The first thing you might notice about a Blomquist painting is the movement. Her process begins with a smooth nondescript under painting that does not live long in a tranquil state. The rich encaustic surface is quickly the recipient of random transformations, and color tangents using brushes and a torch. Blomquist says, “I paint in such a way as to honor all bright shiny objects and chase them.”

Drawn to elegant visual balance upset by the unexpected, Blomquist’s paintings invite one to exist with the present moment and explore immediate sensation and feeling. She states, “I paint rather like my memories; a collage of colors and feelings. I rarely recall specifics, but I always recall how I felt.”

Blomquist, a small business owner near Sacramento, credits art as her balance. Although she cannot define a specific time when her desire to be an artist began, she does recall her Mom entertaining her by drawing, and how she used creative pastimes to balance her nursing career. She remembers her Dad, a pastor, balanced his career by designing stained glass. Beautiful art hung in their home, and she had, and still has, a penchant for drawing swooping doodles; but she cannot credit any other specific youthful influence.

Nearing college, Blomquist began to show divided interest between interior design and advertising. She explains, “My family was in ministry and medicine, and my brother was already in pre-med. I think it was hard for all of us to understand my desire to create beautiful space rather than to follow in the footsteps of the obvious. I was not anywhere near their steps. They lovingly insisted I move toward a traditional education first.”

On a whim, and with family support, at 20 Blomquist left college, and her home state of Minnesota, to vacation in California. Today she jokingly says, “I guess I’m still on vacation.”

Blomquist worked for small businesses, and with voracious appetite, dug into the nuts and bolts of running one. Along the way she met the emerging artist in herself.

In her late 30’s, Blomquist accepted an invitation go through Julia Cameron’s, “The Artists Way.” Along with two friends and a few other creative types, she went through a year of artistic discovery. The experience caused her to reframe the definition of “artist” when looking in the mirror. Her interest piqued, she started to write greeting card verse, and got nowhere fast with rejections. Ultimately, Blomquist decided to design her own greeting cards using a play on her swooping doodles.

Starting with verse that had been rejected, Blomquist surveyed friends, and strangers, for their favorites. At one point, she even enlisted passengers on a flight. Taking along several copies of her verse, she handed them out to the nearest travelers. Laughing, she recalls, “It was a moment. People were having fun and that came to the attention of others. Those surveys got further into that plane than I had anticipated.”

What followed was ten years of creating handmade art cards represented out of New York. Using unique, quality materials, and catering to an exclusive niche market, she produced thousands of handmade art cards from her home studio in Rocklin. During that period, a great irony occurred: a well-known line of greeting cards that had rejected her verse now chose to buy her art.

Meanwhile, her responsibilities with her career went from being operations manager, to general manager, and then to partner. She says, “I had to pack supplies and take on vacations to keep up with the art card demand. Most people packed clothes while I packed art supplies.”

Going through the National Gallery of Art while on a trip to Washington, D.C., Blomquist rounded a

corner to one of Rothko's immense rectangle paintings. She recalls, "Hand to chest, I actually gasped. I remember immediately getting lost in the depths of his work, and how his rectangles magically floated." The experience planted the seed to paint. She began to wonder if she could express through abstracts, her first love of all the arts.

Soon to follow was a trip to Santa Fe, where she discovered encaustic painting. Layers and layers of luminous wax solicited similar feelings to the Rothko experience. Collecting a particular favorite, she returned to California, taking, along with the painting, a curiosity about encaustic.

While wandering through galleries, she discovered any work incorporating wax would leap out at her. An ancient technique, it was just beginning to enjoy a renaissance with artists and collectors.

In a sharp 90-degree turn, Blomquist needed to start traveling extensively for business, sometimes gone for up to six weeks at a time. She explains, "My art cards could no longer coexist with business demands. When I could not trust that I would be able to provide the best possible service to my agent, and my clients, I knew something had to be sacrificed."

Travel continued for a few years, and as soon as those days were behind her, Blomquist turned back to researching encaustic painting. While taking art classes from Sierra College and Wax Works West, she re-configured her home studio to accommodate the special requirements of encaustic.

Today, Blomquist still works out of her home studio in Rocklin, CA. The creative process is vastly different from the art cards. Then she would create a design, and make each art card by hand, as close to the original as possible. Today, the art is all about spontaneous energy. She laughs, "The one very familiar thing is art encroaching into all areas of my home. Since my space is somewhat limited, working from a home studio, I have to be very efficient."

Dominated by horizons, Blomquist's visual commentary is made up of a juxtaposition of color, texture and movement. Frequently marks and scars break the plane of the painting.

It is not a far stretch to find where her fascination with horizons began. Her father was called to three churches during her youth: southern Minnesota, where cornfields marched into the distance, disappearing into the skyline; northern Minnesota; living along the expansive shores of Lake Superior, where a new color palette arrived with all four seasons; and central Minnesota, living in a river town, where stands of trees peppered farm fields. All three were covered by a sky of diverse weather patterns.

Blomquist feels she is particularly influenced by her time as a young girl living on the north shore of Lake Superior. She recalls, "I have indelible memories of breezes and peculiar cloud formations shaped by lofty winds. Our family had a front row seat to an expansive view of four very dramatic seasonal changes. I especially loved the stark winters. Periodically huge ore ships, floating to and from the port in Duluth, would break the horizon between lake and sky, disappearing over the edge." She goes on, "I would search for agates along the shore, or spy for taconite that would roll off train cars coming from the iron ranges. Even today random objects on the ground will catch my eye."

Blomquist paints using a complex building of layers. Predominately, her work will have an expanse of white, layered with shadows and long drifting shapes. Her paintings have been described as simple, peaceful, reminiscent of strata, and full of effortless movement. At one juried event, winning best of mixed media, the judge said, "I love everything about this painting. I love how it continues in the imagination off the edge."

Using a torch to fuse and coax each layer of wax into the conversation of a painting, Blomquist paints with spontaneity. She quips, "The best conversations are with abstract art. It is a place where the discourse goes where it may, and the final word is always a delightful surprise." She goes on,

“This medium is very difficult to control. I find the curiosities which erupt are endlessly captivating.”

The transparency achievable with encaustic, comprised of a mixture of beeswax and dammar resin, allow movement deep within Blomquist’s paintings to reflect up through layers. She says, “Just like experience shapes our lives, so does the building of layers, with marks and long sweeping brush strokes, create the life of my paintings.”

While chasing her horizons, the luminosity of encaustic is a perfect foil to marry the collision of the past, to the present. A parable to life, some of the collisions in her paintings are starkly evident, and some just a barely heard whisper. Once she finishes a painting, she feels it conveys an historical moment of a journey to find the other side of a horizon; a pictorial diary of discovery.

Collectors of Blomquist’s work, David and Anita from Rancho Cordova, CA say, “The artwork has had a personal impact on us as it signifies a specific time in our lives of uncontrollable change and full reliance on God. The artwork is a reminder of God’s miraculous saving of my (Anita) life….Others have loved the artwork and can relate to the significance in our lives…. The artwork still captures the same impact on us as when we first saw them and acquired them.”

Blomquist encourages one to feel her paintings. She suggests, “Try to find feeling rather than shape. Let the painting exist in the moment, and wait for it to talk. I don’t paint with any preconceived end point. I paint because I am curious; to lay down layers of conversation that represent the path along the way. A journey that is hopefully full of encouragement, kindness, peace, and perseverance. I am not in control in this place called creativity. A painting tells me when I have arrived. It is, at that moment, a splash of joy.”