

A³ AREA ARTISTS ASSOCIATION
2024 Artist Catalog

Interested in Joining?

Area Artists Association (A3) is a non-profit organization of professional artists affiliated with the Lubeznik Center for the Arts (LCA) in Michigan City, Indiana. Artists who live/work within 60 miles of Michigan City, Indiana may be juried into the association through review by A3 current members.

The purpose of our organization is to support, recognize and encourage regional artists and provide opportunities for exhibitions of their art and for professional development. Through our regular exhibitions, we also provide communities throughout the northwest Indiana region access to the diversity of work produced by area artists. Among the benefits A3 members share are:

- opportunities for one-person and group exhibitions
- participation in lectures, demonstrations and discussions taking place at our bi-monthly meetings
- involvement in other communal projects initiated by the group to further the aims of A3

Membership to A3 is \$25.00 annually and paid in addition to LCA membership each December. Members, who attend meetings, volunteer to help mount exhibits and serve on committees are considered members in good standing. Fine artists interested in applying for membership to A3, may visit our website. The application form is found under the “join us” tab. For more information, please feel free to contact us.

**Area Artists Association: President Diane Grams, PhD;
Vice-President Laurel Izard; Treasurer Laurie Schirmer Carpenter;
Secretary Jane Cowley**

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Figure 1: Area Artists Association members and a few guests at the 2023 Annual Potluck Holiday Party at the Lubeznik Center for the Arts, December 3, 2023. Photo by Timothy D. Lacey.

Introduction to the Catalog of Artists

This catalog provides some evidence of the seriousness and dedication to creating original works of art by artists of the Area Artists Association. Many of these artists featured on the following pages have each shared a small part of their own story -- what inspires them and how they learned their craft. We hope you can learn more about each of them and their works as you peruse these pages and when you see their work on display in one of our upcoming exhibits as listed on the back cover of this catalog.

This dynamic group provides valuable communal support through the sharing and exchanging of ideas. Such feedback enhances the artist's personal/professional growth. This important communal support takes form through the promotion of Area Artists Association group exhibitions as well as notifications of special invitational, juried and other individual artistic opportunities. As you will see on the following pages, the variety of 2-D and 3-D media, styles, colors and individual artist voices makes for an exciting balance of visual art available to view within the region and beyond.

~L. C. Weigel, founding member, Area Artists Association.



Figure 2: Fantastic Horizon. ©Tom Brand. Oil on canvas. 60 x 48 inches. \$3200

Tom Brand

In the past I had created many large works in oil on board, but now I realized that at my age that would be difficult to manage. So, I decided to switch to a lighter weight stretched canvas to accomplish my aim. I chose 4' X 5' stretchers and had our local art supply shop stretch and prime linen canvas and reinforce the support. I modified my easel to accommodate the new canvas. Following my usual approach of working extemporaneously from my imagination, I created my initial sketch through direct under painting. I then embellished and glazed certain aspects of the canvas I needed to strengthen and develop. I continued to work on the painting for several weeks until it was finished. My title for this painting is "Fantastic Horizon" but I hope the viewer will draw their own conclusions about the work.

Tom Brand has been a part of the art community for over 50 years. He is an award-winning artist whose work has appeared in many curated exhibits and has had numerous one-person exhibits. He maintains a studio in his home in Town of Pines. Website: www.artisttombrand.com

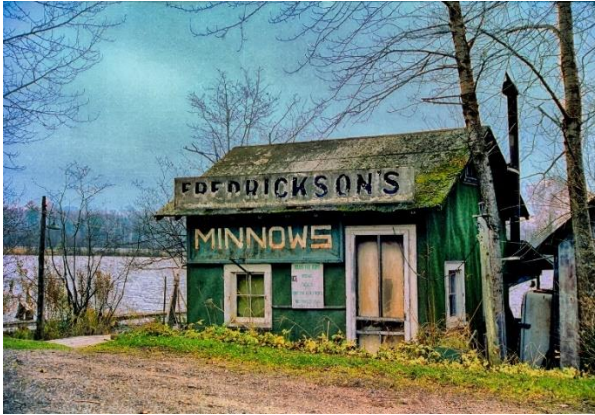


Figure 3: Fredrickson's Minnow Shack. ©Larry A Brechner. Digital Photo Canvas Gallery Wrap. 30 x 20 inches. \$240

Larry A. Brechner

Creative photography is more than making a simple visual recording: it involves the innovative artistry and vision of a photographer, who manipulates the given visual elements in order to both preserve and represent the subject while creating new perspectives. Artistic photography is more than merely making a visual recording of existing subjects. It is also to capture both obvious and subtle visions of the subject. A photograph freezes a moment in time, forever preserving an image of people, places, things, or events, which then can be revisited, thus creating an existence of its very own.

Larry has been a fine art photographer for over forty years. Along with his career as a theatrical lighting designer and musical theater stage director, Larry used photography in his own design and directing portfolio. His work with stage lighting gives him a special understanding and a unique vision for his artistic photography. Larry earned his Doctor of Fine Arts in Theatre Studies and received his Bachelor and Master of Arts degrees from Purdue University Northwest in Radio/TV/Theater Production and Management. Larry currently produces and co-hosts the weekly radio program ART ON THE AIR heard on Lakeshore Public Radio (NPR) and WVLP. Website: brech.com/np



Figure 4: The Violent Remnants of Peace. ©Joel Brussell. Photograph on metal. 16 x 20 inches. \$350

Joel Brussell

I believe “Art” is as much the name of a guy who works at a hardware store as it is some overly pretentious form of expression. So much of what I do comes from accidents. Intentions to me are just accidents with words added later to justify.

If I place myself in nature, I’m well aware that nature is creating 99% of the beauty and I’m just the well-meaning 1% parasite.

I am deeply touched when someone doesn’t believe these are photographs and is convinced, they are paintings.



Figure 5: Daybreak. ©Laurie Schirmer Carpenter. Oil on canvas. 24 x 12 inches. \$1100

Laurie Schirmer Carpenter

Laurie Schirmer Carpenter is an award-winning artist whose work can be found in many corporate and private collections. Raised in northern Illinois, she earned a BFA and BA in Art History (graduating With Distinction) from the University of Colorado, Denver in 1988. Returning to the Midwest in 1990, after living in Denver for 27 years, she is inspired by the distinctive atmosphere of the landscapes and skies of the heartland.

Her oil paintings are created in the studio from field studies, photos and memory and may be a composite of several places. They depict a liminal moment in time; a time “between” an anticipated action and a reaction in Nature. These interludes may be perceived as peaceful, quiet moments of contemplation or subtle warnings of things to come. The paintings are created with many layers of thinly applied paint over weeks and/or months to portray the sense of serenity, quiet, and depth she experiences in Nature. Presently finding ourselves in a transitional moment in our world, the paintings become studies in mindfulness of the essence of our planet.

Website: www.laurieschirmercarpenter.com

Figure 6: So Much Depends Upon a Red Fire Plug. ©Jane Cowley. Oil on canvas. 18 x 24 inches. Sold

Jane Cowley

At the heart of this composition stands a solitary red fire plug, reminiscent of the red wheelbarrow in William Carlos Williams's poem, "The Red



Wheelbarrow." Like the wheelbarrow, the fire plug becomes a symbol of the mundane objects that hold significance in our everyday existence. It stands as a beacon of utility, resilience, and overlooked beauty amidst the hustle and bustle of the city streets. Through this painting, I invite the viewer to pause and appreciate the poetry of the ordinary, to find beauty in the overlooked corners of our daily lives. Just as Williams found inspiration in a simple wheelbarrow glazed with rainwater, may the artwork serve as a reminder of the profound beauty that surrounds us, waiting to be discovered in the most unexpected places.

Jane is a portrait and landscape artist, who works out of her studio in Michigan City, Indiana. She studied at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and the Drisi Academy of Fine Art in Glenwood, Illinois. Jane is an award-winning artist whose body of work spans over thirty years. She has shown her work in New York, Illinois, Michigan, Indiana and international online exhibits. Website:

jcowley.fineartstudioonline.com



Figure 7: Ghosts. ©Robert Daum. Black and white photograph. 24 x 16 inches. \$375

Robert Daum

My abstract photographs focus on color, pattern, form, or light. I use a camera to capture motion in waves, streams, waterfalls, and blowing leaves. Like picking up colorful stones or shells off the beach and putting them in our pocket, I capture beautiful pieces of nature in my camera.

With an undergraduate degree in Environmental Science and a master's degree in Media Communications (photography major), I try to bring the beauty of nature to people in hopes they will be moved to help protect it. I did the photography for three small books, three posters, and four calendars on the Indiana Dunes, and a small book on National Park Service sites that honor Abraham Lincoln. Current projects include an artsy book on the Indiana Dunes. As part of my 36-year-career with the National Park Service, I spent 34 at the Indiana Dunes where I photographed park resources for local and national publications. Email: bobdaum@gmail.com

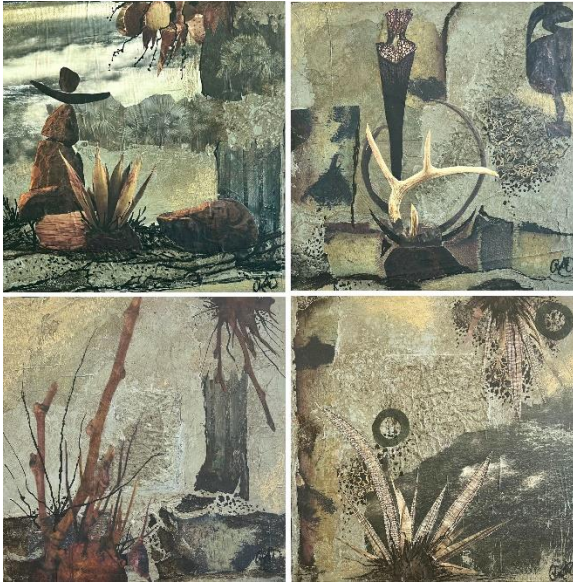


Figure 8: Travel Musings. ©ANKO (Anneke Dekker-Olthof). Acrylic/Collage on gallery wrap board, series of 4. 10 x 10 inches each. \$95 each, or \$380 for set.

ANKO, Anneke Dekker-Olthof

Having traveled extensively over many years and having lived in Africa, that continent continues to inspire me. This land, which many consider the cradle of humankind, fascinates me mostly because of its varied landscape and wildlife. I love the earthy colors. They remind me of traveling in the bush before the landscape turns green in early spring. Then, wildlife viewing is at its best. In these small paintings above, I'm showing sticks, stones and bones found on safaris.

I have no official training but have always been involved in artistic endeavors: drawing, painting, collage, photography, pottery, fashion, jewelry and more. Anything and everything I see, stimulates me to try something new. I appreciate that artistic freedom. I have shown my work in galleries in Florida and the Midwest and have collectors of my artwork all over the world. Website: www.ankoarts.com



Figure 9: Lake Michigan Bluffs. ©Bunny Dimke. Oil on canvas. 18 x 14 inches. \$300

Bunny Dimke

Living near the Indiana dunes and Lake Michigan is what inspires me to paint “en plein air” year-round. If necessary, I use my van as my portable studio. My primary medium is oil but I also enjoy sketching with watercolors. Currently in my home studio I am attempting semi-abstract work using cold wax with oil or fluid acrylics and inks. Only time will tell where that leads me, but it's always an exciting adventure.

Born and educated on the East Coast, Bunny Dimke has resided in Indiana for most of her adult life. She began her art studies at an early age under the tutelage of Iroka Adachi, who taught classical oil painting. After moving from New York to Indiana, Bunny joined the Michigan City Art League where she learned watercolor technique from many well-known local artists. She has exhibited at the Art Barn in Valparaiso, the SFC Gallery, the Chesterton Art Center, and the Midwest Museum of American Art. Her work has been accepted into numerous regional juried shows, and won several awards. She is currently a member of the Duneland Plein Air Painters, the Area Artists Association, and the Michigan City Art League.

Figure 10: Marsh Muses - Grace, Devotion, & Purity. ©Melissa Dittmann. Gouache on Paper. 12 x 52 inches. \$1200

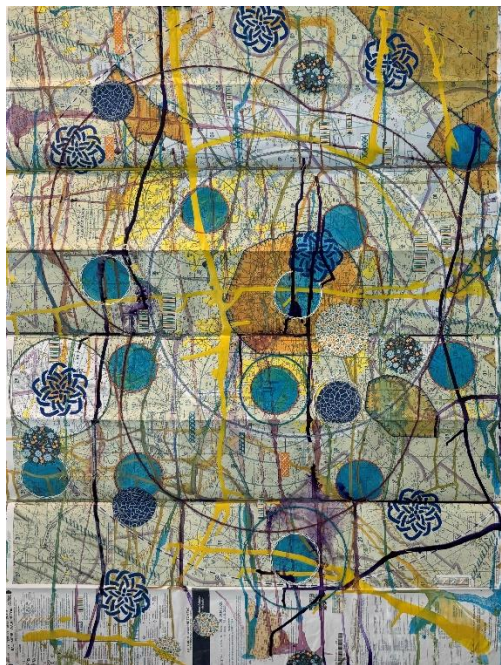
Melissa Dittmann

A native of Beverly Shores, Melissa Dittmann was grateful to grow up with the Dunes in her backyard. She since has enjoyed traveling and living around the world, but coming back to this area made her realize just how special and magical it is. It's from this endlessly fascinating exquisite natural world that Melissa draws inspiration for her paintings, as well as her jewelry and clothing designs.

Though a life-long lover of the arts, Melissa is very new to practicing and making art. Reconnecting with her creativity has been instrumental in Melissa's journey towards overcoming mental health challenges. She enjoys working in gouache and oils, and her paintings often depict landscapes, birds, and other details from nature, sometimes incorporating elements of magical realism. Her time spent living and studying in Asia also continues to influence her style and subjects, with a special affinity for Chinese ink painting and Buddhist art in its various traditions.

With her business, Jewel in the Lotus, Melissa is also a jewelry designer and metalsmith. Her intricate wirework jewelry incorporates locally found fossils, polished precious stones, Steampunk accents and other elements into unique and meaningful pieces of wearable art.





*Figure 11: Washington DC.
©Deb Dyer. Mixed Media -
paper, fabric, thread, acrylic
ink. 29.25 x 39.75 inches. \$500*

Deb Dyer

Dyer works in mixed media utilizing maps, collage, stitching, stenciling, weaving, and paint. She is intrigued with layering, pattern and transparency in her work as well as the

traditional feminine work of weaving, embroidery, quilting and appliqué. In her map-based work, she utilizes aviation maps. They contain landmarks, altitude levels and other necessary information to use when navigating a small plane. . Pre-marked areas on the map are selected to highlight, first with acrylic ink, then hand embroidery stitches. The poured lines imitate the meandering lines of rivers, lakes, and other naturally occurring landscape forms. The art work highlights the geometry of this unseen carved-up airspace and merges it with a purely abstract version of shapes, color and texture.

Deb Dyer now resides in New Buffalo, MI, after living and working in Richmond CA for twelve years. Dyer holds a BFA from the Ohio State University and a MA in Arts Administration from Goucher College. Juried into numerous national exhibitions such as Small Works in Teton Washington and the Over 50 in Las Laguna Gallery as well the de Young Open in the summer of 2020. This prestigious exhibition featured 762 Bay Area artists culled from 11,514 individual submitted artworks. Website: www.debdyerart.com

*Figure 12: The King
Plays the Pearls, But the
Jacks Hold her Heart.
©Carol Estes.
Photograph on Canvas in
a float frame. 32 x 38
inches. \$395*



Carol Estes

Carol Estes is a self-taught, award-winning photographer. She entered the art world late in life, picking up a camera and a pen to

battle grief. Named a Hoosier Woman Artist in 2016 and 2019, she has also had poems accepted into the Indiana INVerse Poetry Archives. In 2016 she self-published her first book of works *Memories Evoked*, and in 2023 released her first Children's Book *Itty Bitty's Journey*.

There are many methods in photography that pushed her learning more. One of her signature styles include ICM (Intentional Camera Movement). The camera is moved while the image is taken, creating a special mood and movement. One day she found that shooting in infrared created another special interest in her images. The camera must have a special sensor replaced so it will see only in the layers of infrared light. She has also resurrected an 1848 Cyanotype process, using infrared light to produce images.

As time goes forward, Carol has integrated mixed media to her photography, building unique art pieces. Her motto is: "If I have stirred a conversation, I have succeeded." Website:

www.welcometocarlo.world.com



Figure 13: Fast Stream. ©Kevin Firme. Forged Steel and Glass. 15 x 12 x 12 inches. \$900.

Kevin Firme

I create pastel drawings on paper and sculptures of forged steel and blown glass. I can describe complicated imagery in the drawings that I can't in sculpture. The sculptures are inspired by the drawings. My drawings have a network of linear gestures and shapes that weave together with the whole image. The intention of the artwork is to impart a sense of peace and will-ordered dynamism. When I look at my work, I envisage a sense of calm and wonder at this world I create. I see what is in front of me as digestible and not overwhelming. I am depicting a small part of the natural world and not the scale of the whole world.

My work is about a world in harmony where everything fits in its place. It portrays a personal horizon that gives me hope for the future. I have a BA in Art from DePaul University and an MFA from the University of Notre Dame. I have shown at the Midwest Museum of American Art in Elkhart, Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, the Lubeznik Center for the Arts and other places in the area. Email: thefeedstore@yahoo.com.

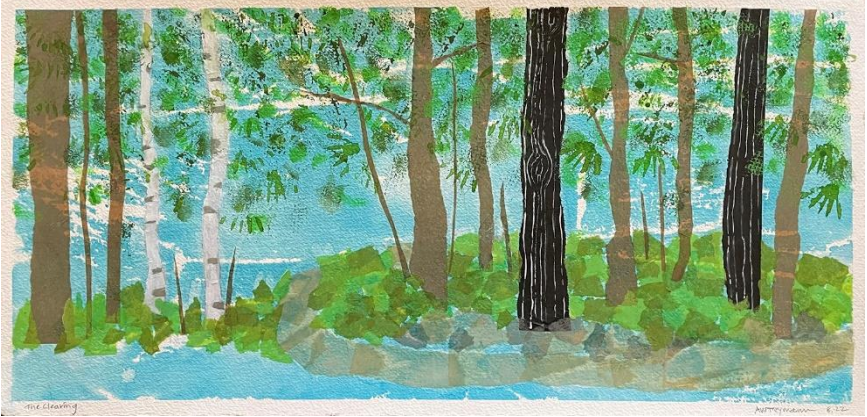


Figure 14: *The Clearing*. ©Amanda Freymann. Tissue paper with watercolor. 25 x 14 inches. \$900

Amanda Freymann

I have been making art since I was a child but for many years my artwork came second to a career and then to caretaking. Now that I am no longer working and am widowed, I have returned my attention to my first love. I enjoy working in all sorts of media and am currently making dimensional flowers in clay. I am also “painting” with tissue paper which can be seen above in *The Clearing*. This has become a favorite medium, along with watercolor, and has allowed me more freedom of expression than painting in oil or gouache. My current work is both representational and abstract, informed by loss and heartbreak but also the joy of making art for art’s sake.

I am originally from Boston, then later lived in New York and Chicago. I have a BFA from Elmira College and a Certificate of Drawing from the Art Institute of Chicago. Beverly Shores, IN has been my home for nearly 25 years. I live on a beautiful, wooded dune one block from Lake Michigan with a one-eyed orange cat. Website: www.afreymann.com



Figure 15: Bird RV. ©Arthur Garcia. Acrylic on found objects. 32 x 19 x 8 inches. \$650

Arthur “Art” Garcia

Back in the day I took several mechanical drawing classes and my 43-year real-world job frequently put me in heavy industrial settings. Some say my paintings reflect that background. I am first a sculptor and a painter second. Lately I’ve been doing a lot more painting than sculpting. I believe that successful abstract art requires more work by the viewer than to digest images of say covered bridges. I don’t expect viewers to have a visceral reaction, but to simply make a decision; does the work seem visually rational (composition, color, balance) or is it visually useless? Is it something one has never seen before, something one has to process and was it worth their time?

Born in Gary Indiana in 1952, I received a BFA in sculpture and painting from Indiana State University, 1975. There I learned to cast in bronze using lost wax process, and weld steel, as well as to survive an intense painting curriculum. One had to learn the basics before “earning the right to go abstract.” Email: orca3639@yahoo.com

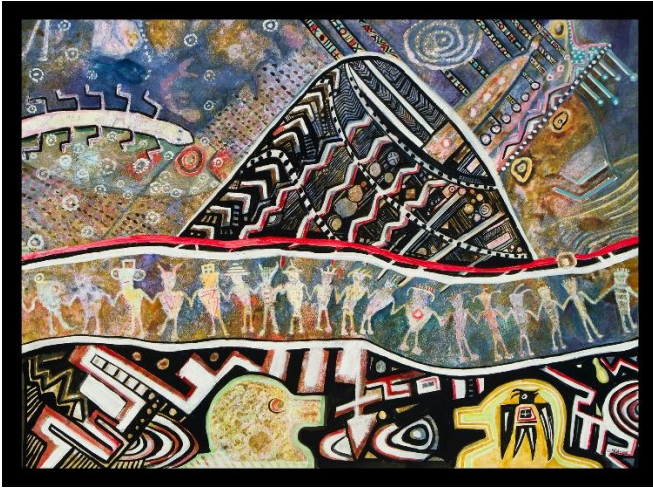


Figure 16: Liminal Passage. ©Dorothy Graden. Mixed media on paper. 30 x 22 inches. \$1,800

Dorothy Graden

Our world is changing in many ways and some of these changes are frightening and stressful. Yet, art brings hope to an uncertain future. My work serves to bring awareness and appreciation of ancient art that was carved, pecked and painted on the rocks and canyon walls in North America. While these ancient spirits reach out and move throughout my work, my continuing study of contemporary art sparks unique innovations. A wide range of techniques and artistic approaches are employed to reproduce an atmosphere that compels the viewer to interpret and explore what inspired its creation.

Dorothy Graden currently lives and makes art full time in Valparaiso, IN. On her travels to many stunning and remote ancient rock art sites she has witnessed astounding art on canyon walls. Her body of work and slide presentation lectures open a new world to viewers and are even more valuable because these are sites that most will never see. She has given lectures on ancient rock art in Northwest Indiana and Chicagoland as well as at universities in Russia, Ireland and Austria. Website: www.dorothygraden.com



*Figure 17: Dancing on the Shoulders of Giants, Frankenstein version.
©Diane Grams. Fresco on panel. 24 x 24 inches. \$2300*

Diane Grams PhD

Dancing on the Shoulders of Giants is a theme of celebration and of gratitude to the women and artists of the fresco tradition who have influenced my artistic practice. Fresco is akin to watercolor as pigment suspended in water is layered onto freshly-troweled lime putty. The process enables fresco magic -- “the golden hour” when rich concentrations of pigment are absorbed and then crystalize forming a permanent rock-like bond. Indiana’s abundant limestone resources make it a great place to access high quality lime for fresco.

This “Frankenstein Version,” is made of parts first built in 1980 at Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture; it was finished in 2023. It is part of a series of frescos funded through a 2024 individual artist grant by the Indiana Arts Commission. It will be exhibited in a solo exhibition at the Chesterton Art Center Sept-Oct 2024. My training: BA fine art, Indiana University Bloomington; master’s degree/PhD cultural sociology, Loyola University Chicago. Visit Somersault Studio 12 on Patreon.com, YouTube and at St. Mary’s Studios in Michigan City. Website: dianegramsart.wordpress.com



Figure 18: Portal #1. ©Donna Hapac. Reclaimed pine. 20 x 20 x 8.5 inches. \$950

Donna Hapac

My present content is focused on patterns and forms that I am intrigued by in the natural and manmade world, with ideas gathered while hiking and traveling. My process involves building a sculptural form from multiple wooden elements carved on a band saw. The results suggest my experiences. I have evolved from a 2-dimensional artist (BFA in painting and MFA in drawing) into a builder of sculptures. I have shown my art work through the Midwest, in other parts of the U.S. and in Poland.

After about twenty years of making mostly two-dimensional art, I became inspired to make objects. After much experimentation, I began to make sculpture out of fiber materials and found objects, eventually settling on reed and waxed linen to build forms using a grid pattern. In 2015, I took a woodworking class to expand my capabilities in my reed sculptures and fell in love with wood. Wood is my primary medium at this time. I live and work in Chesterton, Indiana after living most of my life in Chicago. Website:

www.donnahapac.com

Figure 19: Painting Shade.
©Julia Holmaas. Watercolor
on Paper. 16 x 20 inches. \$300



Julia Holmaas

Over the years I've realized that the act of creating drawings and paintings allow me to see and more importantly feel and connect with my surroundings. I have been keenly observing and learning about the natural world since childhood, photographing, drawing and painting landscapes, flowers, trees, animals, and people.

Always encouraged to be creative, I learned drawing and oil painting as a child in Saturday morning classes and elective art classes in college. After graduating with a degree in Biology I went to work for the National Park Service until retirement as Chief of Interpretation at Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore in 2004. There I initiated the Indiana Dunes Artist in Residence Program. Moving to the Dunes in 1994 I connected with the art community in NW Indiana and learned to paint in watercolor and oil paint in plein air by attending classes and workshops. A longtime member of the Area Artists Association, Chesterton Art Center and a past member of Southern Shore Art Association. I am a founding member of Duneland Plein Air Painters and am currently board president of The Art Barn School of Art where I teach classes in watercolor. Website: www.juliaholmaas.com



Figure 20: Street Vendor. ©Kuhn Hong. Oil on Canvas. 48 x 60 inches. \$ 5,000

Kuhn Hong

Dr. Kuhn Hong, a retired Chicago physician, often paints scenes outdoors as a plein air painter. He also takes on themes of contemporary

importance. Hong's approach is empathetic: he shares the experiences with many of his subjects. For example, as a doctor his knowledge of the medical profession helped him to paint scenes of the COVID crisis. His understanding of refugees comes from his own experience as refugee a young boy in Korea. He said, "We left everything behind, running for our lives with no place to go when the North Korean Communist Army tanks crossed the 38 Parallel Line in 1950." This led to his current project on migrants from Latin America, and their experience of the journey and settling in Chicagoland.

Hong began painting during a medical mission in Ethiopia as a volunteer radiologist from 2013 to 2018. He is active with the Duneland and Chicago Plein Air Painters. He had a recent showing of his work at the Korean Community Center of Chicago, and Palette and Chisel Academy of Fine Art. In 2022, he visited Korea for solo exhibitions at 6 different galleries in 4 cities. Website:

www.kuhn hong.com



Figure 21: 3rd Rate Marsh. ©Christine Hubbell. Mixed Media. 12 x 12 inches. \$350

Christine Hubbell

An illustrator and artist trained in botanical and scientific illustration at the Denver Botanic Gardens, Christine Hubbell works primarily in colored pencil, creating realistic portraits of birds and botanicals, incorporating elements of storytelling and whimsy. She develops her paintings from sketches and research, working both in the field and in the studio from natural materials whenever possible. The finished pieces are built up from thin washes of color on translucent substrates, which allows her to play with hidden and revealed elements. The stories she tells shift over time, but often focus on the themes of homecoming, migration, movement, and personal geography.

She was selected for the 2023 Hoosier Women Artists Exhibition and is a 2024 Artist-in-Residence at Indiana Dunes National Park. As an art teacher, Christine has led workshops on sketching birds from life and nature journaling and is currently teaching classes in nature journaling and colored pencil. Her work has traveled nationally as part of juried exhibitions. Website: chubbellart.com

Figure 22: 1 Mad Bear.
©Laurel Izard. Hand-embroidered and quilted baby blanket. 24 x 32 inches. \$2,500

Laurel Izard

My current textile images are a dialog between found images on vintage quilts and my own stitching.

This image of Mad Bear is animated by the contrast between the sweet fairy tale of “The Three Bears”

found on a vintage

baby quilt and the realistic image of an angry bear sewn over it. The depiction highlights the fate of animals currently facing extinction and invites people to look at our culture and the world around us in a new way.

Laurel Izard is an award-winning artist known throughout the United States for her embroidery and art quilts. She received a BA from Northern Illinois University, with majors in art and anthropology, and an MFA in ceramics from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Upon graduation, Izard and her husband started Izwin, a ceramic business. After twenty-three years of self-employment, she became a fulltime art teacher at Marquette Catholic High School for the next nine years. She currently resides in Michigan City, where she makes art full time. She believes that an integral part of being human is to be creative. As an artist and teacher of workshops throughout the region, she strives to help others discover their inner artistic resources. Website: laurel-izard.com





Figure 23: In My Nature Vases. ©Larry (Lars) Jensen. Epoxy and Pastel. 3 x 4 inches. NFS

Larry “Lars” Jensen

Larry (AKA Lars) Jensen is a largely self-taught wood artist. He deals primarily on the lathe, creating practical and sculptural artwork. He was the 2009 Artist in Residence at the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore (now National Park). This led to two books "Turning Timber" and "In My Nature."

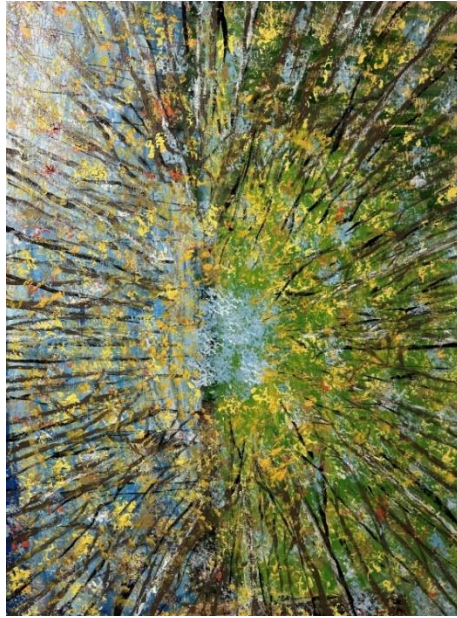


Figure 24: Through the Trees. ©Laura Kittle. Acrylic on heavy cardstock. 18 x 24 inches. \$300

Laura Kittle

I am inspired by the common everyday things we see and probably take for granted including architectural forms, plants, trees, items that take up space in our lives but often don't take center stage. I try to give these objects a spirit and bring them to the forefront. Though most of my work is abstract, I explore representational expressionism as well.

As a graduate of Indiana University Northwest, I majored in Fine Arts with an emphasis on painting and drawing and a minor in Art History. I also studied at the American Academy of Art in Chicago. I grew up in Gary, Indiana (Miller section) and raised my family (daughter Hayley, son Dylan) in the Chesterton, Indiana area. I moved to Michigan City, IN about 13 years ago and after retiring from Indiana University Foundation as a fundraiser/ event coordinator, I have been able to pursue my artistic passions. My works have been exhibited at the Marshall Gardner Center in Miller 2023. Email: Kittle.laura@gmail.com

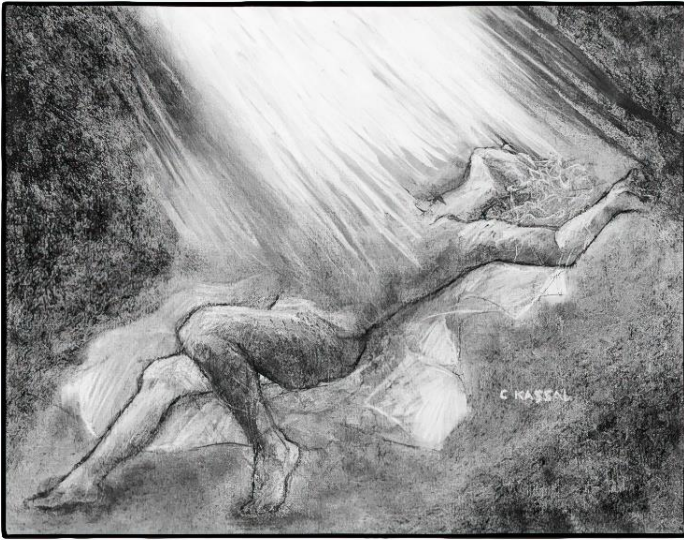


Figure 25: Swoosh! ©Connie Kassal. Charcoal on canvas. 20 x 16 inches. \$300

Connie Kassal

Making marks on material is fundamental to the visual arts. Connie is captivated by humanity's long history of making marks to tell stories and explore the animating essence of life. Like early humanity, she uses charcoal to draw and then applies layers of paint as she explores these concepts. Her goal is to encourage the viewer to look beyond current political or social issues to the larger concept of who we are, and why are we here.

Connie Kassal is originally from Rockford, Illinois, and moved to northwest Indiana early in her art career. She is a founding member of the Lubeznik Center for the Arts and its Area Artists Association. She holds a bachelor's degree in painting from the University of Wisconsin-Platteville and after her children grew up, she got her master's degree in painting from Governors State University. She spent the next twenty years teaching drawing and painting at Purdue University in Indiana and Prairie State College in Illinois. Website: www.Kassal-studio.com



Figure 26: Liminal Landscape: The Worn Path. ©George Kassal. Photography. 18 x 12 inches. \$200

George Kassal

My education and career involved with geology has fostered a deep interest in landscape and the forces involved in shaping it. After years of photographing the natural landscape, I have become interested in documenting the marks, and structures left by the activities of modern society. I view these scenes as contemporary archeology. My influences include photographers Robert Adams, Lewis Baltz, and Fay Godwin. My preferred gear is a rangefinder-style, digital camera with a 28mm prime lens. Monochrome images are created directly in the camera with only slight post-processing done on a computer; prints are made with a digital printer. The finished work looks more like an analog process than a digital one.

My work has been exhibited for over 40 years. I have led many photography-related workshops and taught college classes in photography, the history of photography, and art appreciation as an Adjunct Professor for over 20 years. I earned a BS in Geology from the University of Wisconsin and an MA in Photography from Governors State University. Website: www.Kassal-studio.com



Figure 27: Contrasting Flight-Dorsal (female Ivory-Billed Woodpecker). ©Kristina Knowski Arts LLC. Watercolor & mixed media on paper. 30 x 20 inches. \$1,200

Kristina Knowski

Kristina is a watercolorist depicting primarily avifauna and is best known for her portfolio of extinct bird species. The natural world is her inspiration, drawing from the existing beauty of our environment. As an avid birder, Kristina prefers to work from life and spends most of her time sketching and researching species in the field. In working with extinct species, she visits the Bird Collections of the Field Museum and Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum to study from skins. She enjoys using observation, anatomical references, and specimens to examine these species with an acute attention to detail. By exploring these birds in both life and in death, she hopes to bring a remembrance and sense of dignity to these lost species.

All works are watercolor on paper. Since graduating Valedictorian from the American Academy of Art in Chicago in 2012, Kristina has participated in exhibits in Chicago and surrounding states, including *Animalier: The Animal in Contemporary Art*, *Apocalypse 2012: Genesis 2013*, and *Facing Extinction*. Her most notable solo show was at the Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum in *Dreams of Martha*, in conjunction with the 100th year anniversary of the extinction of the Passenger Pigeon. Website: KristinaKnowski.com



Figure 28: Heavenly Rock. ©Timothy D. Lace. Gelatin Silver Print. 16 x 20 inches framed. \$450

Timothy D. Lace

Being a photographer is an adventure with purpose: you have to be there, you have to see something, and you have to turn it into something inside a little square. No photographer could predict what his or her photographs would look like until they are printed. The main goal is the expression of feeling. It seems completely right that the major aesthetic problem is to reconcile the two claims of method and feeling. The mind, the eyes, and the heart all have to be attentive to the process.

My work has appeared in exhibitions throughout the Midwest, including “Silver Prints” a solo exhibition at the Lubeznik Center for the Arts and I am currently preparing a solo exhibition of digital color prints of the Mardi Gras Indians of New Orleans at the Chesterton Art Center in fall of 2024. My photos have been published in Pan-O-Ply Michiana, Chicago Life, The Chicago Reader, New City Art in America, The Progressive, Crafts Report, Screen Magazine, The Journal of Law and Management and Society, Illinois Arts Quarterly and the Chicago Artists Coalition News. Website: tdlacephotography.wordpress.com

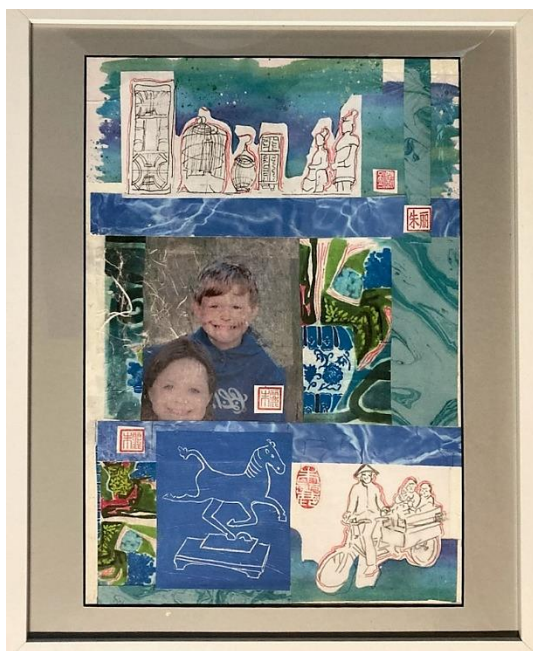


Figure 29: Growing up in China. ©Patty Mershon-Schaefer. Watercolor & mixed media on paper. 16 x 20 inches. NFS

Patty Mershon-Schaefer

Teaching art has provided me with experience working with many different media. I continue to try new material. My choice and work has been primarily in acrylic, paper sculpture and print making. I lean toward designed realism. At age 98, I have slowed down, but I appreciate the enrichment and motivation that art continues to bring to my life and living. This mixed media piece, "Growing up in China," features images of my youngest daughter, her husband and four children who worked as missionaries for 20 years in China.

Patty Mershon-Schaefer taught art, from first grade through twelfth grade, for 32 years. Patty has a BA from Pennsylvania State University and Art Teacher Certification from the University of New Mexico, and a master's degree from University of Notre Dame.



Figure 30: Desert Radiance. ©Nancy Natow-Cassidy. Acrylic on canvas. 76 x 58 inches. NFS

Nancy Natow-Cassidy

I feel most alive in nature, absorbing wind rippling on water, moving through the air or plants. Incandescent moments of light and color instantly appearing and disappearing, flowing, staccato, still or scintillating, call me to physically move, absorbing their energy and vibration. Rich or bright hues replace even the most drab tones. Tracing the shapes and energy I see and feel with my body in space, I bring that movement to my work, translating it onto canvas or paper with pigment.

Nancy Natow-Cassidy grew up in Detroit, listening and dancing to Motown. She began drawing at an early age and went to college, first at Michigan State University, and after studying both Art and African and Modern Dance, graduated from the University of Michigan with a degree in painting. She lived and worked in Chicago as a graphic designer and prop stylist, running a studio with her husband, photographer Chris Cassidy. She choreographed pieces shown at MoMing Dance and Art Center and Links Hall. Now living in the Indiana Dunes, she's expanded her love for nature living in the forest by Lake Michigan. Website: nancynatowcassidy.com



Figure 31: Infinite Blossom. ©Teresina Pavel. Mixed media on board. 18 x 18 inches. \$800

Teresina Pavel

Creating art takes me on an emotional journey. It starts with a feeling that is magnified by what I see, hear, and write. Shapes, lines, and colors mirror one another like visual echoes; shifting in intensity, tone, and direction. I find peace rendering them; introducing order to what could be chaos. I'm compelled to have a center point in my art. This point is often explicit; sometimes implied by what surrounds it. For me, the center point serves as the core from which everything radiates...symbolizing faith in the infinite force of life.

Teresina has an M.S. in Education, with an endorsement in art education. She has completed extensive graduate coursework in art therapy and studied independently with numerous artists. Her 40-year career included developing art programs for children and art therapy for children sheltered from domestic violence. Upon retirement, Teresina has redefined herself from that of advocate to artist. She continues to support the arts through A3 and the Gardner Center for the Arts, and is now also able to explore her own creativity more fully. Email: 2tpavel2@gmail.com



Figure 32: The Movie Watcher, left. The Brother, right. ©John Ryszka II. Lampworked glass. 5 x 7 inches each unmounted. Each \$350

John Ryszka II

With over two decades shaping light and color into form, John Ryszka II presents *The Movie Watcher* and *The Brother*, two captivating masks from his renowned glass series *Visage of Glass*. These pieces embody the depth and narrative of John's craftsmanship; each curve and hue a testament to a storied career in glass artistry.

A luminary at Indiana Beach Amusement Park and the mind behind the Rising Phoenix Gallery, John's journey in glass began at Vincennes University and was honed through his studies at the National Neon Institute. His works, including these vibrant masks, reflect a dedication to the craft learned and refined in various prestigious schools of glass and through extensive professional experience. For more insight into John's art and opportunities to engage with glass working visit www.glassphoenix.org.



Figure 33: Wolf Creek. © Ginny Scott. Acrylic on canvas. 36 x 26 inches. \$600

Ginny Scott

Illusion and beyond reality are the themes in my work. The viewer is challenged to lose oneself in the images, color and rhythm of the painting. It can become a meditative experience if one chooses to explore an alternate way of viewing art.

Ginny is an abstract expressionist painter who has been exhibiting her work for over 35 years. She has exhibited widely throughout the New York region, Florida, Chicago, and the Midwest. Her work has won many honorable mentions, first prizes along with commissioned artwork. Her work has been published in noted art books for several years, namely, Studio Visit magazine and American Artwork Book. Additionally, her work is in many private collections. She is a juried member of the Area Artists Association of the Lubeznik Center for the Arts, and a juried member of Northern Indian Artists. Ginny is presently represented by The Courtyard Gallery in New Buffalo, Michigan. She holds a BS degree in behavioral science and a master's degree in clinical social work. In her clinical practice she taught art therapy as well. Website: www.ginnyscott.com.



Figure 34: Nonduality Dream. ©Edwin P. Shelton. 22 x 9 x 7 inches. \$1200

Edwin Shelton

“Edwin P. Shelton’s mixed media sculptures are bright, playful, strange, and unexpected. The work is highly intuitive and continues to evolve as it reflects his spiritual inquiries and metaphysical way of looking at the universe. Shelton recombines and camouflages discarded, unloved, left behind, and broken objects that appear to have been unearthed from bygone times. These vibrantly hybrid sculptures look like post-apocalyptic machines, resurrected anew,” according to Whitney Bradshaw, curator at the Lubeznik Center for the Arts in Michigan City, Indiana, who featured his work in the exhibition, *Abstraction + Love* in 2023.

Shelton is the art teacher at Marquette Catholic High School in Michigan City, now in his seventh year. He was an exchange teacher in Zibo, China (2015). He majored in sculpture at Virginia Commonwealth University where he earned his BFA. He achieved his MFA in sculpture at University of Wisconsin-Madison. He completed his credits at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture. Shelton has maintained a studio in the St. Mary Studios building since 2020. The space has allowed him to create large sculptures. Website: edwinpshelton.com

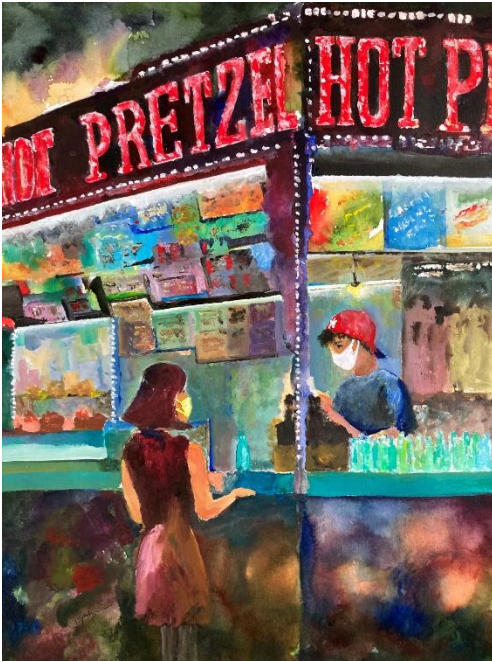


Figure 35: Essential Business.
©Joan Spohrer. Watercolor on paper. 21 x 28 inches. \$650

Joan F. Spohrer

Twenty-five years ago I was a graphic designer and amateur photographer, arranging other people's words and images. In 2002 I decided to attend an artists' workshop and put a

brush and paint to paper for the first time. I still paint with this group of talented artists, who became my mentors, friends, and peers. Painting expresses the world in ways photography cannot. By combining tangibles of light, value, and color with intangibles of personal experience, point of view, memory and emotion, an artist renders a unique interpretation of each image, layering her own subtle purpose with each stroke. I paint to interpret memories in a re-imagined way.

Joan Freneau Spohrer earned a BA in American Studies and Communications at the University of Notre Dame. She was an editor in Chicago and at Saint Mary's College, turning to freelance editing, graphic design, and website design while raising her family in South Bend. She began painting in 2002, exhibiting watercolors, acrylics and digital paintings regionally. The award winning artist is represented at Raymond James. She is Northern Indiana Artists' Publication Chair, Past President of St. Joe Valley Watercolor Society, and co-chairs the Leeper Park Art Fair. Website: joanspohrerwatercolors.com

Figure 36: Pharos.
©Carole Stodder.
Acrylic on canvas. 18 x
21 inches. \$900



Carole Stodder

Constructing collages has become an important part of my studio practice. The process of gluing cut-paper shapes and graphic material on to a painted ground to form a strong composition is satisfying. But as a study, it can also become the jumping-off point for a larger work on canvas. Such is “Pharos”, the painting illustrated here. “Pharos” is the name for a lighthouse which existed on an island of the same name off the coast of Egypt in ancient times. My painting titled “Pharos”, is an abstract visualization of an imaginary signal system. A selection of words and letters, numbers and symbols have been superimposed upon a structured composition. Together they suggest a statement about the purpose of art as a means of communication.

Carole Stodder has been a part of the art community in Chicago and northwest Indiana for fifty years. In Chicago, she maintained a studio in the West Loop. As an Indiana resident, she has exhibited in numerous juried shows and has had one-person exhibits at major art centers and galleries. Website: www.carolestodder.com



Figure 37: Suffrage. ©Suzy Vance. Mixed media. 38 x 58 inches. Sold

Suzy Vance

My mother instilled in me a sense of curiosity about the world through my sense of touch and feel. Whether it was feeling a fabric I was going to wear or creating something with yarn and other fibers, I always have chosen what feels good next to my skin. What followed was a love of animal fibers and a curiosity about what I could do with them. Today it's as if these fibers speak to me and beg to be used in a variety of different ways. What inspires me is grappling with the experience of being human and living in this earthly environment. I cherish and worship trees.

I am a retired lawyer. With no formal training, other than attendance at a variety of workshops, I have pursued my curiosity about what I can create with fiber. I create in my studio at St. Mary's Studios in Michigan City. I've shown my work in Indiana at Beverly Shores Museum and Art Gallery, Chesterton Art Center, Fluid Coffee Shop, Marshall J. Gardner Gallery, Michigan City Art Space, Pines Village Gallery, SFC Gallery, Valparaiso Library and in Michigan at the Donna Chase Gallery in Grand Rapids and Vickers Theater. Website: suzyvance.com.

Figure 38: Vitameata-vegamin. ©Jamie Wallen. Textile appliqué. 35 x 48 inches. NFS



Jamie Wallen

Jamie Wallen currently uses Michigan City, Indiana as home base to do the many different forms of his art. Jamie specializes in textiles using a diverse range of techniques such as, appliqué, thread painting, inks and traditional dye medium applications. He also designs adult coloring books, patterns and specialty tools for artists. He produces an instructional channel, Quilters Apothecary, which is found on Patreon.com and YouTube. In addition, he travels throughout the world teaching his trademark designs and techniques.

As an award-winning international textile artist and teacher, he has developed his own techniques to complete his art quilts. Jamie has taught and exhibited work throughout the U.S., Canada, Australia, and Europe. Not only has his art won awards but he has also received four consecutive Teacher of the Year awards within the textile art community as well as producing his original line of best-selling tools. Website: www.jamiewallen.com



Figure 39: Commission Drawing. ©L.C. Weigel. Graphite on paper. 24 x 18 inches. NFS

L.C. Weigel

Whether working in 2D or 3D formats, either representationally or abstract, the artist's concerns center on themes of family and friends, the natural environment, and the increasing need for awareness of the role of the artist in society. Often all three of these factors overlap resulting in new works created via direct observation, reading written text (public and private) and travels to view other landscapes and art.

Weigel is an honors graduate from Indiana University with a BA in fine art and has completed additional studies at School of the Art Institute of Chicago and Columbia College. A retired art educator, she was Chair of the Fine Arts Department for LaLumiere School. She is active in the local and regional arts community as an exhibiting artist and is a member of regional and national organizations. Additionally, Weigel worked for several years with an interior design specialist creating custom work for clients and showrooms. In addition to her studio work, she serves as art critic/correspondent for *The Beacher*, a weekly regional newspaper.

History of Area Artists Association

Area Artists Association (A3) was founded in 1980 under the umbrella of the first art center in Michigan City, Indiana. All through the Lubeznik Art Center's history, A3 has remained connected to it, serving as a shelter for regional artists to come together to network, to exhibit and to engage the larger community in the arts. A3 has created over 60 member shows since its first exhibit in the old Carnegie library on 8th Street in Michigan City that was the original home of Michigan City's first art center. Over the decades, member exhibits have expanded to include museums and gallery spaces across northwest Indiana and southwest Michigan.

A3's work to engage the local community includes the Juried Exhibit--a regional art competition, The Children's Art Expo, The Box Project, a series of "Fluxus" exhibits, and more recently annual exhibitions at sites throughout the region including at the South Bend Museum of Art, the Chesterton Art Center, Art Barn, Moon Tree Studios, Marshall J. Gardner Center for the Arts, and the Roti Roti Art Center of Buchanan.

~Connie Kassal, founding member, Area Artists Association

Area Artists Association Makes an "Emergence"



There's still time to see Area Artists Association Exhibit, "Emergence," which runs through June 5 at the Buchanan (MI) Art Center. Pictured are artists at the opening: Front kneeling Kuhn Hong, Carol Estes, Connie Kassal. Standing from left: Tom Brand, Carole Stodder, Kevin Firme, Laurie Schirmer Carpenter, Jane Cowley (behind), Dorothy Graden, Suzy Vance, Stephanie Carnell, Diane Grams, Ph.D., Joan Spohrer, Edwin Shelton, Laurel Izard, George Kassal, Ginny Scott.

Figure 40: Beacher excerpt featuring Area Artists members at their first post-COVID exhibition in 2022. Photo by Timothy D. Lace.

Area Artists Association

Upcoming Exhibitions

2024 Exhibitions

Knee High by the 4th of July

Art Barn School of Art, 695 N. 400 E, Valparaiso, IN 46383

July 2-Aug 1, 2024

Reception: Saturday, July 13th, 2:00-4:00 pm CST.

Spirit of Place

MoonTree Studios, 9638 N. Union Rd, Plymouth, IN 46563

Sept 16-Oct 26, 2024

Reception: Sat., Oct. 26, 12:00-2:00 pm CST (1:00-3:00 EST)

It's All About the Square

Chesterton Art Center, 115 S. 4th St., Chesterton, IN 46304

November 2 - 30, 2024

Reception: Saturday, November 9, 12:00 - 2:00 pm CST.

2025 Exhibitions

Marshall J. Gardner Center for the Arts,

540 S. Lake St. Gary, IN 46403

May 2-June 6, 2025

Roti Roti Art Center of Buchanan,

117 W. Front St. Buchanan, MI 49107

November 2, 2025– December 14, 2025.