

A hand-drawn signature in black ink. On the left is a stylized profile of a face with a prominent nose and a slight smile. To the right of the face, the name "MIKE THOMPSON" is written in a casual, slightly slanted, uppercase font. The "MIKE" is on the top line and "THOMPSON" is on the bottom line, with the two lines overlapping slightly.

Artist Statement

I am a sailor and an artist. My work is inspired by nature and is expressionist in style. In the summer I spend as much time as possible painting from a sailboat anchored in distant bays of Maine. I try to communicate what it is about the place and time that excites me.

My painting is not "realistic" in the sense that you can recognize where I put my easel. I'm not painting picture postcards. I seek to express something of the spirit of a place.

Making a painting is like bringing a child into the world. A painting has its own personality and its development is determined both by my vision and by the painting itself. I seek to accept rather than control this offspring and help the developing painting find its own way and realize its own potential. I feel that the demands of consistency (from galleries and critics) should not compel a new painting to fall into line. Each painting is an individual. One may emphasize color, another rhythm and a third may be monumental.

Color is important to me. When I look at a scene I compose the colors in my mind deciding in a creative way which pigments to use. From time to time I will match a color to something in the scene but more often I match colors to those already on the canvas. Every painting has its own palette matched to the way I feel about the subject. In a similar way the composition of the painting evolves using what's in front of me as a source of inspiration.

On the boat, where the wind may change and swing the boat around, I need to work fast and sometimes paint in acrylic (It's easier to clean off the deck!) In my studio these sketches inspire my work in oil which is often on a larger scale.

I have recently been extending my work to landscapes of New England - particularly those I see when hiking or skiing.

Mike

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