



STEPHANIE REITER

# Reacting to Nature

**F**or the entire month of July, George Billis Gallery hosts a show of new works for artist Stephanie Reiter at their Fairfield Connecticut location. Her unique style—achieved by only using a palette knife—is highly textured, colorful and full of light. Her landscape and still life floral subject matter (among others), provides an uplifting, peaceful feeling—communicating the artist’s connection to the “magic” of nature.

“The work that is presently in the show is a good cross section of my paintings at this time,” Reiter notes. “I try to capture the light and time of the day, the magic and beauty of nature, whether I am standing directly outdoors, knee-deep in a landscape or alone, indoors in my studio. Art is always needed to raise our spirit and remind us of life’s fragile, passing beauty. I am fortunate to be able to do this full time now and maintain a close relationship with my painting, and survive the ups and downs of the art world [with all] its trials. I suspect that is the most significant and greatest success—to be able to paint daily, to listen and develop my own inner voice.”



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- 1 *Purple Mountain Majesty*, oil on panel, 11 x 14"
- 2 *Paradise Crossing*, oil on panel, 9 x 12"
- 3 *Today*, oil on panel, 14 x 11"
- 4 *Orange Magic*, oil on panel, 14 x 11"

As for her technique and process, Reiter adds, "I find painting with only a palette knife to be direct and liberating. Without a brush, I can paint more freely and expressively, and the best part is that I don't have to clean them. As I have grown into my painterly predilections, I have come to welcome spontaneity. On an ideal painting day, I am able to let go of some control and let the painting happen without over-managing it. Ideally something happens that's surprising and better than I could have planned."

Like so many artists do while working, Reiter can become completely lost in the moment, escaping and succumbing to her process. The artist majored in sculpture at Boston University and still considers herself a sculptor but, "the immediate, transcending, joyous qualities of painting

better suits me now. People can feel the enjoyment in the paint," she says.

For her landscape show piece, *Purple Mountain Majesty*, the artist shares that she relied on inspiration from a place she frequents often, "because the view is so spectacular," she says. She's referring to Boscobel House and Gardens, an historical mansion set high up on the Hudson Highlands overlooking the river and West Point in New York. "In this painting, I believe I capture the particular time and light of that special day. When I was finished, I could hear the national anthem being played at the army academy."

For collectors that are partial to floral still life scenes, find gorgeous examples like *Orange Magic* and *Today*—subjects that Reiter explores when she's forced indoors.

"In my studio, I set up interesting, beautiful flowers arranged to express some form of tension, space and light," she explains. "I tell 'Alexa' to play the best of Beethoven, and I am off expressing and reacting to nature on a cold winter day safe indoors, more controlled, not braving any harsh outdoor elements, only my own inner demons, quieted and protected for a few hours by Beethoven, palette knife in hand—ready to slay any unnecessary thoughts or diversions."

Reiter's engaging new collection will be on view at George Billis Gallery from July 1 through 31. ●

**George Billis Gallery** 1700 Post Road  
Fairfield, CT 06824 • (203) 557-9130  
[www.georgebillis.com](http://www.georgebillis.com)