



# JS AITKEN *Oil paintings inspired by the rich natural beauty of stained glass*



J. Susan Aitken ([www.jsaitkenart.com](http://www.jsaitkenart.com)) is a contemporary realist painter who lives and works in Canton, Michigan. Her distinctive personal style is a modern interpretation of the 12<sup>th</sup> century art form of stained glass. A combination of intricate line and luminous color, her oil paintings emanate elegance and serenity.

When asked why she paints this way, Susan replies, "During a wonderful journey I made with my children years ago, we experienced stained glass masterpieces in France and Italy that took my breath away. The light and the color were unforgettable." Fast forward to two years ago when she began experimenting with oils, and adding a love for illustration and bold lines of batik, the outcome has been a unique style of painting incorporating encased shapes of color and defined lines woven in complex design.

In addition to its literal visual similarity to stained glass, Aitken's most current work weaves nature with elements of storytelling, utilizing statues and gargoyles. Several paintings explore this historical link more deeply by revealing imagery and symbolic intent, such as *Tranquil Garden* or *Frogoyle: Escape from Washington Cathedral*. Three-dimensional forms are pulled from their places of origin and placed within a framework of stained glass to create an alternate narrative.

Aitken's professional art experience has encompassed book illustration, a bachelors in art with a certification in art education and teaching for a total of fifteen years, and graduate coursework. Three years ago, she retired from teaching full time to set up her painting studio. "I am so fortunate to be able to paint in my own space at home. I'm loving it!"

Aitken's artwork has been shown in exhibitions throughout Michigan and Tennessee, including a two-person exhibit in Depot Town Center, Ypsilanti, and group shows at Madonna University, Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit and Angela Hospice in Livonia. Her paintings were featured in solo exhibits at the Livonia Civic Center Fine Arts Gallery, Beaumont Hospitals in Grosse Pointe and Trenton, as well as Canton's Cherry Hill Village Theater and Huron Valley Arts Commission Gallery. Collections of her paintings were hung in the Plymouth Coffee Bean, the Wooden Spoon in Brighton and Sweetwaters Café in Canton. A future exhibit is planned for the Novi Atrium, as well as other regional group shows and local venues.

*For the entire collection visit her website: [jsaitkenart.com](http://jsaitkenart.com)*