

# **THE RETURN: NEW PAINTINGS**

## **THE STORIES BEHIND THE PAINTINGS**

### ***Series: Abandoned***

I began painting abandoned houses around Roscoe, New York in 2011. I often return to the same houses each summer to find new changes as they slowly transition back to the earth. I began to realize that these paintings of abandoned houses are a metaphor for my aging, and the aging of those I love.

Yes, these houses had much better days. Yet they are still strong and vibrant as they slowly transition to another, final state. Their decline is beautiful to me. I hope I age as gracefully.

Here are their stories.

# Carol Perron Sommerfield

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## ***No ATVs***

2012

Oil on Canvas

20X30 unframed

22X32 Framed

I found this boarded up house on a late August day. I loved the cold, crisp light, which brought out the strength of the house. The only sign that someone has visited in the past decade was an old sign that read "NO ATVs". As I painted in the stillness, suddenly, out of the woods, came someone on an ATV (All-Terrain Vehicle), ruining a magical afternoon alone with this house. Well, after that, there was no question about the title of the painting!



## ***Abandoned Interior, Tennenah Lake***

2013

Oil on Canvas

20X24 Unframed

25X29 Framed

This house has a special draw for me. It was abandoned long ago and I have passed it on my way to town for decades. Each year I watch it become frailer, and yet more and more intriguing. One June morning, at 6 am, I passed the house to find the light strangely illuminating the old chair in the room. It was absolutely glowing, as if the soul of the house had been freed of its timbers for a moment. It was a moment I couldn't let pass.

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## ***Condemned***

2013

Oil on Canvas

24X30 Unframed

30X36 Framed

I loved this house. It is now long gone. An elderly lady lived there, and each year she and the house declined in tandem. Then one year she was gone and the house lost its life partner. Slowly it began to crumble until it was torn down. The land has since healed and the only clues that a family and a house lived here are the lilac trees that bloom in the spring, and the apples that drop from the trees in the fall.



## ***Another Time***

2011

Oil on Canvas

24X30 Unframed

30X36 Framed

This house sat on Eminence Road in Roscoe, NY and was abandoned along with its barn, which is the subject of another painting. It has returned to the earth. I loved how the September evening light warmed the house, revealing beautiful colors on its white exterior. The fields were untamed and the old apple tree freed from annual pruning. It was a glorious moment, and the house seemed to revel in its momentary clothing of light.

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## ***Waiting***

2011

Oil on Canvas

24X30 Unframed

30X36 Framed

This farm house sits, season after season, waiting for its family to return. Each season it sags a little more, and someone comes to board up the windows that have broken. I don't know the story of this house, but it and the land surrounding it are my muses. One late August morning, at 6 am, I packed up my paints to spend time with my muse as the sun rose behind her, casting a warm light on my old friend.



## ***Survived The Winter***

2012

Pastel on Paper

17.5X23.5 Unframed

22X28 Framed

This little cottage has been left and forgotten for more than two decades. It is a strange situation, since it is a lakefront house. Who lived here in the summers? How many children laughed with delight on this yard as they chased fireflies and frogs? Do the heirs know they have a summer cottage on Tennenah Lake? Why do they pass up summers filled with swimming, boating and relaxing? This one is about to return to the earth and each spring I eagerly look for it, hoping it has survived the winter.

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## ***Forgotten, Tennesah Lake***

2012

Oil on Canvas  
20X30 Unframed  
22X32 Framed

The porch stairs are gone, the porch is going, and this house is starting its decline. On a brilliant June day I stopped to admire this house. It was too unstable to climb onto the porch, so an exterior appreciation was all that could be accomplished. Nevertheless, the light was brilliant and the house patiently stood to have its portrait painted.



## ***Haunted***

2011

Oil on Canvas  
24X30 Unframed  
29X36 Framed

This house has a personal story and a very happy ending. My parents, Frank and Harriet Perron, found this abandoned historic house on Merritt Island, Florida. It was going to be torn down. Within two hours they bought it and made a promise to the house to restore it. They spent four years of sweat equity restoring it to its former glory. The previous owners had abandoned it, and as they walked away they said "...it was haunted and the house had turned against us." I loved the mystery of that exiting statement. I eagerly awaited my first ghost sighting, but none came. If there were ghosts they must have approved of my parent's efforts, since nary a complaint was ever issued from the other side. I had the honor of seeing it at the very beginning and helping in the restoration efforts. I also had the heartbreak of selling the house after my father died. I recently returned to look at my old friend and was delighted to see children laughing and running across the meadow. It is in good hands.