

ARTIST BIO

Southern California artist Karen Kauffman was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota. She spent part of her childhood living in a remote Cree Indian village in Canada where she was introduced to craft and appreciation for nature. Kauffman's mother recognized her daughter's interest in drawing and her true affinity for the arts and encouraged her talent.

After moving to Southern California, Kauffman went on to study art and design. While still attending high school, she won a scholarship to Art Center College of Design and was awarded an art achievement award from Bank of America. In 1980 she graduated with honors from California State University, Fullerton, receiving a Bachelors degree in Fine Art and Environmental Design. While pursuing her painting career, Kauffman worked as an A.S.I.D. interior designer. Although she made her living as a designer, her true interest was always in fine art. In 1995 she focused on painting exclusively.

Kauffman works primarily in acrylic on large canvases or wood panels, which allows her the freedom and spontaneity of expression for her gestural abstractions. Kauffman borrows from her past both in subject and palette. Her paintings reference her childhood experiences – watching the spectacular spring ice breaks on frozen rivers and the patterning of the beautiful aurora borealis. Her childhood intrigue of textiles and beadwork is evident in her woven like painted abstractions. Art critic/writer Peter Frank writes, "Karen Kauffman's paintings reawaken the raw vitality of Abstract Expressionism, but also acknowledge the structural soundness that underlay the expansive gestures of the Action Painters of a half-century ago."

Kauffman's work has been exhibited in the Netherlands, Poland and the Czech Republic. Her work is recognized regionally with exhibitions in Palm Springs, Santa Monica, Culver City, La Jolla and Las Vegas. She has received numerous awards for her contemporary paintings and has work in the Riverside Art Museum's permanent collection.

A long time resident of Riverside County, the artist lives with her husband on the family's five acres where she maintains her art studio.