

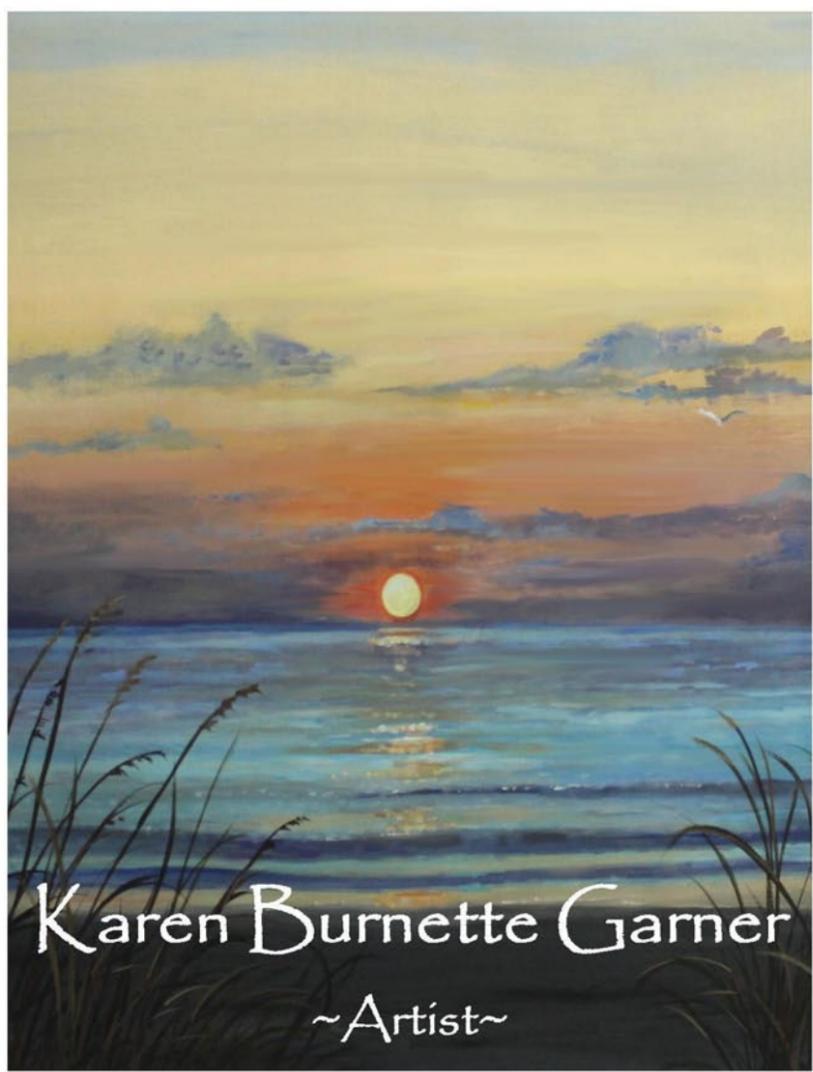
WELLS GALLERY



RUSSELL GORDON
BIRDSONG, OIL ON LINEN, 10x8

THE SANCTUARY AT KIAWAH ISLAND
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A Few Words From Down Under

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lery, sitting on a settee quietly absorbed in one of the larger works. Her attention caused me to focus anew on the particular painting. The artist produces abstract works often inspired by the colours of the 'outback' landscape as seen from an aerial view. When I looked the second time I discovered a painted line I had not noticed previously. It was a continuous, single brush mark that seemed to meander through the whole composition, sometimes boldly sometimes barely there, like a train of thought. When the woman rose from her reverie, we discussed this one brush stroke and each of us discovered a whole new meaning in the work. And yes, we both knew the artist but wasted no time chatting about him rather we talked about the work around us.

The first two ladies are like many art critics. They were not engaging with the art, they were discussing history and their personal encounters with the artist. They had formed their opinion of the exhibition prior to entering the gallery. On the other hand, the lone woman who immersed herself in the art, to concentrate on its concepts, composition, colour and tactile surface, to discover a personal response to

the work, was actually 'reviewing' it.

We can't all be art critics but we should all learn to be honest art reviewers. Artists are interested in, and often want to know, if they are reaching their audience. They accept 'corrective' criticism that comes from their peers and/or feedback from the informed viewer, as there are times they cannot see their own shortcomings.

Let's all become art reviewers. We won't make much money but we'll find riches beyond compare.

Judith McGrath lives in Kalamunda, Western Australia, 25 minutes east of Perth. She received a BA in Fine Art and History from the University of Western Australia. McGrath lectured in Art History and Visual Literacy at various colleges around the Perth area, and was an art reviewer for *The Sunday Times* and *The Western Review* both published in the Perth area. McGrath was also a freelance writer and reviewer for various art magazines in Australia. She also co-ordinated the web site *Art Seen in Western Australia* found at

(<http://pandora.nla.gov.au/tep/25381>). McGrath is currently enjoying retirement.

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