

Any right action first begins with awareness. Artists may not be on the front line of solving the world's daunting environmental challenges, but we do have a role, indeed a responsibility. Art has the power to transcend our known reality, to change the way we look at things, to inspire. Throughout history, artists have wielded their craft to illuminate, provoke and protest.

My paintings come from an unapologetic desire to describe the beauty of the natural world. In these dark times, when our planet and our very existence have never been more threatened, beauty is light and truth. It reminds us of what we have and warns us of what we will lose. It appeals to our better selves and calls for stewardship.

I most often paint the landscape of my two very different, but equally beautiful homes—the Virginia countryside and Pacific Northwest. The quiet, harmonious rhythms of the Virginia Piedmont and the Blue Ridge beyond, contrast with the rugged, majestic mountains of the Northwest. One tame, one wild—and both threatened. The delicate and, at times, ephemeral, quality of pastel is the perfect medium to convey the fragile beauty of these places.

**- PATRICIA SKINNER**