ABOUT THE EDITOR

Tonia Jenny is a senior content developer and acquisitions editor for North Light Books. A mixed-media artist and jewelry designer herself, Tonia has authored three North Light Books: Frame It!, Plexi Class and Duct Tape Discovery Workshop. When she’s not busy making art, cooking, reading or exploring new ways of looking at the world, you can find her on Facebook and Instagram.

“...When I paint what I love, it recharges my soul.”
—Jean Griffin

“Art is where I lose myself and find myself.”
—Randy J. Lagana

The process of art-making has long been known to have meditative and healing effects on the mind, body and soul. In Incite 4: Relax, Restore, Renew, we showcase 120 artists from around the globe as they share the most restorative and revitalizing aspects of their art-making through painting, collage, encaustic, art journaling, jewelry art and more. The 158 works showcased in the fourth edition of Incite, The Best of Mixed Media will realign your inner balance and awaken your creative spirit. In turn, they will help you to gain a new appreciation for the role art plays in your life, while inspiring you to create unique artwork of your own.
INCiTE 4
RELAX, RESTORE, RENEW

THE BEST OF MIXED MEDIA

EDITED BY TONIA JENNY

NORTH LIGHT BOOKS
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clothpaperscissors.com
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Journey | Trudi Sissons
12" × 20" (30cm × 51cm)
Digital and mixed media
This artwork was created using images with the kind permission of Tumble Fish Studio.
ART HOLDS A SPACE

Have you experienced the rewards of creating mandala art? Creating mandalas develops a deeper level of self-awareness while both sides of the brain work in harmony. Just as with any intuitive approach to art-making, the subconscious is allowed a voice because we are creating through imagery—color, symbols and metaphors—the only language in which the subconscious can communicate.

I’ve been exploring the practice of making mandalas for a couple years now and I can honestly say there are real benefits that come with a process that is its own meditation.

The process of making art has long been known to have healthy and even healing effects on our inner states of being. Adopting a regular mandala practice cannot only increase our levels of self-awareness, it can promote long-term wellbeing. This holds true for any creative process that allows us to express what’s inside as if no one else is watching.

The way we approach the composition of our works can carry over into the way we compose the days of our lives. As Yael Maimon poses, “Creating harmony and balance in a painting can aid harmony and balance in every aspect of your life, physically and emotionally.”

Restoring balance, feeding our spirit and awakening what’s been dormant deep inside all motivate us to keep on creating. In the midst of our busy (sometimes chaotic) days, art holds a space for us to return to that which always feels safe and nourishing.

The theme for this year’s edition of Incite is Relax, Restore, Renew. Throughout these pages you’ll not only find plenty of inspiring pieces to awaken your own creative spirit, it’s my hope that by reading what the contributing artists have to share, you’ll gain a new appreciation for the role art plays in your own life—and that the next time you’re feeling artistically dead in the water, you’ll take heart knowing new inspiration is as sure to arrive as the next spring.

In the words of Robert H. Stockton, “There are times that what appears to be an artistic dead end is really a new beginning in disguise.”

► Patio Table | Annie O'Brien Gonzales
24” × 20” (61cm × 51cm)
Mixed media on panel

Patio Table is about pure fun. Letting go of realism and portraying the jubilation of bringing flowers to life again through paint, paper and pencil always restores my creative joy and renews my spirit.

“While I focus on drawing, my mind bundles up my stress and worry, and it floats away. My spirit is renewed.”

—JEAN GRIFFIN
The current adult-coloring-book craze has introduced the idea to the general public that bringing an image to life with color is a very relaxing way to spend some time. Obviously this is not ground-breaking news to artists who have always looked to art-making at one point or another as an effective way to relax.

Sometimes an artist wishes to bring about a relaxed sensation in the body of the beholder through the artwork itself, but I'd say for the majority of artists in this section, such as Angelique Wight, relaxation comes through the act of creation. “When I paint, I journey to a place of deep relaxation. In the silence that follows, I feel a sense of clarity manifesting initially as feelings or emotions. It is only when I begin to apply layers of paint and other media that these feelings begin to take shape on the canvas.”

What we’ve come to refer to as “flow” (thanks to the pioneering work of Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi), that state of engagement with activities that bring us spontaneous joy, where time seems to stand still, is perhaps more relaxing to the artist’s soul than an Epsom bath. As Nancy Anderson explains, “When I feel like I want to just relax and work intuitively, I head to my journal.”

I hope that thumbing through these pages, perhaps while curled up in your favorite armchair with a comforting drink by your side instills its own type of relaxation while simultaneously awakening your muse.

In Oslo | Sandrine Pelissier
12” × 12” (30cm × 30cm)
Acrylic paint, watercolor, graphite and ink on Yupo paper mounted on board

This painting is part of a series of flower paintings, painted from imagination. I start this process by trying to see shapes in an abstract background. I then use negative painting to isolate those shapes and start building up complexity, layer by layer. Working freely from imagination and without reference allows me to enjoy the process because I don’t have to be concerned about being right or wrong.

“Always have confidence in the value in your own voice.”

—SANDRINE PELISSIER
As They Float Away

Jean Griffin
14” × 11” (36cm × 28cm)
Alcohol ink, quill pen and colored inks on Yupo paper

Alcohol ink on Yupo is full of happy accidents and joyful color. But for me, that is only the beginning. I then seek to discover what is there, step by step, one drawn-ink line at a time. It becomes my universe to order and reveal. One idea leads to a solution that leads to another idea. Time slows down.

“Thinking, ‘This is going to be great,’ while working on a piece, will blind an artist to what will make it great.”

—JEAN GRIFFIN
**Pumpkin, the Party Crasher**
Laura Yager
32” × 24” (81cm × 61cm)
Cut-paper collage, acrylic paint, watercolor and black paint pen on hardboard

Placing a party hat on little Pumpkin was the final straw for her. Cats are not known for enjoying “dress up,” so Pumpkin’s frustration leads her to crash the party—and the cake as well! Her messy, yet refreshing freedom is set against a background of strict order and precise line work to show contrast. She was so much fun to create as a freely-formed collage. I believe Pumpkin helps to release the everyday pressure we sometimes experience as society urges us to conform to look and act in ways we find uncomfortable and simply just don’t like.

**Pink Pachyderm**
Laura Yager
24” × 32” (61cm × 81cm)
Cut-paper collage, acrylic paint and watercolor on hardboard

One of the largest animals was created by using some of the smallest pieces of paper. This piece renewed my faith in the protocol of tackling “big” issues, little by little. The lengthy process of cutting and fitting each piece proved very relaxing, almost hypnotic. And to make sure there was no napping on the job, a vivid yellow background was chosen to make this pink elephant pop! The subtle, repetitive letter E included in the background finishes the piece, reiterating the “little by little” theme but adding that sometimes it’s doing the same thing, day in and day out that brings us the victory.
Rain Today
Lois Parks DeCastro
8” × 8” (20cm × 20cm)
Acrylic paint on paper with digital enhancement
Rain Today is part of a series I did for a show of line work. Without thinking, I dipped an old scruffy brush into water and ink and made a quick gestural mark on the paper. What started as a warm-up relaxation exercise became one of my favorite pieces.

Bloom
Lois Parks DeCastro
8” × 8” (20cm × 20cm)
Ink on paper with digital enhancement
Blooming happens when one puddle of watercolor meets another. It’s always fun and surprising. But in black and white, the action of ink mixing with water droplets is different. It’s like a lovely hypnotic dance, intense and mysterious.

“It’s ironic, but achieving spontaneity in art takes work and practice. I work at it, then let go. That’s when the magic happens.”
—LOIS PARKS DECASTRO
I found this viewpoint while standing in a grove of aspen trees in Flagstaff, Arizona and thought the trees to be captivating at that angle.

Setting the scene at night with the Milky Way as the focal point added drama to the starkness of the trees without leaves. This is the first of a series of paintings all under the same theme.

I used acrylic for the background and tree trunks and then used oil pens for the branches and bark effects.
Quick Nap
Yael Maimon
16" x 20" (41cm x 61cm)
Oil paint, soft pastel and charcoal
on linen

Cats bring positive peaceful energy into my studio and my life. Quick Nap radiates harmony with the quiet energy of magenta and the warmth of yellow and brown. It represents our need for a short break from reality and life’s emotional roller-coaster in order to balance ourselves and be able to face the world again.

The sleeping cat theme is often depicted in my artwork. Watching a cat taking a nap is certainly a relaxing experience. In this spirit, I want my painting, with its calming effect, to divert the viewers from their stressful worries and make them feel instant tranquility.

Two Orange Cats #3
Yael Maimon
16" x 20" (41cm x 61cm)
Oil paint, soft pastel and charcoal
on linen

Working on Two Orange Cats #3, I felt my spirit recharged with the combination of the uplifting energy of orange-brown and the calming energy of turquoise. This painting also promotes feelings of compassion and kindness and encourages a sense of caring for animals.

I love observing cats engaging in different activities like eating, grooming, playing and so on; it simply rejuvenates my spirit, especially during times of mental stress and tiredness. Also, for me, it only takes a few minutes of painting or sketching cats to make a difference in my mood, feeling more optimistic and less anxious about life’s dramas.
My art process usually begins long before I step into the studio. *Prayer of the Flowers* began at an estate sale with the purchase of a scrapbook made by a young World War II medic. I was touched that he included prayer cards and pressed flowers into the pages of his book, capturing beauty and peace when he was most certainly experiencing difficult times. His momentos were my inspiration and starting point for the piece.

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I have a young son at home, so the limited time I spend creating in my home studio is very precious to me. It’s an opportunity for me to unwind and get back to myself. I love the process of cutting and pasting vintage papers, melting beeswax, brushing it onto the substrate, fusing, scraping back to earlier layers, incising, and then doing it all over again.

I find that encaustic marries perfectly with collage and is a wonderful way for me to incorporate my love of vintage ephemera, mark-making and layering. I think about the passage of time as expressed in the layers of my work, with each choice covering over the past but still leaving it faintly visible. It is in this way that the history of the piece is created.
Titanium Buff
Barb Carr
30” × 30” (76cm × 76cm)
Collage of found and created papers on cradled wood panel

“Titanium Buff” is part of my series Paintbox Colors, in which each piece is named for an artist’s paint color. Based on the theme of the square and its subdivisions into smaller and smaller square patterns, these works incorporate such diverse references as ancient mosaics and modern pixels. They also bring to mind the division of music into various beats per bar. To me, they also convey the place of the individual in society—each one a unique pattern but fitting within the overall structure.

They were created with a wide variety of found and created papers, adhered to a wooden support and protected with many coats of acrylic and polymer.
As a fairly serious person, I approach my artistic creative time as a time to be playful and let go of stress. I particularly enjoy letting my art express my whimsical side. That is what renews me. Through its transparent acrylic colors, this piece shows hints of a secret world peaking through the buildings and sky. What flows from my imagination is often a surprise, even to me.

The Reading Room
Kathy Kostka Constantine
16” × 20” (41cm × 51cm)
Mixed media with digital layering, printed on archival cotton paper

I love portraying unlikely scenarios in my art. It amuses me to have a raven, who we know is a very smart bird, show up in the reading room. In my imagination, the raven reads in several languages and can perhaps follow a musical score as well.
My current abstract work consists of applying acrylic paint and thin collage materials randomly to a wood panel. After a couple of layers are applied, I vigorously sand the surface. This creates numerous abstract color and collage shapes that I then manipulate with additional paint and collage. I spend many relaxing hours working on small details or adding large areas of flat color. I also use this technique to rejuvenate old paintings, especially those that I’m not totally satisfied with. There is a catharsis in sanding away the old to discover something beautiful and new.
You Are Amazing!
Emanda Johnson
7” × 7” (18cm × 18cm)
Thread, acrylic felt (batting) and Sharpie markers on cotton fabric

I enjoy working in a smaller format than most quilters. This piece honors a dear friend on her ninetieth birthday. It is a QR code that when scanned, reads, “You are amazing!” I used a QR code-generating website to create the message, and then printed the results as a pattern. I spent several happy, Zen-like hours sewing the quarter-inch grid. Each square was marked to correspond to the pattern with a dot using a Sharpie, varying the placement of colors in a pleasing pattern. Coloring the dots and then finishing out the tiny squares with a fine black Sharpie was relaxing and meditative. A complementary batik fabric was stitched around the edge to finish. My friend was delighted to receive such an unusual and personalized handmade gift.

The Elephant Watches
Terry Honstead
22” × 15” (56cm × 38cm)
Poured watercolor and webbing spray on Arches 140-lb. (300gsm) paper

I started this painting with a detailed drawing of a statue of an elephant. I poured on layers of watercolor after layers of masking fluid. It was so much fun to take steps and get to the darkest of colors and still have no idea what it would look like. The final reveal (after taking off all of the masking) was like opening a present.
This piece was so much fun to do. I played on my surface of collage and acrylic gels with colors that were bright and cheerful. It was Springtime, so the tulips and bright colors were a welcome addition to the dull gray of winter. This painting was a process of total abandonment, and I still smile every time I see it! The subject and colors restore my spirit and make me sing!
In this piece, I tried many things that I had not tried before. I started with Venetian plaster, applying it to my canvas over stencils that I made myself. After that was dry, I added vintage papers to match the overall theme of my painting. I drew my angel onto the canvas with charcoal and pencil and used re-inkers and Open white acrylic to paint it. I had to do several layers to get the desired results. I also scrubbed back into the paint at times to remove the top layers and reveal the ink left on the plaster and collage. When I was finished, I used cold wax to seal the painting.
After many years of doing figurative painting in traditional mediums, I started doing faces in my journal using torn magazine paper and a glue stick. My goal was not to think too much, but to just do. This is one of my first tries, and I was so pleased with the expressive face that emerged.

I have a folder of faces that I collected to work from. At first I just found faces that had good lighting that I could abstract more easily. Then I began to collect faces of interesting characters. I wasn’t interested in copying them, but rather allowing what I thought of as their spirit to emerge. I have found that when I am new to a medium I am often at my most creative. Try something new—it will restore the magic of art within you.

A couple of years ago I took an art journal workshop from the artist Jacki Long. I was set free to just “play,” and play I did! What emerged for me was a visual journal that sparks my creativity. I am able to develop ideas and discover new techniques through this process of exploration. I am accumulating a storehouse of ideas to stimulate new work. My advice is: Play! It might be the most important work you do.
After doing quite a few faces using torn magazine paper in an art journal, I decided to try it out on canvas. I bought ten canvases—determined to complete that many and see what would come of it. This one just seemed to come together magically with every piece I laid down. What a great feeling!

In this piece, I related to the emerging expression that seemed to suggest a cautious observing. It’s often how I approach the world—I look and I listen before engaging with someone or something new. In the past, I was deliberate in my work, but this process has helped me move away from being controlled by a technique. My advice is to push away your doubts. If you like it, then you’ve satisfied the most important viewer.
“In Touch” is part of the Reading series. I was inspired by a summer vacation. I wished it would not have come to an end. Back home in the studio, painting a total of six mixed-media works was my way of reliving the moments of bliss and relaxation; to daydream and let my thoughts drift away for a little while longer.
My Tooth Hurts
Devon A. Urquhart
3” × 3” (8cm × 8cm)
Colored pencil, oil paint and mixed media on shrinkable plastic and canvas.

This is a three-dimensional miniature, anatomically themed diorama using colored pencil, oil paint and shrinkable plastics. I use colored pencils to draw the tooth and then shrink it down in the oven. I then painted the background with oil paints. The rest of the landscape is created with mixed media, such as handmade trees.

I am drawn to the creation of small intricate works that reflect my interests in nature, anatomy, personal history and the subconscious. I think of this as building a kind of dream anatomy.

Burgundy Swirl Pendant
Maike van Wijk
2” × 2” (5cm × 5cm)
Steel wire, artisan paper and encaustic medium

Inspired by the theme of “Adorn,” I focused on flow and motion with this pendant.

Hand-bending steel wire is a dialogue between the wire’s properties and my vision for a piece. Making the shapes directs where the pendant will go from there. Adhering the handmade paper with encaustic medium is relaxing—there is a rhythm to dipping the paper into the beeswax-and-resin mixture and then adhering it with a small iron and cutting the paper to size.

Each pendant has its own personality, and my work has been described as dreamlike. Being in the studio makes me forget the world around me and helps restore my spirit.
We are all in charge of filling our own bucket. So fill it with what feeds your soul and makes you ‘soul happy!’

—MARYBETH BARRETT, CHIEF BUCKET FILLER

▲ Fall Fixins
Marybeth Barrett, 2.0
24” × 36” (61cm × 91cm)
Mixed-media paper collage with paint, ink and accouterments

A sudden, near fatal illness in 2012 quickly put things into perspective. I realized that I am in charge of filling my own bucket and need to spend my time doing so. My 2.0 version tries to create daily. The perfectly imperfect world of mixed media allows me to make what I need for both my heart and home. I love cutting shapes, using layers of paint, paper, glue, ink, stencil, found objects—anything goes! Set fear aside. You don’t have to be a fine artist to create. Every person and home has a story to tell, so go ahead and paint your story.
I came across this charming toy boat a friend had purchased during one of her excursions to the south of France. I was immediately drawn to the rich patina and weathered markings beautifully etched into the metal boat. I could picture a young boy whose vivid imagination allowed him to captain this ship to many exotic shores while enduring perilous storms and rousing adventures on the high seas.

I carefully selected bits and pieces from my collection of vintage books and journals that would help build my story. I used acrylic medium to collage the paper onto a wood cradle panel. I then completed the piece using fluid acrylics.

Childhood Voyages is about imagination, childhood and memories.

"Vintage paper and ephemera can be a wonderful source of inspiration. Use them to recreate a story, capture a moment in time and preserve a piece of history."

—KATHY CAMERON

▼ Childhood Voyages
Kathy Cameron
12" × 16" (30cm × 41cm)
Acrylic paint and original vintage paper on cradled wood panel
**Boothbay At Dusk**

Jenny Germann

18” × 25” (46cm × 64cm)
Watercolor and woodburning

*Boothbay At Dusk* tells the story of isolation and serenity. Connecting with nature—at peace—a day’s work complete. It is satisfying for both the subject and the observer.

The woodburning is hard and clean. The watercolor is softer but still isolating and simple.

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**From the Water**

Jenny Germann

19” × 24” (48cm × 61cm)
Watercolor and woodburning

I watched the sunset from the middle of a bridge. Surrounded by the rhythmic lapping of the waves, a soft breeze playing around me, the night crept in peacefully. It was an ethereal sunset, and I tried to capture its beauty through playful and evocative color and woodburned textures.

These pieces relate to the theme of “Relax, Restore, Renew” in that they represent places of restfulness. Maine has become a haven in which personal restoration and clarity have taken place each time I visit.
The initial process of creating art is relaxing for me. There is no pressure, just the wonder of what will come to be. From looking at the veins on the back of a leaf and pondering the marks it might make, to the joy I get when I see the impression that leaf actually made on my paper. The activity of quieting myself so I can be mindful of my surroundings always brings me to a place of gratitude.
Cats-dala and Flourishing developed in very different ways. I had a relatively clear concept of the finished appearance of the asymmetrical Cats-dala and I worked from the center of the mandala outwards. I enjoyed playing with the combination of rather abstract shapes and the stylized calico cats. This creates an interesting mixture of more-or-less recognizable elements, while leaving enough scope for the viewer’s imagination. This is another reason why I love to do mandalas— they incite our imagination!
Mandala means “circle” in Sanskrit. Its design represents harmony and order. I enjoy painting mandalas particularly because they allow me to weave joyful, creative and intuitive themes of my own into their natural symmetry and geometrical forms.

For *Flourishing*, I didn’t make a detailed sketch, rather I worked intuitively from the outermost ring in concentric circles towards the center. My aim was for the organic development of the segments to create a rich, overflowing and intriguing whole, whose center is a focal point while at the same time harmoniously integrated.
**Pieces of You**

Stephanie Estrin

12” × 12” (30cm × 30cm)

Acrylic paint, acrylic skins, charcoal and oil pastels on gallery wrapped canvas

These two paintings are companion pieces created at the same time. My work explores the relationship of human nature and emotions. Communication of my feelings is paramount when painting. I strive to make statements through my art that are positive and uplifting; providing my viewer with a world of sensory pleasure.

I like to begin a blank canvas by putting charcoal or graphite marks throughout the canvas with wild abandon. My process is very spontaneous, and each painting holds a unique and explosive energy. I use bold colors of paint and acrylic skins to add texture and interest. Oil pastels are added as the last step to give some extra pop.

**The Heart Knows**

Stephanie Estrin

12” × 12” (30cm × 30cm)

Acrylic paint, acrylic skins, charcoal and oil pastels on gallery wrapped canvas
For this painting, I looked for mediums and techniques that would give me the fluid effects of water, as well as an unusual perspective. Always fascinated about what rests below the water, I decided to give a view of both the underwater and the surface wave action, at the same time continuing the layering concept in the actual painting. I used inks and fluid acrylics mixed with a resin medium and applied it in many layers. I wanted the viewer to wonder, “What lies beneath?”
Little Red, In Pink

Bev Jozwiak
15” × 22” (38cm × 56cm)
Transparent watercolor, acrylic gloss medium and 9B graphite pencil

Ballet is my favorite subject. I have easy access to this genre, since my youngest daughter (pictured here) is a professional ballet dancer. Tutus are layered and textural, so I decided to run with that idea in this piece. To achieve that sense of energy, I painted acrylic gloss mediums in areas on the pristine white paper. Once dried, I painted like normal, but the places covered with the medium inherently react differently. I also used a soft lead pencil to scribble and create movement. I decided that the background was too dark, so I placed a striped stencil down and scrubbed out with a Magic Eraser to highlight and lighten.
Humor plays a big part in my crow series. I am always looking for new scenarios to which I can add these birds. I started with Fabriano Artistico 140-lb. hot-pressed paper and transparent watercolor. To create the blue shimmer that black birds often have, I dipped my brush in a blue/green shade of Pearl Ex powder pigment and applied it directly onto the already painted blacks. I also used it in the metal poles and splashed it into the background. While my paints were still wet, I scribbled into the paint, pulling graphite and paint out into the whites of the paper.
This is a woman with no doubts. She leans back, the landscape seen through her window, disregarding minutiae and feeling good in her own skin. Wearing low heels in her favorite color, gray hair around her shoulders, extra pounds on her hips—her assertive personality emerges.

Using my typical technique, I sketched in watercolor pencil, adding a watercolor background. I love cobalt teal, so it frequently floats into my compositions. Her background utilizes papers as nifty patterns. I collect papers, grouping them in stash bags for future use. All sorts of papers—new, antique or recycled—are in my work, which is sprayed with a finish to minimize fade.
Late Autumn
Wei Yan
12" × 16" (30cm × 41cm)
Chinese ink and watercolor on rice paper

My wife’s calm expression during the strong wind in late autumn inspired me to capture the impressive moment.

I choose black and white to do the main character, since I wanted to keep the piece simple. I enjoy combining realistic light-and-dark techniques of Western painting with traditional Chinese freehand painting in bold and vigorous saturated ink to capture the eternal moment of beauty.

As an Eastern background artist who lives in the Western world, I’m fortunate enough to absorb essential elements from both artistic systems.

My pursuit to create and develop my own personal style continues to be my lifelong journey as an artist.
A few months ago, I was recuperating from surgery and gave myself the gift of rest and relaxation—and the permission to create without obligation or deadline. The view out the window was my veggie garden bustling with bees, butterflies, lavender, rosemary and daisies. With little to no energy, I just started gathering random bits and pieces of vintage ledger paper, old used maps, sheet music and leftover scraps of wallpaper. I adhered the various papers to the canvas board without much thought of placement or balance. Next I grabbed a mechanical pencil and started drawing flowers and insects all over the collage. At one point, I switched hands and began drawing the images with my non-dominant hand. I felt a shift in my brain. I needed to concentrate a bit more on my drawing and less on my pain. After watercoloring the insects and flowers and then adding a bit of gesso to the background, my canvas of flowers and insects seemed to come to life.
ZenGems
Eni Oken
5" × 5" (13cm × 13cm)
Ink and colored pencil on artist tile

I started to draw Zentangle during my recovery from cancer in 2012. My personal style of Zentangle-inspired art is heavily shaded with the intent of making the patterns look three-dimensional, which in itself is part of the meditative process. This piece incorporates yet another level of Zen to the art: ZenGems (a term which I coined), which are drawings of smooth precious gems created using colored pencils over shaded ink. The results are positively radiant.

Life Patterns #7
Sandrine Pelissier
9" × 12" (23cm × 30cm)
Acrylic paint, marker and watercolor on Yupo paper

This painting is part of an ongoing series where I am reworking some of my life drawings. I chose Yupo paper as a support for watercolor paint and ink drawing. I love how markers and pen and ink slide so well on Yupo because of its very sleek surface. It makes the process of drawing patterns very enjoyable and relaxing.

I am interested in the juxtaposition of organic shapes and geometric patterns, drawing and painting, reality and fiction. This is what I am exploring in this series. The title Life Patterns also refers to the patterns that keep recurring unconsciously in life.
Fir
Sandrine Pelissier
24” × 36” (61cm × 61cm)
Watercolor and markers on watercolor paper mounted on board

For this painting, I combined two different views of the cross section of a fir: a naked-eye view and a microscopic view. That is why you can see both tree rings and cells on the same picture.

I often like to combine organic and geometric shapes in my work. For Fir, I worked on watercolor paper that was mounted on board. That way I could apply a finish to the painting and display it like a painting on canvas. I also like that the sides of the board are left natural and have a connection to the subject of the painting.

Discovery Walk
Sandrine Pelissier
30” × 30” (76cm × 76cm)
Acrylic paint and markers on canvas

I like painting forest scenes and am very inspired by the rain forest here in British Columbia. I find that the succession of trees in a forest works a bit like a musical rhythm with repetitions and variations, and I am representing my own interpretation of this rhythm. The process of drawing repetitive patterns is very relaxing, and I enjoy this part of the process very much. I think you get into a state that is close to meditation.

I am originally from France and some patterning reminiscent of Art Deco somehow found its way in my paintings, making it a cultural blend of Canadian and French influences.
In creating *Koi Meeting II*, I was thinking about the movement of the water being generated by the fish as they surface from the dark, murky water beneath. Their graceful prismatic movements cut through the silence as they propel through the water, finally breaking the surface and the silence. The image is one of a playful dance between fish, water and my own self-reflection.
After Midnight We’re Gonna Let It All Hang Out

Ian Lucking
20” × 30” (51cm × 76cm)
Pastel, pencil and acrylic on illustration board

On one of those late nights following too much coffee, I sketched with my pencils and then later applied layers of pastel and acrylic. The five playful penguins and the magic carpet over the old clock face are whimsical and reflect the subconscious at work.

By using altered perspectives and proportions, I gain a lot of artistic freedom. Why would my studio come alive after midnight? Because in my abstract creations, reality is limitless.

Morning Stretch

Tiffany Miller Russell
10” × 9” (25cm × 23cm)
Colored and handmade art papers

To draw an animal, I must feel the pose in my own body. Anatomy, gesture and movement become the stress and tension of muscles in slow motion. The weight of heavy feathers, long limbs, the twist of a neck. The shivers that travel down bird skin to lift every feather in turn and shake away stiffness. A breeze that lifts a light body for a long travel in a dance with air.
Could the progression of natural selection result in the advancement of certain species? Creative birds using books and instruments begin to explore via an open window to the future. The enlightened owl represents the use of advanced scientific wisdom, while the cage represents past narrow-minded confinement. An active and vocal blue jay optimistically hopes for good luck. Do these birds want to peacefully coexist in their new world? Who holds the key?
Godai Hitotsu
Akemi Shimko
84" × 12" × 12" (213cm × 30cm × 30cm)
Paper sculpture with watercolor, block printing, paper cutting and origami

I am inspired by math and patterns in nature with my main artistic focus on mandalas. I incorporate these patterns into my mandala art by blending sacred geometry, symbols and traditional art forms, such as origami and block printing.

The art piece was inspired from the Japanese concept of the five elements. The five elements are embodied in the cycle of life. I represented the five elements using the Platonic solids. The five elements are arranged from bottom to top: Earth (cube) is at the bottom, followed by Water (icosahedron), Fire (tetrahedron), Air (octahedron) and Void or Emptiness (dodecahedron) at the top.

Each of the Platonic solids were cut from textured cardstock. I used transparent watercolors for the background color. I carved symbols onto erasers and used stamps for block printing with opaque inks on top of the watercolor backgrounds. The additional paper elements were cut from cardstock and painted with watercolors and acrylics. The traditional origami pieces were painted with watercolors and incorporated into the design.
This painting is an invitation to escape into a fantasy world of mystery. The serene moth-like figure, her hand outstretched, welcomes all to enter. Her presence evokes a feeling of serenity. The calm rhythm and flow of the oceanic setting suggests a safe place to rest and regain balance. I rarely paint with an end point in mind. It was not until the painting was complete that I realized I had included so many symbols supporting this magical, imaginary place of renewal. The moth figure is a symbol of change and rebirth. The spiral tattoo on her hand symbolizes empathy, growth and balance. The circles represent wholeness and containers of life force.

“Embrace the process of creating instead of the product, and you can silence the inner critic. Your art will be a mirror of the joy you experienced.”

—KAREN E. O’BRIEN
This painting started as a very different abstract piece but suddenly got stuck. I put it on my wall for some time, and we stared at each other in confusion. It wanted to tell me something, but I wasn’t ready to listen. At last, on a warm Spring day, I let the resistance go, turned it upside down and on a whim, threw a handful of tiny paper scraps on it. They bloomed into flowers, loosely flowing across the canvas. Spontaneity and a bit of silliness are often the best way to get back in the flow.
Born under the sign of Aries, I can become easily bored, with art and nature being the only exceptions. I have always had a love affair with color, texture and pattern on pattern, not only in art but also in fashion and home decorating. Experimenting with mixed media—especially color—appeals to my eclectic personality.

The range of colors and patterns used in both the foreground and background are to help create the multi layers of sight and sound that are characteristic of city life.

My intent was to convey the message: No matter where you live, inner peace and harmony can always be found in the simplest of tasks—like walking the dog.
The definition of numerology is: the branch of knowledge that deals with the occult significance of numbers. As an artist, I use numbers a lot. I appreciate their various shapes as well as their significance. Where would we be without numbers? How would we figure out formulas needed for so many various functions? How would artists know what a half sheet or quarter sheet was? Next time you look at a number, give it some real thought and you, too, will have a new appreciation for them.
I find doing abstract work to be a form of meditation. Drawing, painting, scraping, changing the surface, and then changing it again. I work toward the time when the design, colors and surface begin to hum. The final painting is the result of many hours and many layers. By cutting away the extras, I get closer to the essence of what I intend to say. This ongoing series is dedicated to my daughter, Malia (1958-2013).
Art is my passion. Nature inspired me to create this painting, I started by gluing carefully shaped fabric and randomly torn pieces of collage paper onto watercolor paper. Then I painted it with washes of acrylic paint. I painted the rose shape with white acrylic and gradated it with graphite pencil to define the petals. I then applied collaged images and text onto the background. Edges were softened with colored pencil and acrylic washes to blend areas where needed. The completed painting was glued and stitched onto a black gessoed canvas and then varnished.
This painting is an homage to the relationship we have with plants and insects. The inspiration came from my slightly wild and overgrown backyard. The rose (past its prime) was still beautiful, and I loved the way its petals curled. The wasp, with its glistening body, is a contrast to the soft texture of the rose petals. In the background, colored pieces of fabric control the composition and represent my garden’s plants and trees. The human thoughts written in the border were inspired by the nature theme. I used the same painting technique as with *The Rose And The Dragonfly*. 

*A Rose and a Wasp*

Margaret Nisbet

15" × 11"

(38cm × 28cm)

Acrylic, colored pencil, graphite, collage, fabric and thread on watercolor paper attached to canvas
Meditation is the ability to be happy alone. In a small thing, there is no happiness. Open your energy and send it in the right direction. You lose your energy only if life becomes boring in your mind. Let's be interested in something, let's be addicted to it! Come out from comfortable usual shell and then you will find your long-awaited harmony.
In creating Maiden at Sea, I attempted to capture the mystical and spiritual joy of the ocean. The driving force for this piece was color and texture. My goal was to create a place of comfort, calm and harmony—a safe haven where the natural beauty of the sea would shine with a dash of sparkle. It is my hope that upon viewing Maiden at Sea, one feels immediate tranquility in the movement of water and the glow of color that reflect the magical life under the sea.

May the joy in your art and in your heart be as deep and wide as the sea.

—RENEE PASQUALE
For many years, people have traveled in campers of all sorts to relax and have fun. There are groups now that travel together in caravans. I met some of the ladies from the “Sisters on the Fly,” because they invited me to come and teach them how to make their own camper collage. I did one in preparation and was hooked, so I did another and then another until I had done six! I did The Caravan, because of the way they travel together. It was such fun.

RV Park
Suzy ‘Pal’ Powell
12” ×12” (30cm × 30cm)
Torn paper on stretched canvas

RV Park reminds me of when my husband and I take our camper and leave home. We are in search of a sign with that on it! No doubt everybody that pulls a camper somewhere hunts for that sign too! I love the old Airstreams and wanted it be like home, so I added the curtains and the flowers.
This scene of a quiet, tranquil sheep paddock takes one to a time and place rare in today’s bustling, busy, noisy world.

While primarily a watercolorist, I enjoy exploring other mediums for a change of pace and to expand my experience. I was first introduced to wool “painting” while on a trip to Australia many years ago. Since I have always lived in a rural area and raised sheep and other animals, it was natural to use this material in my artwork.

▼ Sheep Paddock
Christine Lathrop
9” × 11” (23cm × 28cm)
Natural and dyed wool on burlap
ART RESTORES

Just as interacting with nature restores our wellbeing, the universal understanding of art restores our sense of global connection, and we feel the return of a sense of belonging. Art creates a connection between the artist and the one viewing the art. It’s as if the artist is asking, “This is how I see it—do you see it this way, too?” Or, “This happened to me—can you relate?”

But it’s not just the end product that has the power to restore. The process an artist goes through to release a work of art can restore something within that may have previously felt out of balance. As Barbara Olson explains, “This creation of conceptual art is a very private journey, one which ultimately brings my abstract ideas to life. The process, while not inherently relaxing, does restore a certain sense of personal equilibrium. When I can successfully transfer my idea from my head to the paper, all is right with the world. I am renewed and ready to get back on the creative treadmill once again.”

Whether it’s your sense of humor, your sense of adventure or just the sense you have more in common with other artists than you ever imagined, I hope these pages restore something within you that has been in need of replenishment.

Hangry Red Bear | Dawna Magliacano
10” × 10” (25cm × 25cm)
Collage with monoprinted papers, acrylic paint, ink, charcoal and gesso on panel

Working organically is extremely relaxing for me. I don’t stress over getting anything right that way. I simply go on an art-making journey. I start with printing a plethora of monoprinted papers in a wide variety of colors and patterns. Once I have a dried collection, I tear them into random shapes with my eyes closed. I then move the pieces around until I discover a form within the shapes. In this piece a lovely bear showed up, and then I saw the fish-shaped piece. From there I found pieces in colors that resembled the birch trees and built the rest from that point.

There is a strong sense of nostalgia for me in this particular work because of the twenty-two years I spent living in the majestic state of Alaska. I finished Hungry Red Bear out using charcoal and ink to add shading and fine details. I love that I can nearly hear the rush of the river and smell the crisp and fresh Alaska air when I look at this piece.

“Hope is my concept; Faith, the paintbrush; and Life, the canvas on which I can display my creativity.”
—ORIN CARPENTER
Up All Night
Dawna Magliacano
12” × 12” (30cm × 30cm)
Acrylic paint with acrylic glazes and a watercolor wash on black gessoed canvas
Humor has always been a source of healing and rejuvenation for me. (I actually worked as a professional comic for twenty years.) When I do work such as this piece, I am amused by it and laugh at the whimsy of the characters as they develop.

All of my Folk art pieces feature a cup of coffee, which to me is symbolic of the restoration of energy, something shared with friends or taking time out for yourself. Up All Night is about doing whatever it takes to be there for you, twenty-four hours a day.

I love using vibrant fluid color on a black gesso base. Allowing some of the black to show through creates a textural effect. I finished with a wash of watercolor.

Room Between the Waters
Dawna Magliacano
24” × 18” (61cm × 46cm)
Acrylic paint with acrylic glazes and a watercolor wash on black gessoed canvas
I am a storyteller first but I also love to create a piece that leaves lots of room for the viewer to get lost in their own story. Folk art, which has that element to it, has always fascinated me. So when I began doing this work, it was my goal to have lots of room for interpretation. Room Between the Waters leaves lots to be questioned by the viewer.

I used a glaze of yellow hue and white to create a dinged frost on the glass-bubble windows she is peering through. And I purposely used warm colors in the interior and cooler colors in the waters to reflect the different temperatures of the two worlds.
I work these Folk story pieces organically. There are no preliminary drawings done for most of my work, but especially not with these—other than light sketching directly on the canvas. Each mark leads me to the next. This kind of work is very restorative to my soul and fills me up creatively. It takes the direction it wants, and I am simply acting as a vessel. I get lost in the small details, adding in layers of glaze on top of flat acrylic that fill the characters in with their personality and part in the story.
She came to me in a dream. I know I am supposed to paint angels sharing their messages: “You are not alone. We are always with you. You will feel our presence. We are here.”

I am a “Pollyanna.” I don’t bury my head in the sand, but I do believe that the power of love will change the world. I believe that people are basically good, and that we all can make a difference. Red, Yellow, Black or White—we are all one. The only thing that separates us is fear. The only way to heal is love.
The terrorist attacks on Paris affected me deeply, as did the ones in San Bernadino. Something is off in our society these days.

My art contains messages about love, acceptance, compassion, forgiveness, peace, hope and harmony. My goal is to put on canvas that we are all in this together. The only way that things will change is if we reflect love to one another.
In the Silence
Ella Reeves
36” × 36” (91cm × 91cm)
Acrylic paint and permanent inks on canvas
I immerse myself in the first breath of the morning. I listen for loving guidance and wisdom. I embrace the mystery of life.

Always, She Thinks of Him
Ella Reeves
40” × 40” (102cm × 102cm)
Acrylic paint, permanent inks and glazing on canvas
In the color of life, darkness shrouds. Strength and courage will prevail.
I miss the way we were; the special place in my heart only you can fill.
Density of human population varies in different places. Some are populated more than others. The same can be said for organisms in the universe. Taking forms of mapped universes by humans, microscopic elements are bound together to create unity of continent. Lines contrasting with dark establish the balance of light and dark. Although the world is densely populated, there is a balance to keep the cycle running.

The constant repetitive motion of line along with the task of treading a surface freely without a draft highlight the meditative moment during creation. The single grain of white leaves a simple, open concept of simplicity in form while restoring the curiosity of how microscopic an organism is in the universe.

**Cosmos**
Novita Permatasari
32” × 40” (81cm × 102cm)
Acrylic paint with white and silver ink on wood panel
These Friends are what I refer to as “snow globe girls.” Like oracles, they hold secrets in their snow globe-wrapped hair—secrets they will share for a pretty price. Some secrets are simply their own thoughts; some are visions of the future.

Today, a young man has come calling on a cool winter day wanting to know what his future will hold. The Friends are delighted with his visit and find him to be handsome and sweet. They would like to keep him for themselves, but alas that will not be. His destiny belongs to the heart of another.

For me, sharing my story through art comes from my connection to other people—what is happening for them and the emotions that are then stirred within me.
Seek Asylum
Lynette K. Waters-Whitesell
18” × 12” (46cm × 30cm)
Acrylic paint and mediums, gouache, twine, translucent digital transfer paper, turpentine, digital transfers and pen and ink on deep-cradled panel

Seek Asylum is about creating conversation and assistance for the one-in-five adults with mental illness. An early twentieth-century asylum resonates the unsettling feeling that society bestows. I juxtaposed an image of a well-dressed, assumingly wealthy gentleman to personify mental health issues, as mental illness can affect the affluent and privileged as much as any economic status, race, sex, age and background.

The layering method I used makes sense to me because of all the layers of life. Old photos and ephemera reach back to the past. I contrasted materials from yesteryear with materials of today by utilizing Photoshop® and plastic-based transfers—all of which signify the expanse of time.

I pushed society’s ingrained connotations through the use of screaming hues to both grab attention and contradict the uncomfortable subject matter. I believe in a complex process for interlacing storylines.
Inspiration
Orin Carpenter
18” × 24” (46cm × 61cm)
Acrylic paint, acrylic pens, watercolor, ink, scrapbook paper and coffee on 400-lb. (850gsm) Strathmore bristol board

Inspiration represents my growth as an artist coupled with the understanding of my faith and who I am. The butterfly is my struggle from life’s cocoon and the branch is my faith, which is my foundation.

The cup represents life and what it has to offer, which are the overflowing colors that represent hope. I chose a butterfly because butterfly lives are fleeting, but gracefully experienced by their flight. Their persistence in flying, inspires me to live life the same way, while stopping to take a sip from the cup of hope so my true color can be revealed.
The painting tells the story of the disappearance of Native Americans from their Western land. This narrative was created as a way to introduce figures into Western landscapes.

In order to introduce figures into the composition, I researched government archives to find vintage photographs of the Native Americans who once occupied the territory of Arizona and surrounding states. I painted the photo as a trompe l’oeil, making it look worn and aged in order to create the illusion that it was an actual photograph taped on the surface of a painting.

I chose a photo that showed Navajos in the same geographical area represented by the landscape. The ephemeral nature of the photograph and its worn appearance suggest that their existence here was only temporary.
A simple line drawing of a life model rediscovered in a pile of my old drawings started ideas percolating. By purposefully choosing this back view rather than an identifiable female frontal view, I ask the viewer to consider beauty in the strength and endurance of a woman’s body.

Morphing many times, ideas began living in layers of ink, charcoal, graphite and pastel. Infusion of life occurred by drawing, rubbing and brushing emotional meaning into this painting. Imagery began to hint at historical changes in a woman’s life with Byzantine or Madonna halo effects around the head of past, to today’s colors of indigenous cultures. The strong flexible spine facing a dark wall of unknown, interplayed with color (blood red and other pigments) ground the figure solidly on the paper. A seated configuration commands its confined space giving strength and dimension to the image as a whole. The viewer is invited to find their own interpretation by visually peeling away the layers and reinterpreting.
Fairy Tale Castle
Mark Allen
36” x 18” (91cm × 46cm)
Acrylic paint and graphite pencil on canvas

Inspired by color and theme, I attempt to create a new vision of what was, is or could be. Cynical by nature, I transform the despair I see and feel into a new vibrant world of color and hope—a world we’d all like to live in or at least visit. There is beauty to be found and experienced, and if I am at all successful, my own vision will materialize on paper and invite you in.

“When I paint what I love, it recharges my soul.”
—MELANIE ANDERSON
There are many things in my life that give me joy, two of which are my dogs and art-making. Spending time with my dogs is therapeutic and forces me to be present in the moment. My work is about sharing the joy I feel when I’m around them.

I wanted to convey the enthusiasm that dogs have for play. I painted over a repurposed figurative painting. The base colors of the old painting were nice, so I used them and layered more color. I cut a word stencil and used other stencils I had on hand for more layers. I painted the dog on top of the layers, including reflected color from the background.

This piece began as a study of my Chihuahua begging for a belly rub. I liked the results of the study, so I did another one of a different dog. When I put the canvases together, it looked like a yin-yang symbol. Since the dogs were opposite genders, I painted feminine motifs behind the female and masculine motifs behind the male. I used the same layering technique with Yin and Yang that I used for Eat, Sleep, Play, Repeat.
My love for watercolors and the beach converge in this series inspired by Pawleys Island, SC. At the beach, I can hit pause and let the sounds of the waves, the birds and my Creator recharge my soul. Gazing upon the reflective pools of water leads to personal reflection. Through my art, I want to preserve these sights and feelings forever.

“Never stop telling your story—be it through art, writing, music, gardening, home décor, cake baking or stick-figure drawings. Everything you create can be an expression of your true self.”

—KIRSTIN MCCULLOCH
I was out walking on a harsh winter day—a day that saw the first snow in thirty years—and saw a single cherry blossom had bloomed. That cherry blossom sparked this painting.

I love incorporating past memories in my current paintings—a playing card and chopstick wrapper from my European travels, sheet music from my Nan and pretty paper scraps I’ve collected over the years.

This painting celebrates my love of whimsy, of creating girls whose big eyes tell their own stories, and incorporating everyday life into my work.
I started practicing yoga because I couldn’t touch my toes. Through yoga practice, I found not only my flexibility growing, but also my sense of vitality, serenity and mindfulness. My yoga series captures different aspects of the practice through Sanskrit titles. Hamsa translates to “the breath that travels within.”

Close your eyes; take a deep breath; feel the energy reach out to the tips of your fingers and toes. I imagine hamsa would look like this.
Just as free-writing can begin with any word, I begin with any color. The field of color on the white canvas creates a space to enter. The color field opens, taking on life. It asks for shading or brightening or definition. I find this process absorbing and centering, having the restorative nature of any meditative practice.

*Lime Lake,* began as a meditation on the warmth of the summer sun. The mutation to water came unbidden. When is a meditation finished? That’s a good question. It’s always a different answer.
This painting is about our journey through life. This boat and the figures in it represent my family. My husband, with his compass in hand, is looking ahead as he makes plans for the future while I look back, dreaming about what has been and what might be. Only our son with his beautiful child’s eye is able to engage completely with the present as he folds and launches his paper boats. The time will come for him to put the paper boats away and take up the helm of his own life, but for now his only work is to play and learn and grow.
Currents
Wendy Fee
48” × 24” (122cm × 61cm)
Acrylic paint, ink and rice paper on gallery wrapped canvas

Currents is part of a series that was painted to express my dialogue with nature and how forms evoke emotion. The use of a limited palette reflects the colors of optimism, and the patterns of light and textures are achieved through a variety of mediums and alternative tools.
Earth Angel was born as art for a Christmas card. The artwork is actually very simple. Shapes were cut from various pieces of patterned papers. The feathers for the wings were cut out of a feather-patterned paper, and her head, hands and feet were painted in watercolor and gouache.

Long ago, my mother had an imported-gift boutique. There was an assortment of Balinese figures carved from wood—warriors, flying goddesses and mermaids—hanging from the ceiling. Earth Angel doesn’t exactly resemble these figures, but she certainly possesses their mystical quality and stance. I think it’s fascinating how our artistic style develops and finds expression in new ways while drawing on unconscious images from the past.

“Paint it for yourself as you see it in your mind; then you will know it is authentic to you, and it will rise above critique from anyone else.”

—JEANETTE HOUSE
I rarely remember dreams but wake with images in my mind’s eye that I feel compelled to paint before the details evaporate. Such a Deer remained as clear as day after a forgotten dream. Using loose lines and layered brush strokes to create her expressive, vibrant portrait, I contrasted realistic and abstract elements to suggest her dreamlike setting. My deer spirit girl has a knowing about her; she remembers what I have forgotten, and it gives her an inner strength I lack.
**Embrace the White**  
Laura Lein-Svencner  
8” × 8” (20cm × 20cm)  
Collage on watercolor paper mounted on wood panel  

I find myself affected by my environment, whether it’s a change in the weather, or the winds whipping through the treetops as I look out my studio windows. A white blanket of snow can create cabin fever. During these times, I still walk in the woods—a place of peace. Activity, though covered with snow, is still going on but just underneath the surface. Trying to capture that in this collage had me thinking about embracing the wintertime instead of enduring it. Now I look hard and listen deep when I hit the trail. The placement of the little letters in this collage represents the small sounds being heard under the snow.

**Cradled in Love**  
Laura Lein-Svencner  
8” × 8” (20cm × 20cm)  
Collage on watercolor paper mounted on wood panel  

During a visit with my sister, she shared with me a find from her creek wanderings—this turquoise rock cradled in a half-moon shape. She observed how attracted I was to its uniqueness and gifted it to me. Many sketches later, my personal understanding on all different levels and what is important in life emerged with this collage. Love becomes many different things to us—deep and cradled is what I personally felt and wanted to express.
Reclamation emerged from a long struggle with anxiety within my own life and my artistic process. I had been grappling with debilitating depression for months. I was so afraid of failure that I could not create. I had so much pent up negative energy, I used the canvas as a punching bag—slinging, hitting, slapping and beating coffee, paint, ink and charcoal into the surface. Once I had expended that energy, I was able to work in quiet contemplation as I painted the figure—a woman within an environment that became a representation of mental space, taking hold of her own circumstance and creating something beautiful.

“Destroying something can help you create something new.”

—JANE PHILIPS
Cello I
David H. Barclay
48" × 27" (123cm × 69cm)
Acrylics on board

I am drawn to painting close-ups, letting the shape and curves of the subject factor heavily in the composition. My goal is to achieve a high degree of realism.

I think everyone feels a connection to music. The skill required to build these instruments is truly extraordinary, and my paintings are in many ways a tribute to the craftsmen who make them. Dramatic lighting and shadowing creates a three-dimensional quality.

I paint exclusively on board and attempt to capture the rich detail of wood grain. My technique involves building up layers of translucent glaze to create depth, sometimes reaching fifteen to twenty layers. I mix my own paints using pigments and a special binder.
This piece is one of a series called Black is Back. It began on a very hot, humid summer day in Florida. Found objects included “heat” and other random words collaged on a stretched canvas with matte medium. The layered piece also began with an acrylic wash of cool colors such as my favorite, purple, in contrast to the heat of the day. Other layers began to form around an enamel pin, which was in my collection of ephemera. Some of the collage elements included hand-painted crumpled silver foil and other painted papers. I finished with drybrush techniques and acrylic paints, incorporating a warmer palette of colors.
Sojourn
Kelley J Sullivan
24” × 12” (61cm × 30cm)
Acrylic paint, charcoal, oil pen, molding paste and sand on stretched canvas

I’m never entirely sure how mountains become mountains or clouds become clouds. I just try to listen to the paint and let it settle where it pleases. Only then do I come in with pens, charcoals or sand to embellish it.

Cynthia
Gail Postal
72” × 24” (123cm × 61cm)
Graphite, oil paint and Swarovski crystals on board

Cynthia is a very tall, self-contained, strong and elegant person. I tried to convey this by having her look directly at the viewer. Rather than engaging the viewer, however, she is deep in her own thoughts. The painting is life-sized (six feet tall), and there are actual crystals glued into her earrings. I also used strong dramatic primary colors rather than pastels.
My feelings of loss turned into finite points of paint and ink. I was grieving the ending of what was and the reality of what might have been; mourning experiences never shared and paths that will never cross. Names fading. No touch. No breath. Within the catharsis of creating, I found solace. For those who have walked beside us are among us still.

“There is little point in trying to create what you think people want to see. Often, what people want to see most is what is buried within.”

—KELLEY J. SULLIVAN
Coveting Wings explores comparison. The artist compares light to dark, warm to cool, expressive to refined. The dancer works in a similar way. Often however, our frail humanity causes us to also compare ourselves with one another rather than simply being thankful for the gifts we have. The dancers shown represent diligence, confidence and the human frailty of comparison.
In my dancer-inspired series, The Audition considers the emotion of the dance. Both the dance of the brush and dance on stage often involve intense emotional and physical focus. The Audition may show the mental preparation before the audition, or the confident rest rewarded after the dance.
Approaching a piece like this, I try to keep my mind open and not force anything. This portrait is all about tuning into that unseen frequency that reverberates through and around the subject. It’s about looking back in time and locking onto a particular memory, or fragments of a memory, dragging those fragments out of my head and attempting to reassemble them on paper. As esoteric as it sounds, when drawing like this, I try to achieve some sort of gnosis, turning off my consciousness, letting that unseen unheard frequency consume me, guide me. It is never about the end result, but rather the journey getting there.
An interest in vintage toys uncovered the subject of pedal cars. To my delight, many were gifts given at yearend holidays, and many children were photographed fully bundled against freezing weather. I imagined this boy to be jacketed for a 60+ degree day at the beach in San Diego—lucky kid!
As artists, every time we begin a new work, it’s akin to a rebirth. The person facing the lump of clay or blank sheet of watercolor paper is not the same person who created the last piece. Growth has since taken place, and her approach in the now has never before existed. Personal renewal is created through each act of art-making.

Though some of the artists in the following pages tell us directly that their works speak of renewal, the theme for this final section may make its appearance in a more subtle way compared to the first two chapters. Nonetheless, many common threads are found here.

Experienced through nature, the approach of Spring and the planting of new seeds, several pieces in this section reflect symbolism many of us use to express renewal: water, plants and butterflies to name a few.

Finally, you’ll be inspired and touched by several examples here of art-making as a cathartic act. Whether releasing strong emotions associated with regret, issues of challenging health or the challenges of relationships, catharsis always results in renewal.

Tulipmania #3 | Annie O’Brien Gonzales
48” × 48” (122cm × 122cm)
Mixed media on panel

Above all elements, my love of color comes out in all of my work. Gardens and flowers have always been my place of renewal and joy. My earliest memory is of walking through a lush garden with flowers bobbing over my head. I try to renew that sense of wonder in my paintings. My Tulipmania series of abstracted florals takes me back to those childhood experiences.

“Sometimes the process of art-making is messy and hard, not unlike life, and you just have to push your way through the muck until you bring something better into the light on the other side.”

—BARBARA OLSEN
Many of my paintings start from an abstract painting that I wasn’t happy with. I don’t start off with a plan, but sometimes I will look for fish and bird shapes. I outline the shapes that will make the painting interesting. I take a photo before I put in the background color. I’ll look at the photo on my computer, drop different colors in for the background and decide which color looks the best. I paint the negative areas around the shapes and tie the images together with ladders and shoestrings.
When looking for objects in my abstract paintings, I look for quirky things that don’t make sense and are out of place. I try to make the painting whimsical by putting things together that the viewer doesn’t usually see in a painting. They can then create their own story.
The words “evidence of things not seen” had been rolling around in my head for some time with no particular imagery connected to them. Then in a dream, the image of an endless waterfall originating from an apparently finite source (a kind of aqueduct) appeared. When I woke, this image and those five words connected immediately in my mind, and I completed this piece in my studio that same day. This image, coming as it did during an artistic dry spell, with the innate symbolism of an endless stream of water flowing from a self-contained aqueduct with no apparent source was certainly not lost on me!
I strove to depict renewed life as a butterfly emerges. I started with washes of color on wet paper using cool colors and warm accents to establish a soft and glowing underpainting. I made no preliminary sketches, trusting my intuition to be my guide as the painting evolved telling me what to do next. I painted both negative and positive shapes. Then I collaged in texture with rice paper that I had stained with watercolor and liquid acrylic. When I showed the painting to a friend, she suggested the fitting title, Butterfly Nebula.

“Refresh your painting journey. As the painting evolves, let your intuition tell you what to do next.”

—DEBORAH SWAN-MCDONALD
This is a tribute work to my grandmother who has passed from this world. Inspired by the content in my journals, Juliette’s Song combines real-life observation with imagination. To create the magical, dreamlike environment, I used fluid techniques such as dissolving, spraying, dripping and blotting onto a layered, texture-infused ground.

The journal excerpt that served as the impetus for the work reads, “It was a clear autumn day, and the air was crisp and cool. Twinkling through the trees of ever-evolving color was the warm caress of the sun, shinning like a copper flame in the sky. While I walk, a white dove appears as an angel from heaven. Its fluttering wings and soft symphonic coo create a melody that illuminates my mind and fills my soul. I close my eyes and feel Juliette’s warm embrace and spiritual presence around me. Even long after my encounter, the experience resonates, serving as a comforting reminder that a grandmother’s love will always be.”
In Hope of Spring

Sue Grilli
36” × 12” (91cm × 30cm)
Mixed media and collage on canvas

In Hope of Spring reminds us of a time of renewal by viewing the seasons displayed with their own sense of color. I started this painting in an intuitive fashion by adding marks and pieces of collage papers. Then by building layer upon layer of paint and papers, the painting invites the viewer to look deeper into the juxtaposition of seasons and uncover the time of year that sings to them.
▶ L’fant
Jenifer J. Renzel
14” × 11” (36cm × 28cm)
Acrylic paint, colored pencil, two-part epoxy clay and collage elements on mixed-media paper

This piece painted itself in a sense. Using a style inspired by modern-primitive artist Jesse Reno, I built up the background with unrelated bursts of color, lines, smudges, patterns and scumbles, working to highlight interesting outcomes and painting over ugly ones. Shapes began to emerge, and after rotating the painting, modifying it and looking at it this way and that, a flash of inspiration brought the form of a winged elephant. As I outlined the elephant and added details, I began to think of it as an ancient or future deity. I added worshipers and demons at the bottom, letting my mind stream onto the painting while adding scale and complexity.

▶ The Triad
Jenifer J. Renzel
11” × 15” (28cm × 38cm)
Acrylic paint, colored pencil and collage elements on mixed-media paper

Created in the same way as L’fant (background first), the three central figures eventually surfaced. I began adding details and collage elements, working towards what I now think of as a delegation of visitors from different worlds.
This mixed-media photograph is a self-portrait that tells the story of female expression. The centerpiece of the photo is a “Mother Earth” figure caught in a struggle between peaceful existence and ultimate destruction. Serene yet calamitous, this piece highlights human emotion through a vast visual landscape. My technique mirrors humanity’s destruction of the natural world. Starting with clean water, I add pollutants: acrylic color and cooking oil, which create a tarnished sea of texture and shape. Precision is key. Too much color, and the water becomes muddy; too little, and it’s too thin and lacks shape. I never know how the paint will interact with the water; it’s left up to chance or physics or the universe. The shapes morph together or pull apart. Then as quickly as they’re produced, they disappear. I have to be quick to capture it, or it’s gone.
I have always held a fascination for the ability of chameleons to change their colors and camouflage into their surroundings.

I tried to capture it changing colors as it emerges from the leafy growth into the open blue skies. I used netting on the wet paint to simulate his scaly skin. Once dry, I removed it to leave the perfect scales. The gold leaf finished off the painting perfectly.

Empress
Toni Pullen
¾” (2cm)
Polymer clay, mica, repurposed sari silk and copper wire

When the daily clutter of life surrounds and overwhelms, my studio beckons. Transforming and manipulating cold, hard clay, laboring to give it a new purpose, revives my emotional and physical disposition. Once cold; the clay is now warm. Once lifeless; now changing. Once shapeless; now formed.

Always fascinated by the history of jewelry and the ways in which other cultures adorn themselves, I created this freeform cuff—thin leaves attached to an ornamental band—as a tribute to Etruscan style jewelry. The clay was highlighted with mica pigments, and a closure of repurposed sari silk was attached with copper wire.
My artworks develop and demonstrate the spatio-temporal conditions of our ever-evolving urban and ecological environments. They are created to act as the catalyst for defining speculative changes in notions of cities, societies and cultures. Essentially, the work facilitates a reciprocal dialogue among those multifaceted realms in the morphological nature of constantly shifting topography and geology. The drawings explore the hybrid drawing techniques combining both traditional media (ink, acrylic and graphite) and digital media (algorithmic processing, scripting and image compositing with custom software).
Cheery Festive
Anannya Chowdhury
14” × 14” × 2” (36cm × 36cm × 5cm)
Acrylics on wood
I implemented a style of painting called Madhubani, an ancient technique. This style uses freehand single brushstrokes in continuation without breaks while maintaining a symmetrical pattern. I have also implemented freestyle Henna Folk patterns and used my techniques of style, curves and designs. No pens or markers were used—only acrylics, brushes and a bamboo stick. Creating my artwork, Cheery Festive, felt like ding-dong music to my ears. I felt the colors were dancing in laughter and beautiful songs for happy, joyous days. I am truly thankful that my artwork is the direct reflection of the positive energy and vitality that I bring to my canvas.

Poppy Field
Suzanne LeBeau
20” × 23” (51cm × 58cm)
Acrylic paint, glass paint, found and repurposed objects (CDs, fake fur, fabric and buttons) on upcycled board/frame
My art is constantly evolving. Although I enjoy realistic painting, I feel more of a spiritual involvement when I do experimental works. On these, I may have a general idea in my head, but once I start, I never know where it will end. On pieces like Poppy Field, I enjoy perusing my shelves of found objects or items saved from the landfill to see what will work for that particular painting. I crank up some music and let things flow with tools, hands, acrylic mediums and objects. To me, art is like life in this Emerson quote: “Life is a journey, not a destination.”
Mermaid
Elizabeth Rudinica
15” × 7” × 5” (38cm × 18cm × 13cm)
Styrofoam, black sand, toothpicks, palm fronds, shells, twigs, glue, Modge Podge and white coral

Walking along a beach in Hawaii, I thought I saw the tail of a mermaid in the sand. Squatting down for a closer look, I could see that it was an ocean-aged crownshaft of a coconut palm—curved, finned, graceful—a mermaid’s tail. Working with Styrofoam as the base for the body, I added twigs covered in palm sheathing for arms, black sand to cover her body, and vertical strips of palm sheathing to add seaweed-like movement. Opihi shells cover her breasts, and small white shells form her pearlescent scales. Her face is a mosaic of abalone shells—appropriate for the mysterious, mythical creature that she is. Using a long piece of wispy palm sheathing, I created her long tendrils of hair that adorn her body as she lounges on a coral rock.

Port-A-Cath
Carolyn S. Berry
5” × 7” × 1” (13cm × 18cm × 3cm)
PORT-A-CATH®, metal religious medals, thread, map pin, cut paper and printed text on Rives BFK paper in a shadow box frame

Getting a breast cancer diagnosis was difficult enough. When confronted with needing to have chemotherapy and two more surgeries, it took my emotional and physical stress to a higher level. Medical jargon and survival statistics can be daunting. After my last surgery, I asked my surgeon for my PORT-A-CATH, knowing that I would create something with this object that had been in my veins and chest for over five months. Using my doctor’s medical transcript and religious medals, I decided to make myself a badge-of-honor shadow box to celebrate being cancer free.
Donovan’s song “The Season of the Witch” came on the radio, and I suddenly had a vision of a strong, young woman standing in a grove of birch trees. I tried to paint it—failure. Then I tried a second time—failure. So I decided to let the art take over. Whenever I have let the art direct the process, I have gotten more expressive results. Thus the woman became an old crone, her face and hands created from book pages. The grove of birch became a twisted thicket of trees and vines. And somewhere, she got a woven basket and a toad. Seven ravens flew in to join the scene. *The Season of the Witch* is not my original vision—it is much more intriguing.
**Beautiful by Scars**  
Joyce van der Lely  
12” × 8” (30cm × 20cm)  
Acrylic paint, charcoal, gesso, ink, gold and pencil  
on distressed wood slab  

A friend asked me to write about a personal experience for a book she wanted to publish, filled with stories about women working through a variety of difficulties and coming out beautiful through their scars. A poem was all I could manage with words.

Loudly boasted for their size  
Silently suffered for their depth  
Superficially showing on skin  
Or hurting deep within  
For all these is true  
... somehow ...  
They make us stronger  
And more beautiful too  
These scars  

I started this portrait with the poem in mind. While working, I decided to go in the Wabi-sabi direction, where imperfections are honored and broken cracks are mended and filled with gold. This approach suited my poem and my idea regarding scars in the best way, so I stayed with a simple limited palette of the grisaille, added gold to fill in the cracks and distressed the natural raw slab of wood even more by pulling splinters out from the sides.

**The State of the Union**  
Katherine Pippin Pauley  
11” × 12” × 12” (28cm × 30cm × 30cm)  
Assemblage using found rusty metal on a wooden base  

I started picking up pieces of rusty metal long before I was an artist. I just liked the look of rust. I knew that someday I would make something special with them. I retired, recreated myself as an artist, and decided to enter a backyard sculpture contest. The pieces of rust fulfilled the requirement of using found items. The top hat is an iconic symbol here in Springfield, Illinois, the “Land of Lincoln.” I put them together to create *The State of the Union*. Satire intentional.
Wander through The Cul De Chick, and hopefully you will feel like you are taking a stroll around the neighborhood (or the cul-de-sac). My intention is for you to create stories for the characters you come across, as if you are walking by a neighbor mowing the lawn, or talking with a friend or family member outside of their home. Some of the characters make you laugh, some make you smile and others make you wonder what they are up to. I used palette knives, scrapers and more heavy-bodied paint than I usually use to create the depth of texture and color throughout the piece. To create shading and visual texture, I used ink and various drawing media.
Forewarning
Vickie Nelson
20” × 21” (51cm × 53cm)
Transparent watercolor with gesso, acrylic, water-soluble graphite, pencil and stencils on Fabriano 140-lb. (300gsm) cold-pressed paper

Forewarning is a noisy crow sitting on a fence post. A stencil was used in the foreground to remove paint in a subtle way for some of the fencing, thus creating the illusion of depth.

I love painting black. Crows with their glow and iridescent shimmer make it a challenge to capture.

“Be confident. Use bold brush strokes.”
—VICKIE NELSON
The creative process is predominantly an emotional experience for me. My current paintings are about women exploring their spirituality through reflection, meditation and prayer. The woman in this painting is holding her own cosmic bouquet of thoughts and projecting her dreams out to the universe. Reach for the stars and grab one!
I love to go to the zoo and the park with my grandchildren. This collage is from an outing with my granddaughter, Anika. Children have such a great outlook on life—everything is a thing of wonder. I love the way the splash of white light on her fingers and face adds to the emotion of the piece.

I started doing collage about five years ago as an experiment in ecology, using up colorful pages from magazines and catalogs. The more I played with it, the more I loved working with it. After all the colors are in place, I like to find words and phrases that will add to the overall theme of the piece. It makes the collage speak two ways: photographically and verbally.
Growing Pains
Gabriela Domville Dondisch
12” × 10” (30cm × 25cm)
Fabric, tea bag, graphite, thread, needle, metal finding and seaweed root
Walks in nature keep my inspiration going. I feel a connection to and marvel at plants, birds, sea, sand and even pieces of debris. Nature and its relation to humankind is a recurring theme in my work. My background in fashion design has pushed me on to include fabric and stitching in my work.
This piece was created from objects that I collected from my walks. I sewed them to depict the cycle of germination, an allusion to childhood. The process of growing can be painful, with its disappointments, frustrations and tantrums. Yet it is a way to acquire knowledge, to mature and share our experiences. Mothers are always mending these feelings to help their children bloom.

Planting
Gabriela Domville Dondisch
18” × 18” (46cm × 46cm)
Fabrics, thread, paper, ink and graphite
The whole purpose of planting a living organism into the ground is to make it grow and bloom. A gardener tends to it, facing adversities and fragility, yet enjoying the process. In a similar way, we plant values and principles in our children, guide them and tend them and hopefully teach them to be conscious and caring people.
I used my hand as a model, sketched it onto paper and went over it with my sewing machine. I used several colors of thread to give it volume. Layers of textured fabrics were placed as a symbol of fragility, ground, sky and moon. Seeds were sketched onto recycled paper and glued to the multiple layers of fabric.
A string is attached to everyone, following us throughout our lives, becoming knotted and entangled as the length of the string increases. *Gold Lining: Myself and Jared* was shown in my senior art show, which had a concept of portraying my personal “lifeline” and the people and events intertwined with it. In this particular piece, I’m reevaluating how my boyfriend and I are tearing apart and rebuilding ourselves (together and separately) as twenty-somethings, because people constantly evolve—and we are no exception to that.

To make this piece, I relied on pen to create depth and expression in the faces with a multitude of lines. Also, the pen allows for a more graphic atmosphere that meshes with the coarse, discolored background that was made using sandpaper and watered-down acrylic. The yarn is a symbol of how my boyfriend and I are connected. It extends and flows away from us to include everyone else who has touched my life and continues to flow and swell within it.
This piece uses one of my favorite meditation mantras, “Freedom resides in the present.” It applies not only to everyday life, but also art-making—especially the loose, freeing techniques I used to begin this painting.

I squirted and threw acrylic inks onto clayboard. Before they dried, I wiped away the interior to leave an outline of fluid flowing lines and shapes. I worked the rest of the panel by pouring diluted inks, reacting to the surface by adding water or salt. To counter the loose abstract beginnings, I finished the work with some very considered tight rendering of words and images. I silkscreened my mantra, washed away the bottom portion and perched a monarch—chosen for its beauty and very brief life span—on top.
Imprisoned 3
Rick Madore
12" × 12" (30cm × 30cm)
Wire, rope, cloth, thread and oil on canvas
This painting is about the cold, solid, unforgiving steel doors, razor wires and bars of the inside of a prison. The occupants of these depersonalized cells have a choice. To see the opportunity to liberate themselves and release the criminal thoughts that brought them there; or to tie the knot tighter on a man controlled by his confined, rigid thinking. This painting of an empty cell with a single window covered by a steel lattice grate represents that choice. A lone figure outlined in wire that is wrapped with rope and soft colorful cloth stands with the shadow of the grill tattooed onto his cheek. I work with these men every day in the interventions department of a maximum-security prison in Kingston, Ontario, where my experiences as a life-skills facilitator guide my art.

Heart
Amanda Judd
6" × 6" (15cm × 15cm)
Acrylic paint, pastels and ink on paper mounted to wood
I have a stack of paper that I've torn to size. I grab a pen and allow my prayers to come out onto these sheets of paper. Intentions, descriptions of the day and my passing feelings emerge to become poetic scrawl that I gesso over. I select a sheet and scratch into the gesso, marking meditation. I pick up charcoal and sketch the shape of a head, eyes, nose and mouth. While adding pastels and paint, a face emerges.
It is a process that I can and will repeat again and again; a practice to return to, each piece different than the next; a way to step into the unknown and meet what happens now.
I paint what I love. My process includes painting coming from a place of emotion. That is the spark that ignites the process and adds meaning and excitement. Through my paintings, I try to communicate the depth of emotions and gratitude I feel for my subjects. It makes perfect sense to me that I am drawn to mixed-media work. We are all made up of many layers. Sometimes in my life, as in my paintings, I try to peel back the layers to see what is hidden underneath. Most often, the layers are buried deep but still reachable; hidden but peeking through.

—Randy J. Lagana

"Art is where I lose myself and find myself."

—Randy J. Lagana
The Next Phase

Randy J. Lagana
24" × 18" (61cm × 46cm)
Acrylic paint and found objects on Masonite

This painting commemorates the next phase of life for me. I recently retired after twenty years in the Connecticut prison system—the first ten as a drug counselor, and the last ten as a parole officer. In the upper left corner is an authentic brass key to a prison cell. The symbolism is not subtle, but this is a very personal piece, and I wanted to remind myself of the freedom I enjoy. It also represents unlocking my creativity.

The stones are from a beach in California, a place where I feel a great spiritual connection. The texture on the right side of the painting was obtained by placing torn, brown wrapping paper into the wet gesso.

Everything and everyone can have more than one purpose. I am and have been many things, but throughout I have always been an artist.
I started this project in 2014—the year I moved to Abu Dhabi. By layering different shards of articles and newspaper, I wanted to convey a plethora of ideas, representative of how society had so many preconceived (not always positive) notions about the Middle East. Despite these notions, I tried to weave in what I hoped my experience would turn out to be, highlighting words such as “embark,” “life quest,” “travel,” and “world.” And then I left it.

A year after living in Abu Dhabi, I finally knew the story I wanted to tell. By drawing the Grand Mosque, I aspired to capture the beauty of the UAE. The expansive blue sky was symbolic of how I’d ultimately recognized that the possibilities were still endless in my new home.
It’s about 3 a.m., the wee hours of the morning, and it’s insanely quiet. A place that was normally bustling with students was turned into a serene winter playground for urban skiing. Throwing convention aside, my son Corey is pursuing his dream of becoming a professional freestyle skier. As a traditional realistic oil painter, that’s also what I had to do to create this piece. Beginning with a heavy cotton paper, I alternated charcoal, ink, NuPastel and acrylic with water rinses and erasing. It’s scary to take your whole piece and run it under the faucet and then drip ink all over! You risk ruining your work. But the process of loosening up and obliterating convention is ultimately satisfying. As Corey puts it, “Everything you would normally worry about is just gone. You feel nothing—and everything.”
Sense of Place, Common Thread Works
Donna Shiver
12” × 8” (30cm × 20cm)
Watercolor, pastel pencil and thread on 300-lb. (640gsm) cold-pressed paper

Sense of Place depicts the affinity of a woman to her homeland—Portugal. This image began as a wash of earthen watercolor over leftover paper. Not fully aware of its purpose, I put it aside. Months later, I paired it with Estefania, our paternal grandmother. I could somehow see her character within the marks of the watercolor. I chose a warm pastel to create her portrait. After sketching the facial structure, I prepared holes for a sewing needle and thread (an item from daily life) as a way to show the common threads of a person to a place.
I came to art in my mid-forties. Since I could not draw, I did not consider myself to have any artistic talent. A friend who is a collage artist encouraged me to try my hand at collage, since it did not require any drafting skill. I took off from there. When my friend started experimenting with digital compositions, I was right behind her. Eventually I taught myself to draw. After years of exhibiting and selling my art, I will be taking my first college art class soon. I am looking forward to it.
**Sedimentary Life**
Barbara Olsen
20” × 14” (51cm × 36cm)
Torn maps, paper fibers, iridescent acrylics, watercolor and wax pastels on 300-lb. (640gsm) watercolor paper

“Sedimentary Life” is part of my Transitions series. This series explores the navigation of life’s passages from childhood to independence, on into parenthood and through the advent of the empty nest, the acceptance of aging and the accumulation of wisdom. Torn maps are integrated in many of the pieces to signify the life journey. This piece expresses the multi-layered richness of our lives: Layer upon layer of experiences build on one another to transmute into one idiosyncratic life.

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**A Fragmented Life**
Barbara Olsen
21” × 21” (53cm × 53cm)
Torn maps, paper fibers, iridescent acrylics, watercolor and wax pastels on 300-lb. (640gsm) watercolor paper

Part of the same series, this piece depicts a primal Mother Earth crucifix embracing her emerging offspring, the chaos of child-rearing, the letting go of the nesters and the gentle, albeit bittersweet repose that follows.
As a child I found great joy playing with things I found in the trash. I still am inspired by finding ways to incorporate items that get tossed in the trash into works of art. In this piece I used discontinued high-end wallpaper sample books as my material. I removed the pages with a razor blade and placed like colors in piles that became “paints” for me. The heavy cardboard binders and thick staples leave about an inch of paper behind and torn holes in the paper where the staples were. What to do with that? I kept all the binders, knowing that inspiration would come at some point. Eventually, it came to me in a dream, and then I brought it to life. I used a round paper punch over areas that had torn holes, then randomly punched out the paper strips. The punched-out holes were added to the surface, one at a time, to carry color and movement throughout the piece. The surface has one layer of clear encaustic wax over it. The texture at the bottom was created by building up wax layers over a stencil, then using a blue oil stick to catch the surface crevices. Under this area are phone book pages that were used to clean off oil etching ink from the brayer. They had such interesting patterns—I couldn’t throw them away!
My paintings are small tributes to nature, people, everyday life and anything that springs into my mind. The final outcome, the painting, is just the destination of a journey that starts with an image, thought or observation.

My Laces series, with its delicate details, describes a metaphorical universe where the impalpable, painted veil hides fears and hopes.
Self-Portrait
Barbara W. Xiong
14” × 11” (36cm × 28cm)
Digital mixed media with cassette tape

The image for the subject was taken in Photobooth, hence the distorted large eyes. The dark areas of the image were then traced, and cassette tape was laid in strips to cover those areas, with the excess being cut away. This piece was inspired by Erika Iris’s cassette tape portraits of famous musicians.
**Summer Silence**

Tori Weyers  
12" × 9" (30cm × 23cm)  
Mixed-media collage, acrylic paint, Copic marker, colored pencil and gouache on BFK Rives printmaking paper  

“Summer Silence” is part of my meditative mixed-media Circle series. I am drawn to circles and the balance, symmetry and peace I find in creating with them. I use bits and pieces of ephemera to explore and incorporate the past into my creative process. I think about the hands that touched these old pages of history and how they connect to me in the present. I used warm bright colors to bring this faded past into the present and give it new life. My process is intuitive in nature, and I allowed the paper to tear in an organic fashion, working with each torn piece to create layers and textures as I built my final composition.

**Flow**

Cathy Nichols  
10" × 22" (25cm × 56cm)  
Encaustic and handmade paper on wood  

This painting is based on a magical moment between me, the man I love and the natural world. I was in graduate school and sitting by the river struggling to understand Heisenberg’s Uncertainty Principle. Suddenly I looked up at the sky, river and clouds, and it made perfect sense: Everything was always in motion, including us. In Flow, I’ve used line and color to illustrate the perpetual motion of the air, water and landscape. Everything is harmonized by the greatest force of all—the (e)motion of a couple in love.

“Explore the past and document the present, then look to both for inspiration.”  
—Tori Weyers
Layered Pear

Kristin Peterson

6” × 6” (15cm × 15cm)

Mixed-media collage on wood cradle

The story of Layered Pear is one of renewal. This wooden cradle had started as something else, but a glance at the texture and a spark of relativity lead to the rework. Paper was torn from a favorite vintage book and added in just the right places. Wet acrylic paint and inks were allowed to blend and mix, creating the skin of the pear. Finally, edges were added with a pop of blue watercolor crayon to define the pear. This piece really encompasses me. It is colorful and full of texture with a loving hint of vintage paper collage and drips of this playfulness down the sides.
Analyzing is a self-portrait. Asymmetrical composition and contrapposto positioning of the figure are important in my portraits. I usually leave the feet bare because it gives me an opportunity to challenge my classic drawing skills and exploit the complex and beautiful anatomy that makes up a foot. At the time, I was crocheting hundreds of scarves. That inspired the incorporation of yarn, and the actual llama fur that is adhered to the floor. There is an intersection where the fur meets the painted string, leaving the viewer to wonder what is real and what is an illusion.
The people I work with are very important to me and my daily life. I have worked with Bob the custodian for a quarter century. He wears the same uniform every day and carries the same tool bag. In this large-scale mixed-media work, I included some of his other tools, such as his brooms and mop. I produced a huge mess around Bob, which gave me the opportunity to play with multiple mediums and styles. The abstract image on the wall behind him was inspired by stream-of-conscious doodles in my sketchbooks. They were rendered using pen and colored pencil. I erased parts of this doodle to give it the look of being scrubbed by the custodian. All of the litter on the floor was collaged in. I used gel medium to adhere and layer the paper, ribbon and garbage onto my foam core substrate. Shadows were painted under the garbage to create the look of a trompe l’oeil.
The crows brought Gaia gifts to adorn her while she guards the next generation. They knew that they had to take care of Mother Earth in order to protect their young in the future. It was a cycle of life and knowledge from the beginning of time. The power of three (birds and eggs) is universal and is the tripartite nature of the world as heaven, earth and waters. It is human as body, soul and spirit. Three is birth, life and death. It is the beginning, middle and end. Three is a complete cycle unto itself. It is past, present and future.
The magic of music is that it uplifts us, tells a story, can soothe us or make us cry. I tried to visually represent this through the use of collage elements. The direct eye contact was to get your attention—a visual "Hey, you." to bring you into the painting share the joy of music.
Ode to Son is a tribute to my eldest son, Bill. He is strong in character and extraordinarily compassionate towards others. A scientist who is always questioning everything, he has a complex nature but prefers a minimalist lifestyle. The simplified two-color scheme suggests duality and minimalism. I used a strong value pattern to reflect his strength and the patterned areas to suggest science motifs. Lastly, I feel compassion is in the heart but reflected in the eyes.
Artists have a free travel pass through our imagination and memories. By simply closing my eyes and recalling a different place and time, I am able to open the memory and transfer it to the surface. Gloriana came out of just such a meditation. When I was eight, I was called upon to memorize and recite the passage from the Nativity story about the angels and shepherds. To my young mind it was torture, and I dreaded the moment. When the time came in the program for me to recite, I was trembling. But the words came, and I survived. By painting that memory, I was able to recapture the moment and preserve the feeling forever.

I often reflect on scripture or other passages as a basis for my work. I will write a line or two down and tack it up where I can see it from my worktable. Throughout my day, I repeat the passage and turn it over in my mind looking for different viewpoints and allowing images, colors and shapes to float through the words. After several days, or maybe even weeks, a specific composition or image fixes itself on the words—only then do I know I am ready to paint. I took the passage, “And the Word was made flesh,” and percolated it. The images of a lamb and flying fish, as well as shades of blue kept rising to the surface. After several weeks of meditating on those images, the piece seemed to paint itself.
Nature never ceases to be an inspiration to artists, but as pollution and global warming threaten, I cling to every vision of beauty I see. I have been experimenting with creating texture in my paintings using a combination of gesso and mat medium with any tools I find around my studio. When the textured surface is dry, I do a loose sketch and start painting.
The ocean has always been an empowering majestic beauty to me. Here I feel connected with myself and my roots. When the world’s weight is on my shoulders, the ocean’s relentless waves seem to wash them clean.

Working on these pieces is a very meditative process because it involves collecting, layering and building a careful tapestry of mediums and tools.
My father was diagnosed with cancer and came to live with us, moving into our home immediately after surgery. At first his treatment was a very dark time emotionally, and this painting was created between visits to the hospital over the duration of a month.

The act of glazing is something soothing, and I wished to paint a work almost entirely brought to life through this technique.
This piece reflects a period in my life when I answered a deep longing to commit more time to my art. After teaching full time for ten years, I decided to work part time to create the necessary space for my art. This leap of faith started me on a journey grounded in care rather than fear. I arrived at the risky ledge of a precipice that looked impossible, and found courage. My teaching style and art practice are therapeutic and restorative, encouraging both healing as well as freedom of expression. This piece reminds me of my own advice and encourages me to follow it.
I’m transfixed by the movement of a sunflower. In this piece, I blended vibrant colors and patterns with fabric and paint to create the movement and shape of wind and shadow. Two of the flowers are fabric collages, and the third is painted to appear like cloth. The sunflower is a theme I find myself coming back to often because I recognize myself in it. Each flower turns its face to the sun, following and embracing its warmth while swaying in graceful worship.
Women today have the freedom to do any job suited to their talents, but this has not always been the case. Inspired by women’s work from the Renaissance to the modern day, this piece focuses on periods of difficult labor when women cultivated gardens and worked to support the textile industry. In this piece I emphasize woman’s history with fabric: the years of dying, weaving and quilting to clothe their families and provide necessary function. I started by layering and scaring to produce the patina of age and created a crackled surface reminiscent of the strain that hard living has on our bodies. In the end, the image is a simple flower, an image that represents our longing for beauty—perhaps the greatest influence on our work.
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Wishing on a Star, 106

Alban, Lee
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3rd Place, Tannerly Row Artists Gallery
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Illusory
Mo Wassell
6” × 12” (15cm × 30cm)
Joint compound with acrylic, ink, graphite and collage of vintage papers on cradled wood canvas

Maybe everyone has a happy place they go to in their minds when the clutter, noise and demands of the day take their toll. Personally, I can conjure up the memory of the beach and sounds of the surf and I’m immediately transported to a place of peace and calm. My art does that for me, and I love painting the sea. The little snippet of image showing a cliff, the surf and the mountains in the background was taken from a vintage postcard. I built the rest of the painting around that tiny symbol of tranquility. The dictionary clipping was purely serendipitous as I searched through my scraps for something fitting … “Illusory: Causing illusion … Imaginary, chimerical …”
Maimon, Yael
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Quick Nap: People’s Choice Award, Richeson75 Animals, Birds & Wildlife 2015 Competition
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1st Prize, Palm Art Award 2015;
2nd Place, Mixed-Media category, Florence Biennial 2015
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Collective Visions Gallery, Bremerton, WA; Betty Jo Fitzgerald Award 2015
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Tonia Jenny is an acquisitions editor and senior content developer for North Light Mixed Media. She is passionate about helping other people recognize their gifts and talents and discover ways to bring more meaning into their lives. A mixed-media artist and jewelry designer herself, Tonia has authored three North Light books: *Duct Tape Discovery Workshop*, *Plexi Class and Frame It!*. When she’s not busy making jewelry and art, cooking, stitching, reading or exploring new ways of looking at the world, you can find her hiking, riding her bicycle, on Instagram (@littlefir) or at SacredMaker.com.
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“When I paint what I love, it recharges my soul.”
—Jean Griffin

“Art is where I lose myself and find myself.”
—Randy J. Lagana

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