



ARTIST KAT JAMIESON

Versatility

OF WATERCOLOR AND METALWORKS: COLOR AND MOVEMENT

BY BARBARA MACKAY



Kat Jamieson

If you happen to encounter Kat Jamieson's art without knowing anything about her work, at first glance you might think that the watercolors and metalwork are done by two different people. Kat's watercolors seem to come from a realm of insubstantiality, where everything is made of light and air. Her metalwork, on the other hand, revels in solidity, announcing itself boldly.

Yet a closer look reveals the links between the two. The elements they share most obviously are color and movement. The watercolors primarily reflect scenes of nature, capturing a moment in time. Blue islands hover between the sky and a body of water; a heron pauses to catch the next fish; a brilliant sunset stretches above a lone speedboater.

Kat's jewelry and bowls are equally devoted to color and movement. One playful wrist cuff is called "Red Fish Blue Fish." Made of copper, it has tints of blue on its nose and its tail. Another cuff bracelet is a bright orange/red. Its front features a triangular cut-out, which is laced together with what looks like glossy black string.

"Both of these pursuits are very easy to do badly and very difficult to do well," explains Kat. "The thing about watercolor is that not only does the water literally flow and carry the pigment, but also you can move everything. You can move the paint. You can move the brushes. You can move the paper, you can blow on the painting.

"Most people don't realize that metal surfaces



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move as well. They are like balloons. You strike in one area and it blows up in another area. Also, with both painting and metalwork, things happen that you didn't plan on, she says. "For a second, it feels as though your plans have been spoiled. But eventually, if you're lucky, you partner with your material."

"With metal—be it a bowl or a bracelet—it means understanding the way metal naturally moves under heat and pressure." Kat says. "And with watercolor, it's understanding the way paint moves with the flow of the water that is so integral to the process. With either medium, you need to let the material do what it wants to do. I'm enthusiastic about it because it's an incredibly joyful process. It's profound. How lucky are we?"

Kat's works don't just use color. They use brilliant, intense color. "All my colored pieces have a luminous quality about them," she explains. "I've tried to use watercolor effects on metal surfaces. I don't like to cover metals with opaque substances, I like to use transparent resins, enamels and powder-coating, using them in a way that allows the glow of that metal to come through. If you don't allow the metal

themselves to sing, you're not succeeding," she says.

Kat points to her upbringing for having led to her interest in art. "I'm truly an object lesson in what happens when key people take the time and the trouble to notice and encourage you," she says. "For me, it was my family, teachers and friends." Kat's father grew up during the Depression on a Maryland farm. He necessarily learned how to do things himself and he taught Kat self-sufficiency. On her mother's side, Kat's mother and five great-aunts were from New England and were pioneers in their fields.

"Every summer, we would go to the old family home on Cape Cod where my days were filled with painting and print-making and knitting," Kat says. "One aunt was a silversmith, one was an organist at a silent-movie theater. So I grew up with all these wonderful things as a foundation.

"I also have to give a nod to my teachers—from my high school teachers to two or three people at the Art League in Alexandria—who have been phenomenal in their support and encouragement," Kat says. "And friends have played a huge role, too, urging me to keep at it. Without that support, my life would not

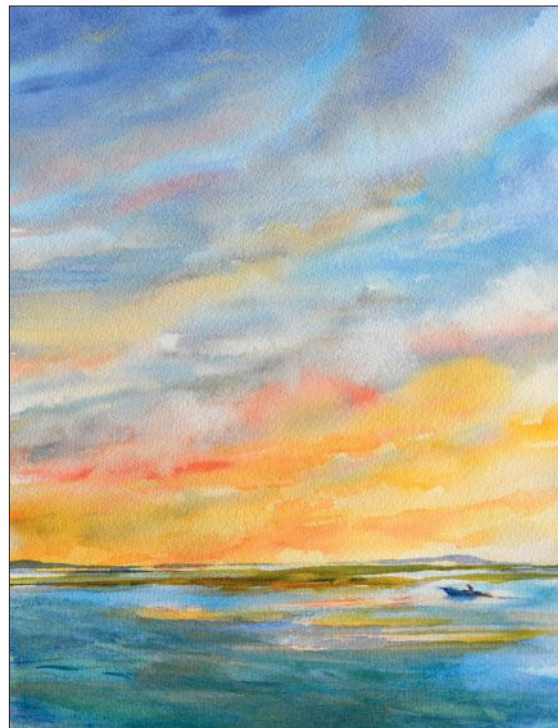


Page 36: "Red Fish, Blue Fish" cuff

Page 37: "Blue Brush," 20" x 11", watercolor

Opposite, clockwise from top: "Across the Lake," watercolor; "Curved Edge Cuff," and "Laced Red Cuff"

This page: "Shibori Cuff," fine (pure) silver; and "Speedboat" watercolor, 7" x 9"



have turned out the way it has."

Whether it was a sense of Yankee independence or a desire to join the ranks of her artistic ancestors, at the age of six, Kat tacked up samples of her watercolor work in the family garage, sold tickets for 10 cents apiece, and had her first art show. Years later, after receiving her B.F.A. from the Maryland Institute College of Art and completing graduate school in the United States and England, she was the Creative Director for the Red Cross, and later held an administrative job at the Nature Conservancy.

"After 30 years of the corporate life, my boss at the Nature Conservatory insisted that I not work one weekend, but that I go with her to an art workshop," she said. "And that got me back into watercolor work 20 years ago. It's been about 10 years that I've been metalsmithing—and it's been a joy," Kat says.

Kat is an active member of the Arlington Artists Alliance and of The Art League in Alexandria. In the past, she has shown her work at Gallery Underground and now shows at Gallery Clarendon. é

Kat Jamieson | www.katjamieson.com.

