

Peter Gough
Artist's Statement

Although I grew up in the city, I was a country boy at heart. Now I live where my heart and imagination have always resided and go to the city only to visit museums and galleries and to pick up art supplies. I fish, hunt, canoe and beach-comb. I hike through forests, across tundra, along rocky shorelines. I note the moods of the changing weather and seasons and marvel how a well-beloved landscape can change its appearance from one day to the next, one hour to the next. This is my world and this is what I paint.

As Picasso said, “I don’t search for things, I find them.” Once I get to know an area I recognize almost instinctively what I want to paint. The more familiar you are with an area or landscape, the more aware you are of its details, its nuances. You develop a sense of its intrinsic nature—its soul. And I’ve come to realize that I’m not only trying to portray the visual world in my painting, I’m saying something about my spiritual response to the land and its dynamic harmonies, as well.

I believe that every work of art should in some way be a revelation. It should change us in some degree—both viewer and artist.

As an artist, I like to build my own stretchers and stretch my own canvases. It’s like an architect selecting the materials for a building he has designed. It’s part of the process of making art. At this point in my career, my medium of choice is acrylics. I find the medium the best of two worlds – watercolors and oils. You can work with them like watercolors, building up thin washes of different colors to get the illusion of a totally different color. Acrylics can also be used like oils to create thick, heavy impastos where you can actually get a sense of the texture of the paint on the canvas and see your brush strokes if desired. I as well like to paint large canvases of epic landscapes and seascapes in the romantic landscape tradition. I find they do justice to the subject matter. The size recognizes the grandeur of the landscape. I attribute part of my style to the luminists and their use of light and tranquil settings. They have always impressed me. Although my paintings have been inspired by real places, they serve as metaphors for me, a narrative of my life, about who I am and what’s important to me and how I see myself as part of the natural world.

I am, as well, trying to say something about my spiritual response to the land and its dynamic harmonies. What I hope to impact people with, who view my work is a reminder of who and where we are in relation to our natural surroundings and above all a sense of respect and reverence for it.