



LINDA PACKARD

COURTHOUSE GALLERY  
FINE ART

# LINDA PACKARD

AUGUST 15 – SEPTEMBER 15, 2018

## **Fruitful Wanderings**

Essay by Karin Wilkes



*Daily Riff 2*, mixed media on paper, 7 x 5 inches

COVER *The Poem I Meant to Write*, detail, oil on canvas, 36 x 48 inches

**COURTHOUSE GALLERY**  
**FINEART**

6 court street ellsworth, maine 04605 [courthousegallery.com](http://courthousegallery.com) 207 667 6611



*October*  
oil on panel  
18 x 18 inches  
2018



*Too Deep for Tears*  
oil on panel  
20 x 20 inches  
2018

# LINDA PACKARD *Fruitful Wanderings*

*The abstract quality of my work encourages each viewer to have a uniquely personal interpretation and emotional response. Seeing that happen, or hearing about it, is very exciting to me as the maker.*

— Linda Packard

Linda Packard's new body of opulent abstract paintings has brought the artist to a critical juncture in her artistic journey. Until this show, her first solo at Courthouse Gallery, Packard has painted almost exclusively *en plein air* focusing on small intimate scenes in nature. Her metamorphosis from landscape to abstract over this past year may seem abrupt, but the transition has been in the making for a several years, and the abstract overtones were always there.

Packard, who has a profound interest in the abstract expressionist movement, is admittedly enamored by its painters. The one artist whose work she returns to most often, however, is Joan Mitchell. For Packard, Mitchell's paintings reflect the raw emotions of her experiences, often without specific

intention. Packard says she aspires to make paintings from such a deep emotional or spiritual place.

A change in style can be risky for an established artist. But Packard, who turned sixty-six this year, has quelled any fear. *The Poem I Meant to Write* is a stunning example of Packard's newfound boldness. Layers of rich color have been worked and pushed around an uncharacteristically large surface marked by scratches and rubbings. In the upper left corner, the most exquisite patch of cerulean blue reveals yet another delightful dimension.

Packard cites many other influences from Matisse and Cezanne to Tom Thompson, but in recent years, she has spent more time looking at contemporary artists, mostly struggling artists like her, who seek



*The Poem I Meant to Write*, oil on canvas, 36 x 48 inches



*Dreamers Pass This Way*, 2018, oil on panel, 24 x 48 inches

new means of expression through abstraction. Seeing the work of Gretna Campbell, a Great Cranberry Island artist whose estate we represent, also made Packard want to work bigger and deeper.

A trip to China last September renewed Packard's interest in mixed media. She was awed by an array of colors and textures everywhere—on fabrics, textiles, structures—and how old everything seemed. Years of wear and erosion exposed luscious colors and textures hidden beneath layers and layers of built up paint on stone structures and buildings.

In the fall, Packard spent a month-long residency at Weir Farm in Wilton, CT. Here she experimented with mixed media using new materials: acrylic, gouache, inks, oil sticks, and rice papers. She made rubbings, textured prints, and collages. The process of working in an unplanned, responsive manner was liberating. Soon Packard began incorporating this organic approach in her own studio.

Packard now works mostly in the studio, and her practice is totally process driven. Her interest lay in pushing the physical properties of the paint, mixing media, and exploring the play of opposites: warm/cool, thick/thin, transparent/opaque, textured/smooth. On occasion, a landscape memory will help get a painting started, but traces of these beginnings are usually gone by the time the work is finished.



*Sorting Through the Memories*  
oil on canvas  
30 x 24 inches  
2018



*Life's Illusions I Recall*  
oil on canvas  
40 x 30 inches  
2018



*Embracing the Storm*  
oil on canvas  
14 x 11 inches  
2018

Packard, who holds a BA in studio art from Smith College, set out to become a printmaker and to study book arts. After college, she moved to Boston where she worked as a librarian and made prints, mostly etching and collographs, at night and on weekends. She studied typography, papermaking and bookbinding, and later apprenticed at a small printing press.

When her son was born, Packard put her fine art ambitions on hold. She started a graphic design business, so she could work from home. The family moved to Sedgewick, Maine, and Packard eventually relocated her growing marketing and graphics business to Bangor, Maine.

By 2006, Packard's nest was empty, and she began painting on weekends. She was working with pastels and for the first time with color. The experience was explosive. Packard's workweek continued to shrink, and her weekends soon became three-and-four day paintings weekends. Packard realized she needed to paint everyday in order to grow. In 2009, she left her graphic design practice and never looked back.

A one-week summer workshop in Stonington, Maine, with the late Boston painter, Jon Imber, marked the beginning of her love affair with the expressiveness of oil paint and *en plein air* painting. She still cites Imber as one of her greatest influences,

having taught her the importance of approaching a piece with an open mind and stepping away from a painting when it holds together as a whole. She is forever grateful for Imber's transformative weeklong workshops that continued until his death in April 2014, and for the enduring relationships she formed within that group, that continue to gather on the same week every summer in Stonington.

People often ask about the meaning behind Packard's titles, which are short stories themselves: *Sorting Through the Memories* and *Dreams Pass This Way* are a few in this show. She usually pulls them from a poem, a lyric in a song, or from something she has heard or read. For Packard, coming up with titles is fun, and they add another layer of intrigue.

*Fruitful Wandering* is a fitting title for this show and for Packard's artistic journey. Pure joy has replaced any hesitation to paint abstract. Packard is working larger, bolder, and as the work in *Fruitful Wandering* demonstrates, she is clearly making paintings from a deep emotional place.

— Karin Wilkes, Director  
Courthouse Gallery Fine Art



*Silver Linings*  
mixed media collage  
14 x 11 inches  
2018



*Love Burning Bright*  
oil on canvas mounted on panel  
29 x 27 inches  
2018



*Linger in the Twilight*  
oil on panel  
36 x 31 inches  
2018





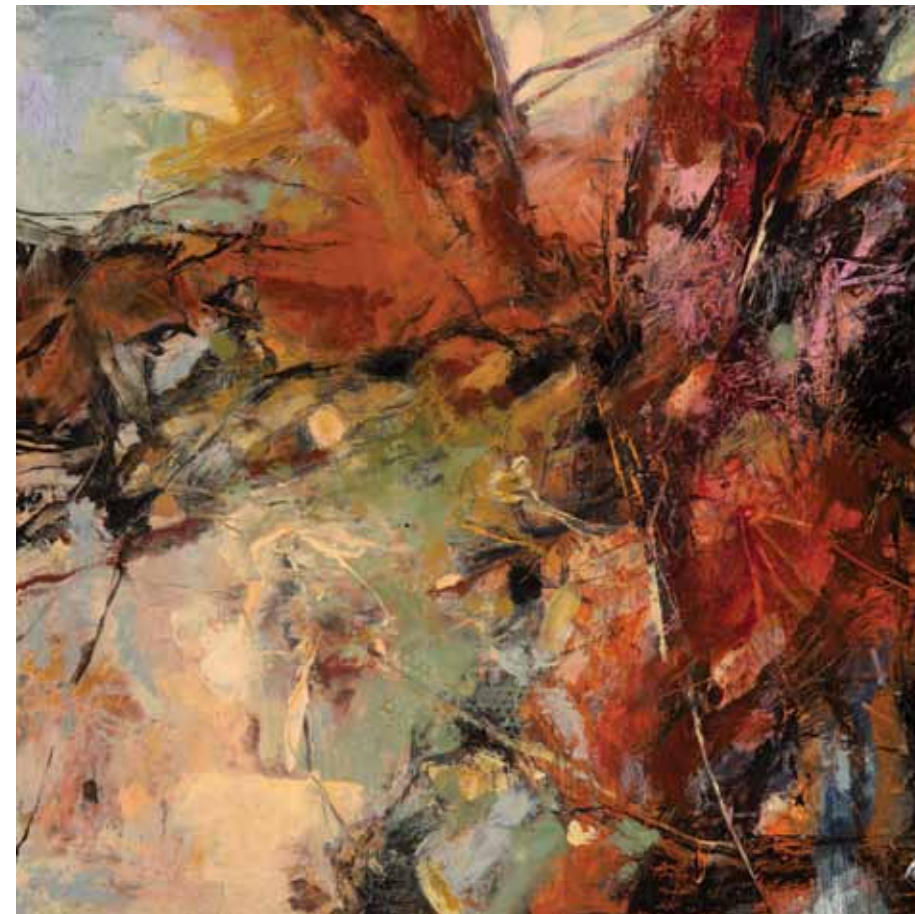
*Home for the Summer*  
oil on panel  
20 x 20 inches  
2018



*Summer Went By In Green*, 2018, oil on canvas, 36 x 48 inches



*An Unexpected Moment*  
oil on panel  
18 x 18 inches  
2018



*November*  
oil on panel  
18 x 18 inches  
2018



*Mixing Memories*  
mixed media collage  
13 x 10 inches  
2018



*The Lightness of Letting Go*  
mixed media collage  
10 x 7 inches  
2018



*Retracing My Steps*  
mixed media collage  
24 x 19 inches  
2018



*Retracing My Steps*  
mixed media collage  
19 x 24 inches  
2018



## LINDA PACKARD (b.1952)

### SOLO EXHIBITIONS

Courthouse Gallery Fine Art, *Fruitful Wanderings*, Ellsworth, ME 2018  
Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens, *Linda Packard: Intimate Views*,  
Boothbay, ME 2015

### TWO-PERSON EXHIBITIONS

Courthouse Gallery Fine Art, *Painting Maine Together: June Grey and  
Linda Packard*, Ellsworth, ME 2014

### SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

Rocky Neck Artist Colony, *Grey Matter: 9 Invited Artists Explore Limited  
Palette*, Gloucester, MA 2017  
River Arts Gallery, *Black and White*, Damariscotta, ME 2017  
The Painting Center, *The Retrieval of the Beautiful*, New York, NY 2016  
Three Stones Gallery, *Both Sides Now: Inner and Outer Landscapes*,  
West Concord, MA 2016  
Maine Farmland Trust, *Paint the Farm Invitational*, Belfast, ME 2015  
Umbrella Arts, *Driven to Abstraction*, Juried Show, Concord, MA 2015  
University of Maine Museum of Art, *I-95 Triennial (Juried Show)*,  
Bangor, ME 2013  
*TEN: 10 X 10 Works by Ten Painters*, Bangor, ME 2011

Gallery at Boyd Place, *Maine Land and Light: Seven Painters*, Bangor, ME 2010  
Handworks Gallery, *Great Spruce Head Island Artists*, Blue Hill, ME 2010  
19th Annual Maine Open Juried Show, First Place Pastel, Waterville, ME 2009  
Bangor Art Society, *Annual Juried Show*, First Place Monotype,  
Bangor, ME 2006

### PUBLICATIONS

Kim, Stephanie. *The Hour*, Norwalk CT, November 22, 2017  
Thompson, Jamie. *Maine Home & Design*, Portland, ME, May 2016

### RESIDENCIES

Weir Farm Art Center Residency, Wilton, CT 2017  
Heliker-LaHotan Foundation Residency Fellowship, Great Cranberry Island,  
ME 2015  
Great Spruce Head Island Fairfield Porter Residence, *Art Week*, ME 2009

### INDEPENDENT STUDIES

Jon Imber: Stonington Painters Workshop, Stonington, ME 2009–2013  
Ed Nadeau: Life Drawing, Bangor, ME 1998–1999  
Andrew McMillan: Life Drawing 1974–1976  
Kaji Aso: Drawing 1975–1976  
Boston Etching Studio: Intaglio Printmaking, Boston, MA 1974–1976

### EDUCATION

Smith College, BA Studio Art, Drawing and Printmaking Concentration,  
Northampton, MA 1974



*Daily Riff 1, mixed media collage, 7 x 5 inches*

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