



## The Art of Frankie Brackley Tolman

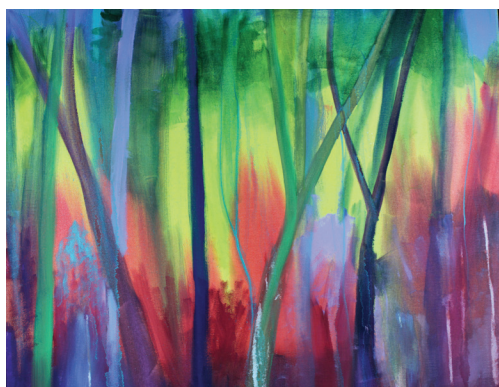
by Mary Ann Hunter

A background in botany – and a yearning for art since she was a little girl – brought Frankie Brackley Tolman to the easel in her 40s.

As a shy and contemplative child growing up in Massachusetts, Frankie never had art courses in school, but her parents had several art books that she regularly perused. The family also attended museum exhibits as often as they could. Frankie was given a Jon Gnagy art set one year, and carefully followed his instructions on television while working diligently at her own creations. After years of attending exhibits and art shows, she began to build the courage to express herself through art. Now, her acrylic palette of bright, bold tones tells stories of endangered landscapes, fleeting moments in the forest, and what she calls the “heartbreaking beauty of the world.”

Frankie supervised the New Hampshire Heritage Inventory for many years, cataloging rare plants, animals, and natural communities across the state. She also taught Botany to non-majors at Keene State. Her exposure to the natural world, as well as her Yankee roots, led her to translate her responses to nature through painting.

When people ask me, 'How long did it take you to paint this?' I say, 'All my life.' Everything I am or have done is expressed in my work.



"I don't want to paint what I see, but rather what I feel about what I'm seeing," she explains. "Scenes of nature grab me and I realize I'm looking at a point in time that won't be there again. I want to freeze it and have it wash over me."

Now, a sought-after instructor at the NHIA's Sharon Arts campus, Frankie has taught experimental painting and mixed media for 15 years. "I have the most fabulous, talented students," she shares. "They are all so very different in the way they express themselves." One of the exercises she insists upon is that her students determine their artistic intent before they begin painting. "Are they trying to convey abundance? Magic? Joy?," she asks. "It is with intention that all art is begun."

### Amethyst Gallery

43 Nubanusit Road | Nelson, NH  
[www.frankiebrackleytolman.com](http://www.frankiebrackleytolman.com)

By appointment and during the Fall Foliage Art Tour  
 over Columbus Day weekend

Take a studio tour on July 16 from 6-9pm.  
 10 Kadaket Street | Mill #6 | Harrisville, NH