



THE SCRIBE

OHIO'S NONPROFIT ARTS NEWSPAPER



VOL 2, NO. 4 - APRIL 2025

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Birds, Parks, and Passion: Julie Bomia



Self-taught painter captures Ohio nature

Works as pediatric social worker

Photo realistic landscapes and birds

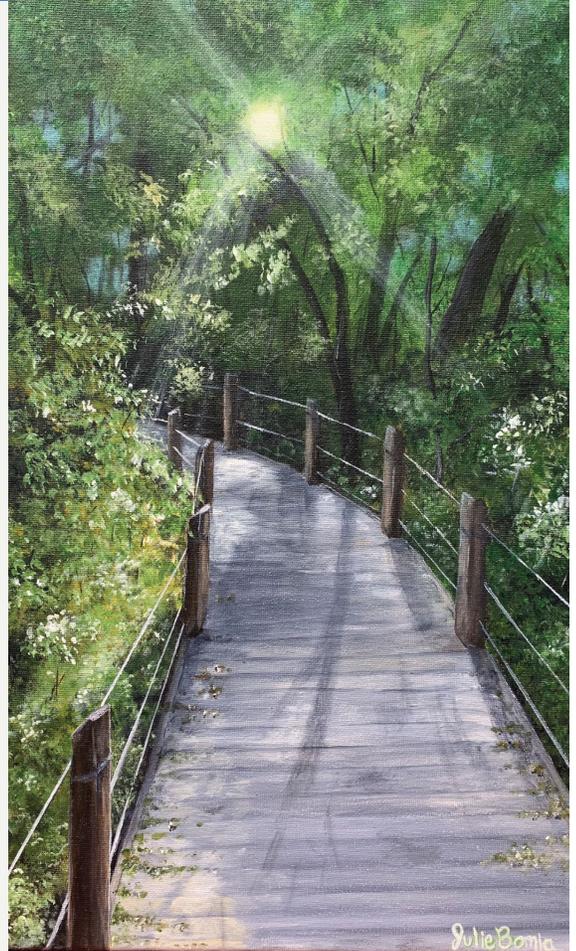
@juliebomia_art
<https://the-scribe.org/julieb>

Julie's Background

Julie Bomia is a self-taught artist from Mansfield, Ohio who has called the Toledo area home for 25 years. A University of Toledo graduate with a bachelor's degree in social work (2005), she balances her career as a pediatric social worker with her passion for painting. Though always artistic—drawing characters and cartoons as a child—she discovered landscape painting as an adult in 2017 after encouragement from a coworker.

Her Artistic Style

Bomia specializes in photo realistic paintings that often depict landscapes, birds, and local landmarks. Without formal training, she has developed her unique style organically, focusing on creating works so detailed they might be mistaken for photographs. Her technique emphasizes color, shadows, texture, light, and depth to create visual experiences.





THE SCRIBE
OHIO'S NONPROFIT ARTS NEWSPAPER



The Scribe™ is a **FREE** monthly arts publication that is created and published under the 501(c)(3) nonprofit Apollo Press.

The Scribe™ is the first Ohio-wide arts newspaper, providing arts coverage and making art accessible to everyone.

Individual Subscriptions are \$10/mo. Businesses are encouraged to stock this paper for free.

Support The Scribe!
The Scribe™ is a **FREE** nonprofit newspaper, but we need your support to keep going! Consider stocking or sponsoring this publication!

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WHAT IS THE SCRIBE?

The Scribe is a free, community-driven arts publication that promotes local Ohio artists, authors, filmmakers, musicians, and more!

By bringing Ohio's vibrant art scene to a location near you, *The Scribe* connects you with meaningful stories and beautiful art.

We believe in making art accessible and enjoyable for everyone.

Discover Ohio's art scene!

WANT TO BE FEATURED?

The Scribe accepts submissions from Ohio artistic creators of all kinds. Just send us your portfolio!

The Scribe is Ohio's best way for artists of all skill levels to grow!

Reach out now!

submit@apollo-press.com

'Safaritopia': A story of gene-spliced animals



"Daddy, I'm excited to go to the zoo, but why can't the animals leave?" my daughter Zoe asked?

"Zoe, the animals are at home. They just can't be in their natural habitat because of many reasons. Some are endangered," I replied, getting our tickets using my augmented reality glasses.

Safaritopia is filled with animals both from nature and from the lab. The zoo had many gene spliced additions recently. In the advertisement, it says:

"Meet creatures from this world and beyond." We entered the park with the tour guides being augmented reality as well.

"Welcome to Safaritopia, the zoo of the future. Keep your headsets on for additional information about our animals. Let's begin our tour," the virtual tour guide said.

"She talks funny," Zoe acknowledged, grabbing my hand, with her own headset on.

Robots walked around with us to display video

to people watching from their headsets at home. "The smells, it's been a while since I've seen a giraffe," one person said inhaling from their nose plug.

I looked into the next exhibit: the eagles. They flew back and forth with a freedom that even us as humans didn't feel. These particular eagles were mixed with ostriches so their legs were slightly longer than usual. In my excitement, my headset fell to the ground. "Oops, don't want to have to pay for another set they're expensive."

One particular eagle, went to the ground and started to run in a circle with its toned legs. "Ladies and gentlemen we've had these particular gene spliced eagles for a year. They can run twenty miles an hour and have a ten foot wingspan," the virtual tour guide smiled.

I looked in a unmarked exhibit that had a coming soon sign and could see a naked man running around. I covered Zoe's eyes and she scratched me leaving a long scratch. I wondered why they would have such an exhibit. "Why is there a man in that display there tour guide?" I asked, shocked.

My question was ignored and the in-person guests looked at me with an odd stare. "What are you talking about?" one man asked.

I took off my headset to see if there was a malfunction. The man was still there reaching into the sky. "I can see someone in that exhibit." I added, with my nostrils flaring.

People became upset and the guide acknowledged my claims. "Mister Kingston there is no one present in the exhibit you speak of. We have a new addition coming soon. If your outbursts persist you'll have to be escorted out of the park."

I uncovered Zoe's eyes and whispered to her. "Do you see anything Zoe?"

She squinted her eyes then said. "No dad. Are you okay?"

I began to have a panic attack wondering why I would see something that isn't there. I asked for my vital signs. "Digi-pal, what are my vitals?"

"Hello Mister Kingston, your vitals are normal. Do you need any assistance?" my Digi-pal asked.

I made sure to walk in the back of the group. "No, that won't be necessary."

The monkey exhibit had squirrel monkeys that jumped from tree branch to tree branch. Some of them looked at the group pointing. "The monkeys see us daddy," Zoe said.

"We're not too different than they are Zoe. Look at them communicate with one another." I observed.

"These particular squirrel monkeys are capable of asexual reproduction. This something that may be added to endangered species so they be released from captivity," the guide commented.

"What's next!? What's next!?" Zoe asked, as she jumped around.

"The next exhibit is the final group showing of the day. It's a special animal. We call it the humanoid panther. It's rather fascinating capable of leaping large distances and the ability to talk a lot of normal words. He normally just sits on the rock display. Occasionally we let him watch TV for study purposes."

I noticed the animal looked a lot like the man I thought I saw in the other exhibit. I could feel the hairs on my back stand up. "That's what I saw earlier. Why would you keep a person gene spliced with an animal? It's inhumane!!" "It's more animal than human," a woman in the group replied from the robot's screen.

"Aren't we all animals," I mentioned, tapping the glass.

"You should go you're upsetting our guests," the guide said, displaying frustration. "Security please escort this gentleman outside Safaritopia. Have a good day sir."

Zoe and I left from the group and walked out of the park. I kicked a garbage can then catching it before it fell. "Sorry Zoe, I wanted you to see the rest of the park. It's hard to have a conversation with a program besides a person."

Later I watched the news and saw that the humanoid panther had escaped. It had climbed to the top of the tree in its exhibit and jumped to its freedom. "Is everything alright Michael?" my wife Shawna asked. "Honey look, the animal escaped."

"Hope he comes back before curfew," I replied, licking my hands.

- Chad C. Taylor
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ctaylor8368@gmail.com

What's New With *The Scribe*? Seshat's Art Contest

Our mascot Seshat needs more artwork!

Seshat is the ancient Egyptian goddess of writing, wisdom, and knowledge — but despite her importance, she's rarely seen in art. Let's help change that!

Submit family-friendly artwork of Seshat and win:

- \$100 visa gift card!
- Your art featured in *The Scribe*!

Deadline for submission is **JUNE 30th!**

Submit your art to:
submit@apollo-press.com

Full terms and rules:
the-scribe.org/contest

Stocked On The Ohio Turnpike

As of March, *The Scribe* is now officially stocked on the Ohio Turnpike! You can find copies of it at the Wyandot service plaza, and in other rest stops in the near future.

The reported foot traffic for this plaza alone is 1.5 million people annual, giving a massive boost in visibility for Ohio's artists.

The Scribe is the only monthly newspaper stocked on the Turnpike!



Capturing Life's Moments: Renae Contris



Finance graduate turned artist

Abstract art invites interpretation

Colors reflect emotions, memories



renaecontris.com



@renaecontris

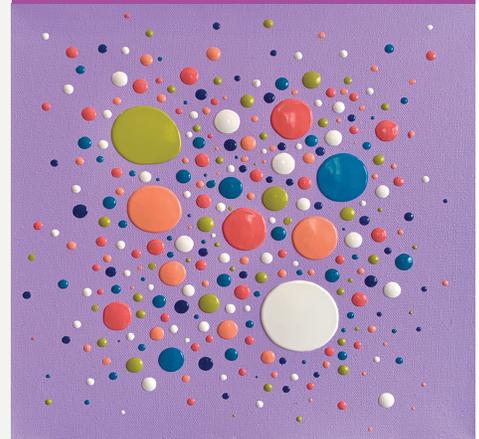


Exploring Experience Through Abstract Art

At its foundation, Renae's artwork explores relationships, emotions, and the transient moments that shape human experience.

Her primary artistic aim is to invite viewers to pause, engage, and discover their own narratives within the layers of her work.

Each piece serves as an echo of something deeply personal yet universally understood.



Creation Guided by the Senses

Renae draws color inspiration from both external sources and internal feelings. Her palette choices might be influenced by specific moments—places, memories, or observations of light—or they may emerge intuitively, guided by emotion. This dynamic between planned and intuitive creation gives her work its distinctive character.

“Each piece serves as an echo of something deeply personal yet universally understood.”

An Artist Rooted in Emotion

Renae Contris is a Lima-based abstract artist whose journey began during her transition from finance studies to creative exploration. What started as a personal outlet quickly evolved into a professional passion, with her work gaining exhibition recognition within just six months of serious pursuit.



Art That Invites Reflection

Abstract art holds special significance for Renae because of its open interpretations.

She values how a single piece can evoke different responses from viewers based on their unique memories, associations, and emotions.

Some observers connect with the energy conveyed through patterns or brushstrokes, while others relate to the color palette through nostalgic associations.



Through Her Lens: LaVonda Josett Photography



Toledo artist explores spiritual identity

Photographs preserve precious family memories

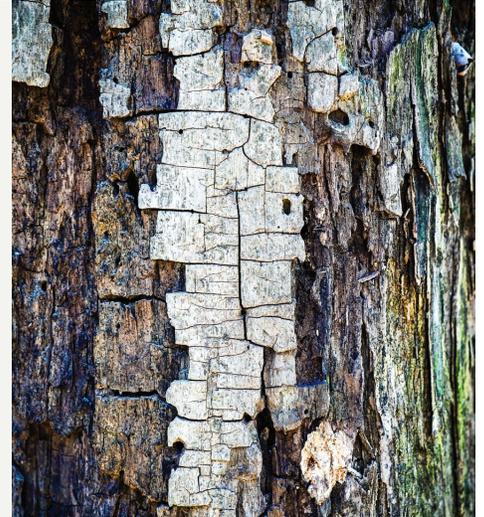
Exhibition featured in Toledo Blade



lavondajosett.com



[facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com)



“...I value depth, love fluidity, and seek authenticity everywhere.”

— LaVonda to *The Scribe*

Faith, Family, and Artistic Roots

LaVonda Josett, daughter of Katcherlean and Cinnie Delano Johnson, grew up in a matriarchal, faith-centered household. She embraces spirituality while challenging traditional religious interpretations.

Through her journey, she found inspiration in reimagining religious texts, particularly questioning the feminine aspects of divinity.

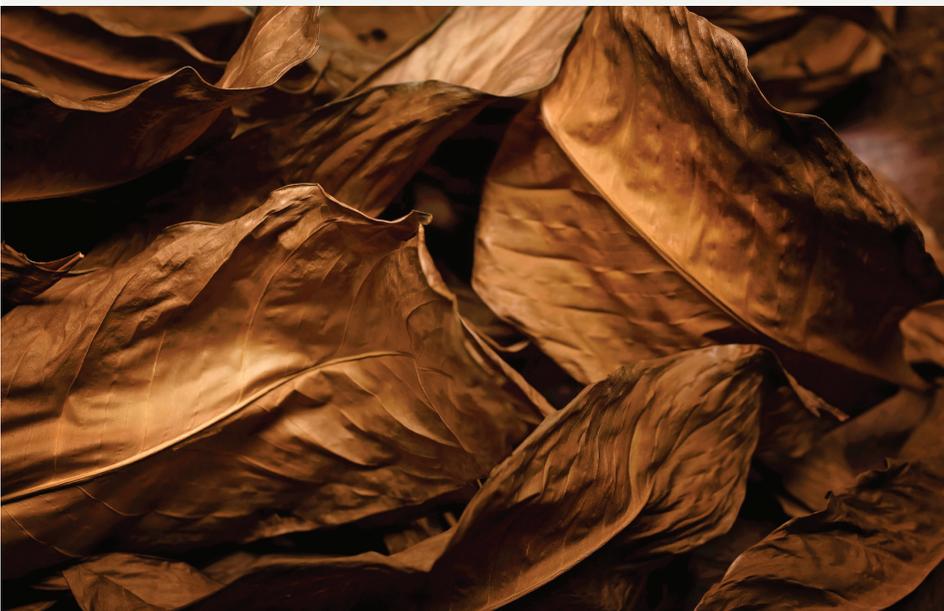
Her family ties include siblings Sidney Delano and Samuel Lee Johnson, and she is married to Lisa Marie Holden.

A Professional Legacy Through the Lens

LaVonda Josett operates LaVonda Josett Photography LLC in Toledo, Ohio, where she specializes in event and still life photography. Her work focuses on capturing real-time, authentic moments that resonate deeply with emotion and personal meaning.

In July 2024, her portfolio was featured in an exhibition covered by *The Toledo Blade*, highlighting 22 symbolic still life photographs that explore themes of faith and intimacy. Drawing from a rich tradition of still life, LaVonda uses her lens to tell a narrative grounded in spiritual reflection and human connection.

Widely recognized in Toledo's arts community, LaVonda maintains that “memories are the final currency,” underscoring her belief in preserving meaningful moments her clients can cherish and revisit for years to come.



A Vision of Emotion and Contrast

As an event and Fine Art Photographer, LaVonda's work focuses on capturing images that explore contrast, contradiction, and evolution.

Her photography speaks to themes of love, longing, pain, redemption, and presence.

She approaches her craft with an emphasis on depth, fluidity, and authenticity, creating work that resonates with universal human experiences.

LaVonda's work is dedicated to humanity, focusing on capturing authentic moments that resonate with emotion. Her portfolio demonstrates versatility through landscapes, still life compositions, and digital art.

Public Art Meets Ancient Technique: Derek Brennan



Cleveland muralist transforms public spaces

50+ murals across Northeast Ohio

Specializes in wax painting technique



derek-brennan.com



@derek_t_brennan

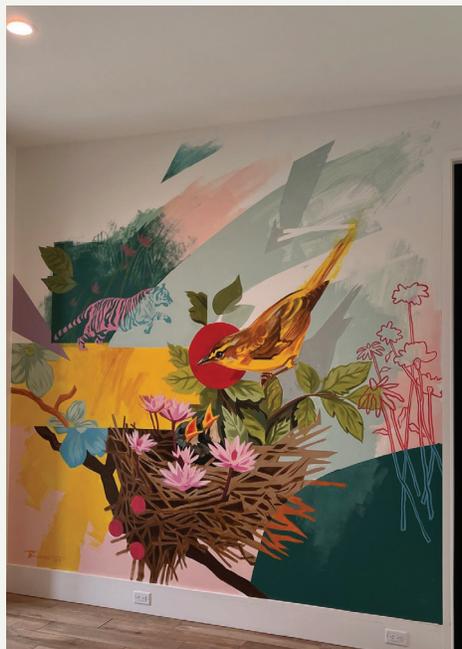


The Ancient Art of Encaustic

When not creating large-scale public works, Brennan immerses himself in encaustic painting at his gallery and studio in Cleveland's Gordon Square neighborhood, specifically at 78th Street Studios. His approach to this ancient medium is deeply intuitive: "I create to discover something unexpected," he explains. The process involves simultaneously painting, drawing, and collaging with wax, allowing him to work instinctively rather than overthinking. For Brennan, the physical act of creation takes precedence over subject matter, providing a meditative space free from constraint and anxiety.

Making His Mark

What started as a single mural project in 2016 has blossomed into a remarkable career in public art. Brennan has completed nearly 50 murals, primarily in the Cleveland area, with significant works expanding into Sandusky and Fostoria. His most notable achievement is a stunning 728-foot-long mural created for the Elevate the East campaign in partnership with the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority, marking it as one of Ohio's largest murals.



From Caricatures to City Walls

Cleveland-based artist Derek Brennan has evolved from a theme park caricaturist to become one of Northeast Ohio's most prolific muralists, while maintaining a deep connection to the ancient art of encaustic painting. His work spans from intimate gallery pieces to one of Ohio's largest murals, demonstrating his versatility and commitment to making art accessible to all. Derek Brennan resides in West Park with his wife and two daughters, balancing his prolific public art career with family life and his studio practice. His dedication to both monumental public works and encaustic pieces proves his versatility as an artist.

A Vision for Public Art

Brennan's perspective on mural creation reflects his passionate dedication to public art: "Murals have the power to shape environments and connect with people in a way that few other art forms can." His restless creativity drives him to constantly seek new challenges and push artistic boundaries, transforming spaces and bringing vitality to neighborhoods and workplaces through his large-scale installations.

Upcoming Arts Events in April

Global Arts Festival at Ohio University	Cabin Fever Arts Festival	Athens International Street Fair	Spring Exhibitions at Summit Artspace
March 31 - April 4, 2025 Time Varies 1 Park Place, Athens Free admission No RSVP ohio.edu	April 5, 2025 10am - 4pm 100 Hobart Ave. Hillsboro Free admission No RSVP Find more info on facebook	April 5, 2025 10:30am - 5pm 75 W Union St, Athens Free admission No RSVP ohio.edu	April 11, 2025 5pm - 8pm 140 E Market Street, Akron Free admission No RSVP summitartspace.org
Grove City EcoFest	Art From the Heart Expo	Broadway in Columbus - A Beautiful Noise	World Music and Dance Concert
April 19, 2025 9am - 1pm 3359 Park St., Grove City Free admission No RSVP grovecityohio.gov	April 19, 2025 11am - 4pm 2430 S Detroit Ave., Maumee Free admission No RSVP maumeesenioreniorcenter.com	April 22 - April 27, 2025 Time Varies 39 E State St, Columbus Must buy tickets columbus.broadway.com	April 27, 2025 8am 953 Eden Park Dr, Cincinnati Free admission Registration Required ohio.edu

Check out our online calendar at the-scribe.org

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Thursday Night Comedy
Jake's Saloon
8:00 PM

Sunday Night Comedy
Home Slice Pizza
6:30 PM



Instagram icon: 
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Wax and Water: Beth Genson



Water artist explores encaustic technique

Captures reflective natural beauty

Supports clean water charity



bethgenson.com



[@bethgenson](https://www.instagram.com/bethgenson)



An Artist Drawn to Water

Beth Genson describes herself as an “artistic explorer” who finds beauty in local subjects. Her primary fascination is water in all its forms—ponds, rivers, lakes, and oceans.

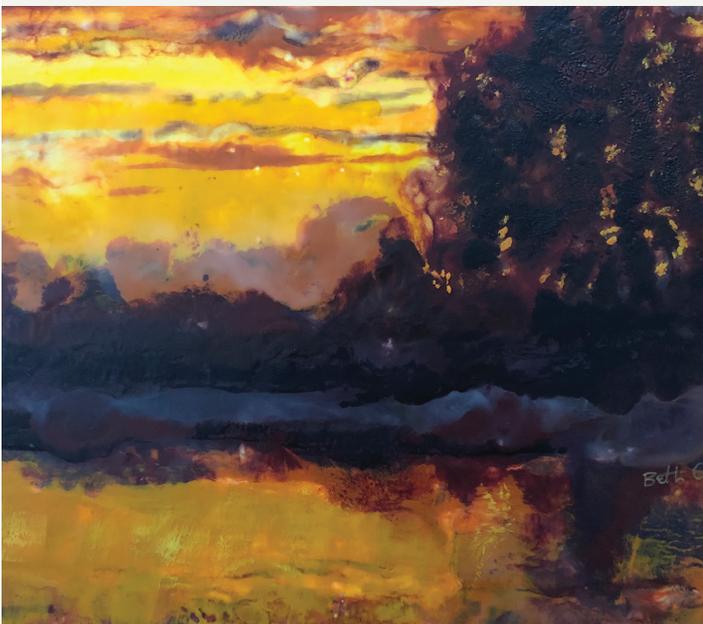
She’s drawn to water’s transcendent quality as it reflects sun, sky, and changing weather conditions, capturing its various “moods and expressions” through her art.

Moments in Motion: The “Water Ways” Exhibit

“Water Ways” showcases Beth’s exploration of water through encaustic on various surfaces including paper, Encausticbord, and wood.

The collection features rivers, lakes, and oceans at sunrise and sunset, capturing these moments in vibrant color washes.

Beth invites viewers to select paintings that evoke personal memories or connections to water. She emphasizes that each purchase not only provides daily enjoyment of these water scenes but also contributes to helping others access this vital resource.



Where Art Meets Action

For Beth, water represents life itself. She reminds us that water covers approximately 70% of Earth’s surface and constitutes 60% of the human body, demonstrating its importance.

With awareness that one in nine people lack access to clean drinking water, she donates a portion of her sales to CharityWater.org, which directs 100% of public donations to water projects.

The Encaustic Process

Beginning with traditional oil paints both in plein air and studio settings, Beth has recently become engrossed in encaustic painting. She uses R&F Encaustics, a blend of beeswax, damar resin, and oil pigments.

This ancient hot-wax technique offers unique approaches and finishes that have “mesmerized” her, though she feels she’s only begun to explore its possibilities.

Artfully Led: The Legacy and Space of 20 North Gallery

20 NORTH GALLERY

Founded in 1993, 20 North Gallery has over 30 years of experience in representing local, regional and international artists.

Address

18 N. St. Clair Street,
Toledo, Ohio 43604

Contact

419-241-2400
info@20northgallery.com

Hours

Wed-Sat:
12:00 PM to 4:00 PM
and By Appointment



20northgallery.com

20 North Gallery is a Superb Location for Your Private Events

"We believe the combination of fine art and fine entertaining is a natural fit.

20 North Gallery is available for private rental, making this elegant and cosmopolitan gallery the perfect site for your weddings, charitable events, corporate gatherings and private celebrations.

In addition to the offerings from our own commercial kitchen and licensed bar, we work with a wide variety of caterers and restaurants in our community, to create a menu as individual as your special event.

And because art exhibitions at 20 North Gallery are never repeated, the look of your event can never be duplicated—always to be remembered as unique as your own special occasion."



Left: The gallery building in 1990, before restoration Right: 20 North Gallery in recent years, reflecting its role in revitalizing downtown Toledo.

How Art Changes a Community

In 1990, downtown developer Eric Hillenbrand and a former business partner acquired a once bustling but then dilapidated warehouse building, on an equally abandoned downtown street, with the intent to restore and revitalize their investment.

Inspired by urban renewals of Soho and other cities led by arts and entertainment, they envisioned a fine arts gallery as part of the renovation. 20 North Gallery launched its first exhibition in May of 1993 to great acclaim—the first downtown art gallery since the 1970s.

Under the guidance of its first art director, the late Peggy Grant, 20 North Gallery began exhibiting internationally-celebrated artists, bringing crowds of art aficionados and entrepreneurs to Toledo's downtown. Many of them invested in the neighborhood; over time, more properties were revitalized, a ballpark was built, then an arena, restaurants, shops, and parks.

That once abandoned street is now the center of Toledo's arts and entertainment district—and 20 North Gallery remains proud at the heart of it all.

Taking it to the Next Level

As Toledo's premier independent gallery, 20 North primarily represents established and museum-collected artists from Toledo and the region. Additionally, 20 North Gallery curates exhibitions of their artists that travel to regional museums, and constantly endeavor to reinforce the legacy of those artists through placement of their work in permanent museum collections.

Through collaborations with academic institutions, 20 North offers internships for students seeking careers in arts administration and workshops for students who are looking to launch their artistic careers through gallery representation.

But, most of all, when a visitor enters the space, the 20 North Gallery team—art director Condessa Croninger, gallery manager Anastasia Wagner and owner Eric Hillenbrand—look forward to sharing the delight and wonder of the exhibited art with them, helping them to make a connection with the artists and the stories their art conveys, discovering that art is something one really can't live without, and taking it home to enjoy it, forever.



20 North Gallery's "Exploring the Industrial Landscape"



20 NORTH GALLERY

An exhibition of Midwest industry through painting and photography by Tony Bianco and Sebastien Schön.

Location
18 N. St. Clair Street,
Toledo, Ohio 43604

Date
April 4 – June 21 2025



Exhibit Web Page

Free Public Reception
Friday, April 4, 2025,
6 – 8 p.m.

Common Ground, Distinct Voices

20 North Gallery art director Condessa Croninger adds, "We are delighted to welcome Tony Bianco and Sebastien Schohn in their first exhibition here at 20 North Gallery.

Despite the differences in their mediums and approach to their subject matter, both artists' work reveal striking commonality with concepts of the historic Ash Can School in American art, but with a twenty-first century Midwestern sensibility.

Their detailed and highly evocative presentations reveal the unexpected and hidden grandeur of Midwest industries that were devised by the towering visions of our industrialists and entrepreneurs, as well as a celebration of the dynamism that fueled the industrial heartland and the commitment—in sweat and toil—made by the men and women whose labor empowers the American experience."

Industrial Stories in Paint and Pixel

Reflecting on his unique viewpoint as a factory worker of many years in the steel mills of Indiana, Tony Bianco presents landscapes of factory interiors and industrial skylines.

His watercolor, acrylic and oil paintings capture scenes across Indiana and Chicago, with multiple new-for-2025 depictions of Toledo, Ohio being unveiled in "Exploring the Industrial Landscape."

Sebastien Schohn, originally from Toledo, makes his commercial gallery debut with photography created while working in construction across West and Northwest Ohio.

Schohn's introspective photographs invite viewers to discover new perspectives on construction, fabrication and machinery.

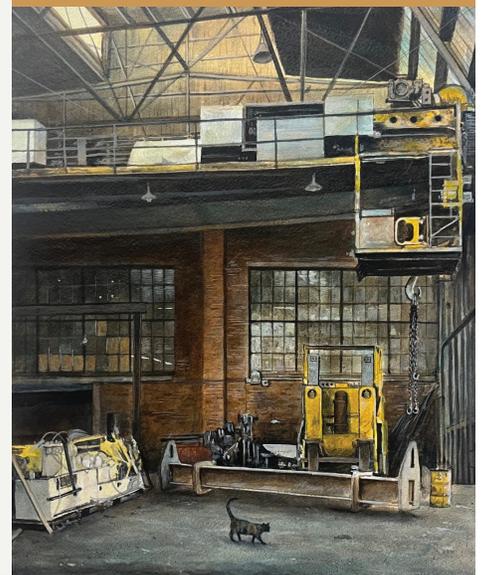
"beauty in familiar scenes"

Exploring the Industrial Landscape

On April 4, 2025, 20 North Gallery will present "Exploring the Industrial Landscape: Tony Bianco and Sebastien Schohn," an exhibition of atmospheric landscape paintings by Chesterton, Indiana artist Tony Bianco and construction site photography by Columbus, Ohio artist Sebastien Schohn.

Inspired by their individual experiences of working in factories and construction in the Midwestern United States, the exhibiting artists of "Exploring the Industrial Landscape" look for beauty in the familiar scenes of the region known as the Rust Belt.

The exhibit will open with a free Public Reception on Friday, April 4, 2025 from 6 – 8 p.m., featuring a light tapas buffet and cash bar by Venue. The exhibition will continue through June 21, 2025. The "Exploring the Industrial Landscape" online catalogue will be on 20northgallery.com soon.



Brad Davis: Portraits of a Changing City



Oil painter based in Cincinnati, Ohio

Known for plein air city scenes

Captures beauty in overlooked spaces



braddavisartist.com



@braddavisartist



Where It All Began

"My name is Brad Davis, and I am an oil painter living and working in Cincinnati, Ohio. I was born in 1993 in Cincinnati and raised in the rural countryside near Belfast, Ohio. My father was an elementary art teacher and my mother, who also has a teaching degree, stayed home to raise my sister and me.

Growing up, I was constantly surrounded by art. My dad is a dedicated follower of the Wyeths, and he made an annual pilgrimage from Ohio to the Brandywine Valley in Pennsylvania to see the paintings in person at the Brandywine River Museum and to soak up "Wyeth country" in hopes of running into Andrew or Jamie.

At around the age of 8, I was allowed to join him on this trip, and it unlocked in me a full desire to pursue painting seriously. When the time came in high school for me to decide on higher education, I chose to go to the Art Academy of Cincinnati to study painting."

Becoming a Painter

"It was a difficult decision to take out loans for a path with so much uncertainty, but I dedicated myself fully to the practice and the life, even studying with local painter Richard Lushek in between my college classes, receiving the traditional training I desperately needed.

After graduating from the Art Academy of Cincinnati with my BFA, I decided to go to graduate school at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts.

It was in Philadelphia where I really began to develop as a painter. I worked on several paintings of the city and portraits of people against the urban backdrop.

After graduating, I returned to Cincinnati where I began teaching at the University of Cincinnati and the Art Academy of Cincinnati. In 2020, I started renting a studio in a warehouse on the industrialized outskirts of downtown Cincinnati and have worked there since."

Painting the Present Moment

"Many of my large-scale paintings are completed in this studio, but many of my smaller paintings are painted "en plein air" using a pochade box and tripod. I prefer to paint cityscapes that emphasize the changing urban infrastructure and allude to historical or personal narratives.

Painting from observation in this way becomes a performative act of recording and paying homage to a place and time. My wife, Alex, is a poet and often joins me on these plein air days, and she writes about the same places.

Together we established "Plein Air Poetry" which is a collaborative Instagram and Substack account featuring these moments we share together.

Currently I am working on a solo show that will open May 24th at Abend Gallery in Denver, Colorado. The show is titled "End of an Era" and features paintings about the many closing chapters in my own life and those that we collectively experience. It will be on view at Abend Gallery until June 14th."



Watercolor Wanderer: Megen Leigh



Watercolor artist from Westerville

Creates whimsical, fluid art

Exhibits locally and nationally



megenleigh.com



@leighmarts

Background in Imagination and Ink

Megen Leigh is an artist based in Westerville, Ohio who grew up immersed in the science fiction and fantasy community.

She primarily works with watercolor and fluid inks to create whimsical, imaginative landscapes and playful abstracts that reflect her upbringing.

Evolution of Megen's Art

Over several years, Megen has been on a journey of artistic self-discovery, experimenting with various styles and mediums.

Rather than searching for a single defining characteristic, she has embraced continuous evolution and experimentation, though watercolor has become her artistic home.

“She begins without knowing... letting the piece evolve.”

The Fluid Painting Approach

Megen embraces a fluid creative process, often beginning by simply applying color to wet paper and allowing the artwork to develop organically.

She frequently starts without knowing whether she's creating a landscape or an abstract until the piece evolves.

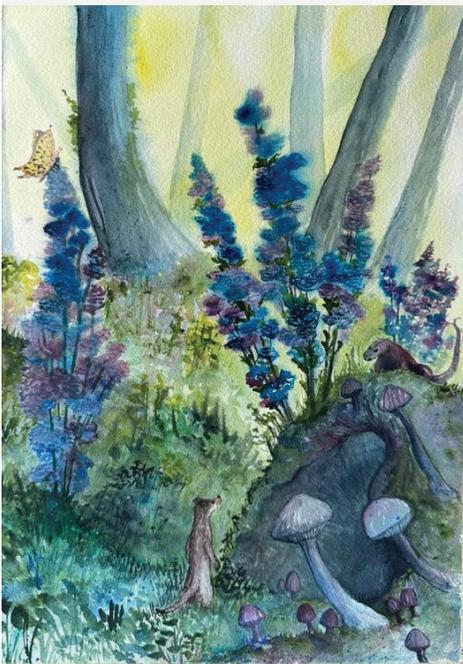
This spontaneous method has been instrumental in her personal mental health journey, teaching her to embrace natural processes both in art and life.

Creating, Mentoring, and Exhibiting

Currently, Megen is an artist in residence at High Road Gallery in Worthington, where her studio is open to the public. When not in her studio, she volunteers as a mentor with Art Outside the Lines, a program for adults with developmental disabilities.

She also exhibits at fine arts and crafts festivals in the area and occasionally appears in science fiction convention vendor halls and art shows:

- Solo exhibition at the German Village Historical Society (May 2023)
- Multiple group shows at 83 Gallery
- Solo exhibition at Family Room Cafe (December 2024)
- Artist Guest of Honor at Windycon 50 in Chicago



The Mercury Effect: Michael "MERCHAZE" Mercury



Toledo music producer trailblazer

Creative community builder

Multi-platform artistic innovator



mercandfriends.com

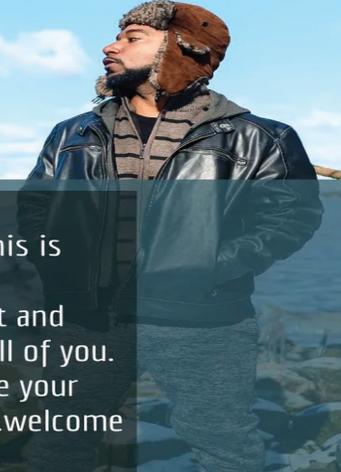


@merchaze

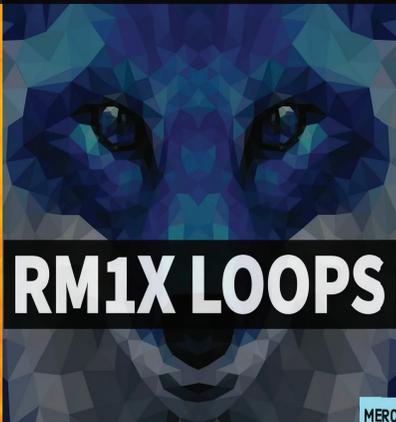
MERC+FRIENDS

Peace all, I'm Michael Mercury. I go by "Merc" as a music producer and this is my website. Creative people are the people I know best and Merc+Friends is my way to connect with all of you. You're here now, browse my site and leave your email. This will be a journey for us all so...welcome to Merc+Friends.com ..let's go!!

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Michael's Creative Foundations

Michael Mercury, also known by the moniker "MERCHAZE," is a musician and producer whose creative work spans multiple disciplines. His platform, Merc+Friends, serves as a hub for artistic collaboration—offering music production services, scoring for film and TV, and editing for dance and voiceover projects.

As the creator and facilitator of The Renaissance at Murphys (2000–2003), Mercury established one of downtown Toledo's longest-running open mic nights, creating a vital space for local expression. He later co-created The Listening at The Truth Art Gallery (2008–2011), another influential poetry and music series that further cemented his role in Toledo's creative community.

Leading with Art and Voice

Mercury's work extends deeply into both music production and journalistic media.

As co-creator of U.G.E., a local production label, he helped lead the team to win multiple Ohio Hip Hop Awards between 2008 and 2012 — including prestigious honors such as Best Label and Best Artist. His work continues to support artists through music production, beat sales, and artist consultation.

In parallel with his music career, Mercury served for eleven years as an entertainment columnist for Sojourner's Truth Newspaper, where he covered industry professionals, local talent, and offered insightful film and music reviews.

His commitment to media excellence was also reflected in his involvement with the National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ) and other media societies.

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MUSIC BLOG • BEAT SITE

A New Chapter in Motion

The Lyrical Protege Web Series represents Mercury's latest ambitious project. Initially launched on Merc+Friends.com and now available on Tubi, this series showcases his talents as both writer and composer.

Directed by Tyrell Betts, with stunt choreography by Dante Russell, the production features numerous Toledo-area creatives, reflecting Mercury's ongoing commitment to collaborative artistry.

His instrumental work continues to reach audiences worldwide, with music available under the name Merchaze on major platforms including Spotify, Apple Music, YouTube, and beyond.

Producing for the Next Generation

Mercury remains inspired in today's rapidly evolving entertainment world. He particularly advocates for Black creatives, offering insight on navigating the industry's dynamics based on his experience.

Mercury continues to support emerging talent through production services, consultation, and beat licensing.

His work demonstrates how artistic vision — when paired with community engagement — can create lasting impact.

In a New Key: The Creative Life of Teresa Disbrow



Musician turned multi-medium artist

33-year career in band directing

Retiree still pursuing creative passions

A Life Shaped by Music and Mentorship

Creativity and encouragement have always defined Teresa Disbrow's life. With the support of her parents, she pursued a path in music education – a field where few women were represented in the late 1970s.

In 1978, she began her career as a clarinetist and band director, dedicating herself to the development of young musicians.

Teresa spent 33 years teaching as a band director in Toledo Public Schools and at St. Joan of Arc, doing whatever it took to help her students reach their full musical potential.

She was one of the early Conductors of the Toledo Junior Youth Orchestra, and throughout her career, she instilled confidence, discipline, and a lasting appreciation for music in those she taught.

Though music remained her primary focus, Teresa always held an interest in other creative outlets. In spare moments, she found quiet joy in cross stitch, photography, and sketching – artistic threads that would later return more fully into her life.

Everyday Joy in Retirement

Teresa continues to teach and perform on clarinet, while enjoying a life enriched by nature, family, and creativity. She and her husband share their home with two Labrador Retrievers who are always eager to “assist” in the studio.

From gardening and birdwatching to nature walks and time with her grandchildren, Teresa finds inspiration in the rhythms of daily life – blending her artistic spirit with a deep appreciation for the world around her.

Exploring New Creative Paths

After retiring in 2011, Teresa discovered a hidden art room at the Wolf Creek YMCA. In 2015, she joined an Intro to Drawing class and, with the support of a patient instructor, began expanding her skills.

Today, she works in a wide range of media – including pencil, pastel, ink, photography, acrylic, watercolor, and water-based oil – and treasures her uninterrupted weekly sessions devoted to artistic growth. What began as a quiet exploration has become an important part of her creative identity. She continues to enjoy learning at her own pace.



Beauty in the Unexpected: Britni Wilson



Photographer capturing unexpected beauty

Advocate from personal struggles

Empowers others through storytelling



inspire-somebody.com



[@thebritniwilson](https://www.instagram.com/thebritniwilson)



Professional Life with Purpose

Britni Wilson is a Fine Arts & Portrait Photographer, Writer, and Motivational Speaker who believes in the power of storytelling. She describes herself as a visionary who seeks beauty in unexpected places while viewing each person as uniquely valuable beyond surface appearances.

Turning Pain Into Power

Wilson firmly believes that positive outcomes can emerge from every experience, regardless of circumstances or hardships. She emphasizes the importance of looking beyond struggles and recognizing our inner power to overcome challenges, learn, grow, and achieve our deepest aspirations.

Britni's Journey of Resilience

Raised by a single mother after losing her father before age five, Britni's background shaped her resilient outlook. She identifies as a survivor of domestic violence and advocates for those with invisible chronic illnesses. Her professional experience spans Social Work, Behavioral Health, and Human Services.

Healing Through Storytelling

Britni's core philosophy centers on vulnerability and storytelling as healing tools. She remains committed to the belief that sharing personal experiences can inspire, empower, and heal others when done with courage and authenticity.

"I recognize the value found in telling our story, along with the impact that the arts can have on our healing."



The Night Nancy Jean's Poems Were Heard

Like a flower so is love
Like a wind it can fly...



Poet & painter of personal stories

Made 80 pieces in 6 weeks forexhibit

Makes feelings visible through art



nancndon@gmail

The Beginning: A Wall of Poetry

"I have been doing poetry art since 2001 when I did a huge art exhibit of Gatsby/20's inspired Wall Pieces that I designed to highlight my Original Poetry.

My proposal was a rudimentary computer printout of a wall with the different sized boxes depicting framed poetry Gatsby-like poetry and a short description of what I proposed to create for this wall.

Just a simple piece of paper and a simple idea at the time was to decorate one complete wall of the Secor Building inside the ballroom with this collection of my original poetry in this Gatsby themed exhibit.

The Toledo Arts Commission agreed with my proposal and gave me the opportunity. In all I created over 80 pieces in the 6 weeks I had to display that evening at the Black 'n' White Ball held at the Secor Building in 2002."

A Night to Remember

"One of the greatest, luckiest things that night selling poetry art became more than just a fun thing I did, it became a thing I could actually utilize to share the one thing most people might not follow through and actually read a poem. MY poems.

That evening, I had so many people reading poem after poem, as each piece drew them in with a curiosity that they didn't see coming.

At one point two beautiful ladies had been reading over piece after piece dressed in their finest long 20's evening gowns reading poem after poem when I heard the one say to the other one, 'I HAVE to know who this Nancy Jean is...'

That was an artist's rare moment."

"That was an artist's rare moment."

A Journey to a Thousand Poems

"That same evening I had a couple other artists come up to me and introduce themselves to me with questions like, 'how did you get this whole wall exhibit from the art commission - this one artist show?'

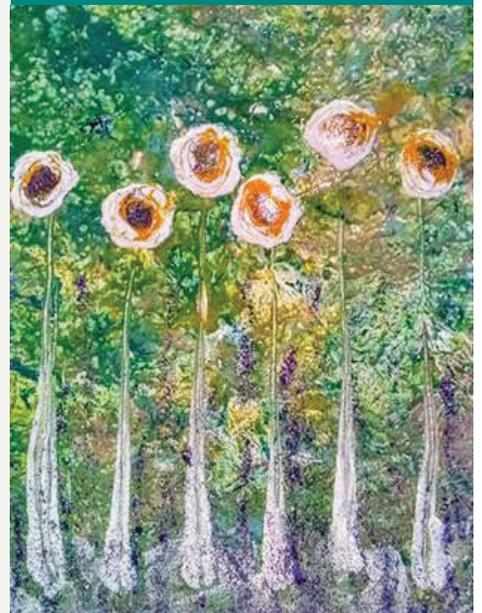
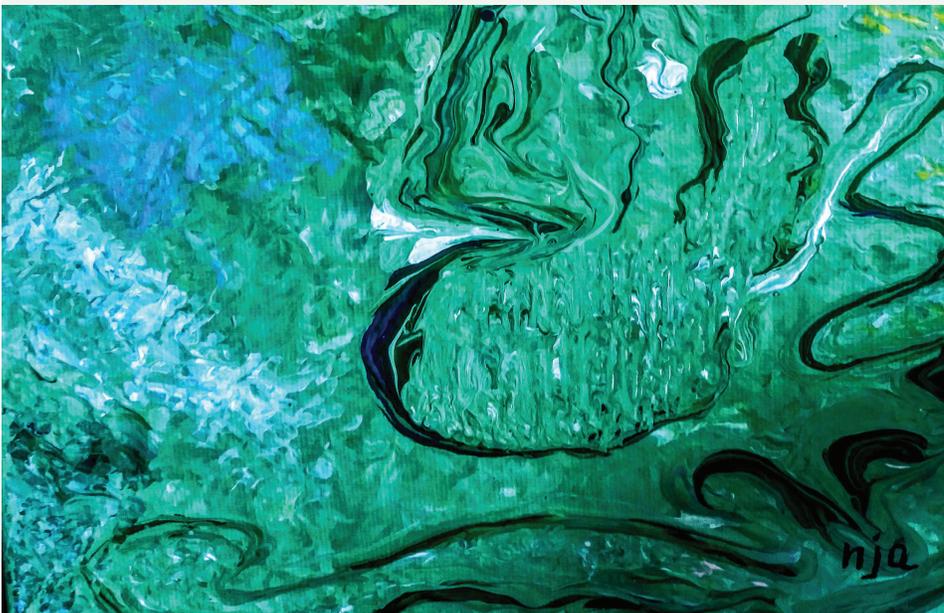
And I simply told the truth... 'I asked for it.'

Since then, I have created, sold, and gifted at least a thousand of my poetry art pieces.

I have written many requested commission pieces and created poetry art keepsakes for countless families for many occasions.

I can truly do a short interview and ask some questions and then use a person's own words and feelings to express a poem personal for them.

In my time playing with decorating my poetry I started to paint to incorporate excerpts and lines of my poems into paintings. This sparked a lot of paintings over time."



We Make Art Visible

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- We are a nonprofit service for Ohio's art community!
- Each month, 4,000 free copies reach over 80 libraries, galleries, cafes, and businesses across Ohio.



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Who is The Scribe's Mascot?



Seshat is an ancient Egyptian goddess of wisdom, knowledge, and writing. She appears as a woman wearing a distinctive headdress featuring a seven-pointed star or flower and what resembles horns or antlers. As the divine scribe and record-keeper, Seshat fulfills several important roles in Egyptian mythology.

She serves as the goddess of writing, record keeping, accounting, and mathematics, making her the patron of scribes, libraries, and archives. Seshat is considered the inventor of writing and is responsible for recording the reigns of pharaohs and their achievements.

Seshat was nearly lost to time, and has no real art of her left since Ancient Egypt.

