

Wanda Koop Artist Research  
Painting 220  
November 24th, 2022

Wanda Koop was born in Vancouver, British Columbia as the sixth child to Russian immigrant parents. The family moved to Winnipeg Manitoba where Koop was encouraged in her artistic pursuits from a young age. As a teenager, she attended a commercial art school and then entered the fine arts program at the University of Manitoba. After three years, Koop was offered to be included in a Winnipeg Arts Gallery group show which focused on the nature of painting. This show served as a launchpad for the rest of Koop's career, which she explored all over the world. Throughout the course of her 40+ year career, Koop has shown her art at over 60 one-person exhibitions throughout Canada, as well as Great Britain, The Netherlands, Germany, India, Brazil, China, Japan and Italy, where she also lived for a time.



Koop's work has been mainly abstract since the start of her career, though she has also worked in music, video, and dance. She once said of her work, "I've always lived with a kind of hand to mouth attitude; that's why I've been more concerned with intangible things, because I have always been aware of how quickly you could go from having everything to having nothing." (1997). From this background ideology, Koop has created numerous works, mostly in series, of waterscapes, abstracted portraits, explorations of light and colour as subjects, and some futuristic cityscapes. Through dozens of layers of pigment and paint, she is able to create the illusion that her paintings are glowing from the inside, drawing the audience further into her world.



To me, some of her works look extremely accomplished and striking, while others look unfinished, childlike in colour choice and opacity of paint, and perhaps more like a study than a finished gallery work.

She paints observations of contemporary life and transcendent beauty of the natural world and has- through her artwork and career- been able to create very impactful and meaningful work. In 1993, Koop founded Art City- an inner city arts center and storefront to help bring free teaching, a sense of belonging, and the creative process to disadvantaged youths within her Winnipeg community.



Koop has an incredible ability, honed through decades of work and practice, to bring people into her world and show them scenes from current events, philosophy, and psychology in their most basic and pure forms in a beautiful and thought-provoking way. She is able to force the

audience to contemplate this gorgeous imagery and find the inspiration through the finished piece.

