

# SIXTEEN ART STORIES

## WATCHING THE BOST BEAT

BY K.D. SELF

*In June, the public was invited into artists' open studios all around Monroe County. As I viewed the work of nearly twenty local artists, because I was inspired by the diversity of both art and artists, I asked each individual for a short reflection. Here are their flash narratives.*

### **Angela Caldwell** [Jewelry and Textiles]

*Art Story:* I've always felt that I see the world a little differently. I react to simple shapes and colors and attempt to arrange them in interesting combinations. I look for the unusual, the beautiful and that which might tell a story. I source my memories and then try to create something new and unique. I strive to have my work have a sense of the familiar yet modern all at the same time.

### **Betty Wagoner** [Watercolor, water-based pencil]

*Art Story:* The natural world is my life. I walked every inch of my father's farm. I lead outings down forest trails and have been involved in environmental movements. Studied art. Left it for awhile. Got back to art after walking into a botanic garden where they were offering watercolor classes. The natural world is my imagery. Now a plein air artist and teacher of such.

### **Bonnie Gordon-Lucas** [Watercolor on Paper, Fabric Paint on Silk, Ink (to draw lines... black, gold, sepia or clear)]

*Art Story:* Art as a Universal Language--A New York career as an animation designer influenced my obsession with lines that enclose and hug each shape. Color, whimsy, and imagination define my style. I believe reality is highly overrated so I do not paint to imitate nature. Dreams, lyrics, obscure song titles, quotes and twisted misquotes are my inspiration.

### **Brien Beidler** [Leather, paper, gold, brass]

*Art Story:* Books may not be the primary way that information is collected and stored these days, but they sure are fun to make, and even more fun to hold. I like crooked lines that are part of the process, not intentional statements. I also think sincerity is underrated.



Artists: Cheryl Duckworth, Angela Caldwell, Betty Wagoner, Brien Beidler, Bonnie Gordon-Lucas.



Artists: Dawn Adams, Ellen Starr Lyon, Gwen Law, Christy Wiesenhahn Jim Campbell, Elizabeth Parrock

### **Cheryl Gregg Duckworth** [Oil painting]

*Art Story:* I've been painting and drawing things that I love since my childhood--landscapes, flowers, wildlife, and my pets. I often get up just before sunrise to see if the sky will be amazing that morning! Inspiration for paintings often come from a beautiful sunrise or sunset.

### **Christy 'Weezer' Wiesenhahn** [Glass, Paint, Mosaic, Skateparks]

*Art Story:* There is nothing better than juxtaposing ideas and colors, exploring lines and curves in a design, and making it interactive with light or with skateboards and bikes. It's a mess in the studio, moving from medium to medium, failing and succeeding on a daily basis. But on some days, like today, I'm sitting here with a sketchbook enjoying the light and how it plays with the colors/textures of the glass as it changes throughout the day like a moody little boy.

### **Dawn Adams** [Oil Painting]

*Art Story:* This body of work was a response to grief at the loss of our son, Wade. Making art was therapy for me, and I was hoping therapeutic to look at. Water, probably more than any other representational imagery, has both psychological and emotional implications. It can morph its surroundings suggesting multiple realities. It can be abstract if you want it to, and be very emotionally soothing - an ideal subject for healing. I believe looking at water promotes a peaceful mind.

### **Ellen Starr Lyon** [Oil on canvas and pencil on paper]

*Art Story:* My work has always been about portraiture; whether a self-portrait, paintings of my family, detailed depictions of specific plants or still life. Our lives are all so busy with what feels like constant motion. Through my portraits, I am collecting moments that show a beautiful, ordinary scene in a very intimate way.

**Gwen Law** [*Sculpture, steel, plastic, wood, resin*]

*Art Story:* I have a need to learn how things are made and then break that process to discover fantastic new possibilities. My recent work using translucent, weightless materials plays with natural light and breezes to enliven the surrounding space with kinetic energy. I bring the freedom of fantastic form to transform everyday reality.

**James B. Campbell** [*Painting/Sculpture*]

*Art Story:* I paint the inconsistencies of mind. / Within the cacophony of thought, what we believe is often in conflict with our lives. I paint the search for resolution and the desire for meaning. To observe the multiplicity, and contentious division of mind is to find ourselves. I embrace the paint and paths that sculpt life in unexpected ways.

**Joanne Shank** [*Painting*]

*Art Story:* Mixing colors to find the subtle blends, nature is my source. Pouring puddles of color and moving it with my hands across the surface. Waiting to see what new imaginary landscape emerges. The fluidity dries to a moment in time.



*Artists: Michal Ann Carley, Meg Lagodzki, Mary Uthuppuru, Paul Smedberg, Leanne Ellis, Joanne Shank*

**Leanne Ellis** [*Clay, fiber, sticks and stones, habitats*]

*Art Story:* Creating is play. / A tail here, a leg there. / Creature, man, woman. / One of a kind, silly thing. / A story waiting to be revealed. / Then into the fire! / Like the birth of a baby. / Opening the kiln.

**Mary Uthuppuru** [*Artists' books, printmaking*]

*Art Story:* I love to slow down and examine the world around me. Science and nature are fascinating, and I can spend hours researching unique organisms. These investigations take shape in my artists' books, which stray from traditional book formats. With mystery at the forefront, the viewer is invited to explore each book's content in a way that is playful and fun.

**Meg Lagodzki** [*Oil paint, primarily landscapes*]

*Art Story:* I find a location that moves me and an element of the landscape that feels mysterious and awe inspiring. Then I study it intently through repeated visits, plein air studies, photos and sketchbook notes. I use that material to create large-scale studio pieces in order to recreate an immersive experience. Lately, I am particularly drawn to overgrown quarries for their impossible shapes and ruinous nature.

**Michal Ann Carley** [*Iron/steel, glass, drawing*]

*Art Story:* While watching and listening to the world of nature, I am drawn to what is transitory—the activities and forms that articulate movement from one state of being to another. These passages, adaptations, and transformations are the notions that inspire my forged and torchformed, nature-based works—leaving each piece to be a pregnant allegory of moments from life's relational cycles of growth, amplification, and decline.

**Paul Smedberg** [*Photoremixes, poetry, installations*]

*Art Story:* There is so much more to the world than what we perceive. I delight in what's here, and also look behind and above for the lines and forces that bind and churn nature. Then, with that glimpse of understanding in hand, I make stuff up. It's incredibly fun.

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