



## Workshops in Wild Places

BOGLIGHT

# Painting the Spirit of the Peatlands

September 15 – 23, 2026 | 9 Days

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS BY:

  
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In this immersive earth-connection workshop, we travel together from Inverness into the wide, wind-washed quiet of the Flow Country. Staying at the House of the Northern Gate above Thurso, we'll explore the UNESCO World Heritage peatlands, learning to see their subtle light, ancient textures, and deep ecological significance. To deepen our sense of place, we'll gather with poet and playwright **George Gunn**, whose work rises from the spirit of Caithness, and with **Dr. Roxane Andersen**, peatland scientist at the University of the Highlands and Islands, who will share the hidden intelligence and global importance of these ancient bogs. Through guided meditations, spacious painting sessions, and time on the land, you'll explore ways of translating the stillness of the bog, the soft glow of "boglight," and the presence of this landscape into your own visual language. This workshop invites a slower way of seeing — rooted in silence, connection, and reverence for a place that holds thousands of years of Earth's memory.

In northern folklore, the faint flicker of boglight was seen as a sign that the land itself was opening — a gentle portal to the Otherworld. Bogs were threshold places, where earth and water, past and present, seen and unseen meet. These lights were said to hover just above the surface, guiding wanderers into deeper ways of seeing. In this spirit, we meet the peatlands as a living doorway: a place where attention sharpens and the quiet presence of the land invites a more spacious, intuitive relationship with the world. As we paint, we follow this subtle illumination — letting it draw us into a conversation with the ancient, breathing depth beneath our feet.



## WORKSHOP LEADER

**Janice Mason Steeves** has an MA in Clinical Psychology from the University of Manitoba. Leaving the field of Psychology in her 30s, she became a visual artist and later a painting instructor, training at the Ontario College of Art and Design in Toronto. She has exhibited her work widely in Canada and the US, with paintings in collections in Canada, the US, the UK, Iceland, and Ireland. Janice has taught painting workshops across Canada, the US, Iceland, Spain, Scotland, and Lapland in Sweden. Inspired by personal travels and a deep connection with place, she founded *Workshops in Wild Places* in 2018, leading groups of artists to remote locations around the world to connect with nature and, through a contemplative process, translate that experience into abstract paintings.

Her recent book, *Bloom: On Becoming an Artist Later in Life*, is a wonderful mix of anecdotes about the author's own personal journey as a visual artist, the stories of the men and women she interviewed, and her research into creativity and aging. "An inspiring read for anyone thinking it's too late to indulge their long-ignored creative impulses, as an artist in any field." — Review by Kathy Stinson, author of *A Tulip in Winter*.

## ITINERARY

### Tuesday, September 15: Arrive in Inverness, Scotland

Arrive this afternoon at the railway station in Inverness. Our group hotel is just 200 metres away, making for an easy walk. We have a group orientation meeting later in the afternoon, followed by a festive welcome dinner.

*Overnight: Mercure Inverness Hotel*

*Meals: Welcome Dinner*

### Wednesday, September 16: Inverness / Coach to Thurso

We have some time to wander about Inverness before our private coach ride to Thurso in the remote reaches of Scotland's northeast coast. The Inverness Museum and Art Gallery is worth a visit to get acquainted with the storied heritage of Highland life. We then get to ride through the twists, turns, ups, and downs of the Highlands on the approximately three-hour coach ride to Thurso that includes an enroute stop at the Forsinard Flows Nature Reserve. Our home base House of the Northern Gate overlooks the North Sea.

*Overnight: House of the Northern Gate*

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

Dunnet Head Lighthouse



### Thursday, September 17 – Tuesday, September 22: Workshop and outings

Janice conducts her workshop during these six full days at House of the Northern Gate. Though the painting workshop occupies the majority of our time, we will seek inspiration from the surrounding landscapes of cliffs, bogs, windswept fields, and rocky beaches. This is a wild and remote part of a country already known for its abundance of far-flung sites. Our home for seven nights sits atop a high point, allowing us to gaze out at the North Sea and read the surrounding weather, which is sure to be moody and ever-changing. This is Scotland after all.

In addition to the visit from playwright George Gunn and peatland scientist Dr. Roxane Andersen, there might be a few more surprises in store as we situate ourselves in the singular Highland context.

*Overnight: House of the Northern Gate*

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner daily*

### Wednesday, September 23: Train to Inverness / Departure

After a final breakfast, we have a single group transfer to the railway station and then a train ride back to Inverness. The tour concludes upon arrival at the Inverness railway station.

*Meals: Breakfast*

*Note: The itinerary and accommodation described in this detailed itinerary are subject to change due to logistical arrangements and to take advantage of local events.*

## TOUR DETAILS

### Tour Cost (per person):

C\$6675 (rooms with private washrooms; six available)

C\$6295 (rooms with shared washrooms; two available)

*Includes all taxes and gratuities.*

**Group Size:** 8 participants

### What's Included:

- Group coach transfer from Inverness to House of the Northern Gate on Day 2
- Single transfer from House of the Northern Gate to Thurso railway station on departure day
- Single train transfer to the Inverness railway station on departure day
- Accommodation, based on single occupancy
- All activities as described in the detailed itinerary
- Meals as specified in the itinerary
- Activities as specified in the itinerary
- Gratuities for guides, driver, and included meals
- All taxes
- Full six-day Workshop with Janice Mason Steeves

### Not Included:

- Arrival transfer from airport to Mercure Inverness Hotel
- Transfer to Inverness railway station if arranging independent plans following main tour
- Roundtrip airfare from your home to join the tour
- Meals other than those mentioned above
- Alcoholic beverages with meals
- Art supplies (A Materials List will be provided.)
- Items of a personal nature
- Travel insurance
- Additional arrangements required due to any emergency or other situation
- Any item not mentioned in "What's Included"

### Payment Details

A non-refundable deposit of C\$750 per person is required to reserve a space on this tour. A second deposit of C\$2000 is due six months prior to departure. Final payment is due 90 days prior to departure.

## WHAT TO EXPECT

### Arrival: Tuesday, September 15

This tour begins with the welcome briefing at Mercure Inverness Hotel. This briefing will be in the late afternoon. We will send specific timing closer to arrival day.

### Departure: Wednesday, September 23

The tour concludes with a single included transfer by train to the Inverness railway station. **Please contact us to verify timing of this transfer prior to making any flight arrangements.**

### Level of Difficulty: Easy to Moderate

We have many opportunities to walk and spend time outdoors during our stay. Our primary home base near coastal Thurso largely consists of gently rolling terrain. That said, sturdy walking shoes are useful when outside exploring the land. As a general rule, you should be able to walk unassisted at a leisurely pace for up to three hours on uneven ground.

### Weather

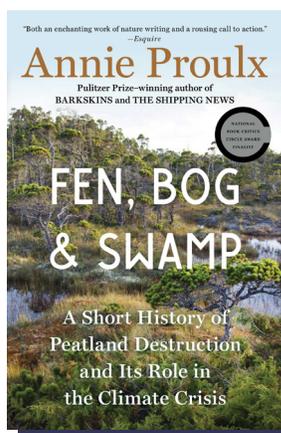
The Thurso region in mid to late September usually has temperatures around 14°C (57°F) during the day and 8°C (46°F) overnight. Over the course of the stay, we can expect a mix of sun and cloud and very likely some rain. .

### Travel Documents

You will require a passport. Please make sure that it is valid for six months after the date of your return home. As of January 2025, you require an Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA) to travel to the United Kingdom. You can apply for this online in advance of your trip. We will send additional details about the ETA closer to the tour start date.

### Recommended Reading

*Fen, Bog & Swamp* by Annie Proulx (2022)



## Accommodation

**Mercure Inverness Hotel** serves as a terrific landing spot for our first night. The railway station is just 200 metres away, so it's an easy walk to this smart, modern hotel in the city centre astride the River Ness. Enjoy a broad range of amenities as well as food-and-drink options.

**House of the Northern Gate** is our home for the bulk of the retreat. Just outside Thurso on Scotland's northeast coast, this luxury baronial house has only nine bedrooms, so we get to enjoy the place to ourselves for the week. To complement the modern amenities, there's also a lounge, outdoor fireplace, games room, and picnic area.



House of Northern Gate

### A Note from Janice:

My workshops call for participants who can embrace flexibility. While I thoroughly research the locations, poring over numerous online reviews and gathering firsthand insights, I don't visit the sites in advance. I can't guarantee perfect weather, stunning bedrooms, exceptional food, or ideal studio conditions. It's an adventure for me as much as it is for you. Perhaps it will rain every day. Maybe strong winds will drive us indoors. Perfection isn't the goal here — adventure is. Are you ready to join the journey?

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**Please contact Janice Mason Steeves before registering:** [janicemasonsteeves@gmail.com](mailto:janicemasonsteeves@gmail.com)

## HOW TO BOOK

Contact the Worldwide Quest office to secure your booking.

**1-800-387-1483 | 416-633-5666 | [travel@worldwidequest.com](mailto:travel@worldwidequest.com)**