cans! I remember him giving me BIG paint brushes, encouraging wide, sweeping strokes, drawing rabbits in puffy spring clouds, dark hidey holes in the forest, and always water...rivers, lakes, ponds, the Pacific ocean. As a 3<sup>rd</sup> grader, I won my first 1<sup>st</sup> Place award in an All Cities Schools Annual Art Contest. It was of a white Pegasus horse with a black mane and tail, flying and cloud hopping through my dreams. Dad was proud!

My passion for being outdoors in the brilliant changes of seasons inspires my imagination, and I find myself wondering about "the story" in a moss-covered pond, or roiling cloud patterns, or shadowy silhouette against a doorway. I want the viewer to be drawn into a painting to explore those passageways.

The sound of water flowing gently down a creek is calming. Similarly, the nature of watercolor is to 'float', allowing the pigments to flow freely and settle onto the surface ...effectively letting the water do the work. It is by layers of color allowed to dry between applications that the rich jewel-like glazing effect is created - producing luscious, juicy, translucent depth in glowing colors that seem to vibrate from the surface of the heavy rag papers.

After many years of watercolor instruction, completing class projects and watercolor workshops with artists whose work I admire, I see the evolution of my own unique and color-intense painterly style. My favorite old master is Winslow Homer. His subjects are emotionally intense, his strokes clean and sharp, leaving areas the white paper to define and contrast dark shadows that dramatize a focal point.

*In 1994 my work took an unexpected leap when I became a student of modern master Chinese Watercolorist Lian Quan Zhen. I strive to better understand and continually practice his ancient pouring method of applying a simple triad of primary colors as an underpainting, then pushing the darks in negative painting. Fortunately, his teachings continue to push my growth as a valid painter.*

*Before retiring in 2016 from a high-tech professional career as a project manager, I had the pleasure of curating artwork for four large buildings of our corporate headquarte. I have chaired and worked on many art show committees in Sonoma and Placer Counties, served for years on two art club Boards of Directors, and represented Healdsburg Center for the Arts as an invited resident artist for 10 years.*

*Today I just paint for the meditative peace, joy and magic of watercolors.*

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Artist Information at Arts Council of Placer County [www.placerarts.org](http://www.placerarts.org)  
and Placer Artists Studio Tour [www.placerartiststour.org](http://www.placerartiststour.org)