

TRENA McNABB

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ABOUT THE “STORY-TELLING” STYLE

“...Real yet surreal”

New York Times 1985

Each painting tells a story. Trena’s work reveals its deeper meaning through a connected series of smaller paintings, each a tale in itself. Images overlap in a kaleidoscope of colors depicting the flora, fauna, foods and landscapes that comprise our precious earth, utilizing the vivid acrylic-on-canvas pieces described by one reviewer as transparent painted collages. As the viewer approaches the painting, more and more details come into focus. This technique has been used in many large-scale paintings for public spaces.

This curious and elegant synthesis of realism and imagination in Trena’s art reflects her interest in nature and the environment. Real world visuals come alive through her use of “windows” created by the overlapping images, adding a many layers to the story which becomes deeper the longer one studies the work.

Trena’s unique blending of science, realism and fantasy creates original art where vibrant color and stark white paint compete, contrast and ultimately dance together in breathtaking harmony. She paints large site-specific and small-scale paintings of allegorical scenes, uniting the stylized shapes with her own harmonious concept of beauty. These compositions are typical of Trena’s distinctive style in that it is a multi-layered montage of brightly lighted, realistically rendered, thematically related scenes and images.

Trena’s prior work ranges from 32-foot long multi-canvas, site-specific corporate or public art commissions to small, elegant pieces for private residences. Clients throughout the US, Europe and Asia have seen their goals, themes and histories successfully captured and expressed by artist Trena McNabb. Whether she is telling a captivating story or documenting the growth of an industry, Trena’s unique style of transparent overlapping images and montages of brilliant color, inspires collectors.

*“It was certainly a pleasure to work with you in the Nature Art Gallery!
Many of our visitors and employees have commented how beautiful and colorful your pieces are.
I was surprised as well during the time we were unwrapping them. The photos of the pieces, in my opinion, do not do the finished canvas justice. The detail and colors seem to be lost in a photograph.
I wanted to let you know how much more gorgeous the pieces are in person as opposed to the photographs. Thank you for your time and great talent!”*

Brad Thompson, Curator; NC Museum of Natural Sciences, Raleigh, NC

SELECTED COMMISSIONS/COLLECTIONS:

- Piedmont Land Conservancy; 2 exterior, wildflower panels for the Emily Allen Wildflower Garden: 30" circle & 36" x 48" oval; Winston-Salem, NC 2022
- Red Oak Brewery; 4 locations: Office; Lager Haus; Wursthau; Exterior Biergarten; Whitsett, NC 2021- 2022
- ‡ Wake Forest Baptist Hospital, Birthing Center; 3 panels, each 36"x30", 2" apart; Plus 4 other paintings; Winston-Salem, NC; 2019
- † ‡ Dayton Children's Hospital; High resolution photo prints (23"x46") (30"x51") 2019; Dayton, OH
- ‡ Lucile Packard Children's Hospital; 2 paintings for treatment rooms (19"x120" & 19"x145") Palo Alto, CA; 2019
- † ‡ Wake Forest Baptist Health, Printed installation honoring Abdominal Transplant Donors; Winston-Salem, NC; 2019
- † Clean Air Carolina; Painting for large-scale photo print and note cards; Charlotte, Chapel Hill, NC 2017
- Red Oak Brewery Painting of all North American Hummingbirds; 24"x36"; Whitsett, NC 2015
- ‡† Salemtown Retirement Community; Focal point for a renovation; 24"x48"; Winston-Salem, NC 2015
- Arbor Acres Methodist Retirement Home; Painting to commemorate their employees; 48"x72"; Winston-Salem, NC 2014
- ‡ Wake Forest Medical Center; Paintings for the Davie County and Cancer Center locations; Winston-Salem, NC 2013
- * ‡ Carolinas Healthcare System; Series of paintings that connect to tell a story. Six 30" squares and seven 15" equilateral triangles; Total size: 30"x375"; Charlotte, NC 2008
- American Bladesmith Society (USA) Portrait of Bill Moran, founder of the organization – for display at the Historic Arkansas Museum, Little Rock, AK. 36"x36"; 2006
- Richard Childress; Portrait depicting his ownership in NASCAR racing, wine-making, nature, wildlife and his family. 72"x30"; Welcome, NC 2006
- University of North Carolina; Eddie Smith Field House Hall of Fame *Olympic Runner*, 30"x24"; Chapel Hill, NC 2006
- ‡ Arbor Acres Methodist Retirement Home; Painting to commemorate the 25th anniversary; three canvas panels, Total size 36"x96"; Winston-Salem, NC 2005
- † Emerson et Cíe; Painting for Furniture Market promotional purposes; 40"x30"; High Point, NC 2001
- Glencoe/McGraw-Hill Publishing; Lobby; Eighteen canvas panels, Total size: 77"x173"; Columbus, OH 2001
- Museum of York County; Portrait of *The Folk Artist*; 72"x24"; Permanent Collection; Rock Hill, SC 2000
- ‡ Hahnemann University Hospital; Lobby; Nine canvas panels, Total size: 48"x228"; Philadelphia, PA 2000
- *† Wingate Hotel/Winston-Salem Parking Deck; Art Treatment of 4 story parking deck. Utilizing printed vinyl, laminated to PVC and applied to the exterior of the deck; fifteen square 6.5 ft. panels; and three 27 ft. x 2 ft. panels; Winston-Salem, NC 2000
- † Old Salem, Inc.; Painting; 30"x40" used as poster, puzzle and note cards; Winston-Salem, NC 1999
- * ‡ Lopez Nursing Home; Veterans' Administration, Art in State Building Program; Seven equilateral triangles, each 45"; Total size 39"x184"; Land O'Lakes, FL 1999
- Syngenta; Five 36" square canvas panels; Total size 48"x192"; Greensboro, NC 1998
- Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development; Seven equilateral triangles, each 60"; Total size 51"x264"; Alexandria, VA 1998
- * The Park and Recreation Administrative Office Building; Eleven 36" squares, 3-dimensional elements and "balls" of various sizes; Charlotte, NC 1998
- * The Wallace H. Kurlalt Centre; Mecklenburg Department of Social Services; Four Plexiglass panels, 20"x60" each, suspended from the ceiling and three canvas panels, Total size: 45"x109"; Charlotte, NC 1998
- Banner Pharmacaps, Inc.; Five equilateral triangles, each 47"; Total size 41"x150"; High Point, NC 1997
- Kunming Cigarette Factory; Two square canvas panels, each 48" and one 48" circle of Plexiglass; Total size: 48"x98"; Yunnan Province, China 1996
- ‡ Christ Hospital; Children's Pavilion; 30"x48"; Oaklawn, IL 1996
- Philip Morris; Painting; 36"x72"; Concord, NC 1995
- ‡ St. James Hospital; Three canvas panels, one @ 18"x60", two @ 38" hung in the shape of a cross, total size of 60"x94"; Chicago, IL 1995
- PDS Engineering; Paintings, two locations; 36"x72" and 18"x132"; Dallas, Texas 1995
- Japan Tobacco, Inc.; Painting; 36"x36"; Tokyo, Japan 1995
- ‡ Kaiser Permanente Hospital ; Two feature areas; each area with two canvas and one Plexiglass square (hung as diamond shape) interlocking together for a Total size: 51"x104"ea; Hollywood, CA 1995
- † KinderCare Childcare Center; Five canvas paintings; three 30"x40", two 30"x48"; paintings reproduced as limited edition prints for use in their daycare centers nationwide; Montgomery, AL 1994
- PNC Mortgage; Three canvas paintings each 48"x36"; Chicago, IL 1994
- Fannie Mae Mortgage; Ten panels, Total size of the assemblage is 48"x285"; Chicago, IL 1994
- † Sara Lee Corporation; Hanes Hosiery Division; Painting 30"x24"; 1996 Summer Olympics, poster 24"x36" and photo/mural wall at trade show, 96"x44"; Winston-Salem, NC 1993
- Truliant Federal Credit Union; Three locations in the building; Winston-Salem, NC 1993
- * ‡ Cleveland Memorial Hospital; Six canvas panels, each 24"x60"; Total size 84"x159"; Shelby, NC 1993
- Knight Foundation Two canvas panels, each 24"x20" and one Plexiglass panel the same size, hung as diamond; Total size 36"x54"; Miami, FL 1993
- Midcon Corporation; Three panels, each 24"x72"; Total size 48"x144"; Lombard, IL 1992
- T.W. Garner Food Co.; 20"x70"; Winston-Salem, NC 1992
- Reynolds Tobacco Co.; Seven panels, each 36" square, three of which were Plexiglass; Total size 51"x228"; Tobaccoville, NC 1986
- Focke and Co.; Three panels, each 24" x 108"; Total size 76"x108"; Verdun, West Germany 1986
- † A.H. Robins Co. - ChapStick; Painting 30"x24"; Commemorating their sponsorship of the 1984 Winter Olympics, Poster and Limited Edition Prints; Richmond, VA 1983

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS:

- Museum of Life and Science; Juried show; Durham; 2023
- Waterworks Visual Arts Center; Solo Museum Show 2011; Identity, Stories, Connections; Salisbury, NC; 2022-2023
- Piedmont International Airport; *NC Personalities-Portraits*; Greensboro, NC; 2017 & 2023
- Solo Show, Gallery C; Raleigh, NC 27604; 2018
- Solo Show, Steele Group Architects; Winston-Salem, NC 2017
- Sawtooth School of Visual Art; Winston-Salem, NC 2015 - 2022
- Greenhill Center for NC Art; 2016
- The Art of Native Plants*; Blowing Rock Art and History Museum; Group Show; Creator, co-curator, participant; Sponsor NC Native Plant Society; Blowing Rock, NC 2016
- Transparent-Overlapping Images of Nature*; NC Museum of Natural Sciences; Solo Show, Nature Art Gallery; Raleigh, NC; 2015
- Overlapping Images of Nature*; Solo Show, NC Botanical Garden, DeBerry Gallery; Chapel Hill, NC; 2014
- Art Comes Alive*; International Juried event; Cincinnati, OH; 2013
- NC Museum of Art; *Art of the Auction*; Juried fund-raiser; Raleigh, NC; 2011, 2012 & 2013
- Sacred Space for the City*, Exhibition and Conference; The Servant Leadership School, (Juror and Invited Exhibitor) Greensboro, NC 2012
- Waterworks Visual Arts Center; Solo Museum Show; Transparent Imagery; Salisbury, NC; 2011
- Davidson County Community College; Group Show; Lexington, NC; 2011
- Carolina's Got Art!* Juried exhibit, Artists of North and South Carolina; The historic Atherton Mill; Charlotte, NC; 2009, 2010
- Cultural Crossroads; Associated Artists Gallery; Winston-Salem, NC; 2009, 2010
- Arts Council of York County; 20th Annual Juried Competition Exhibition, Honorable Mention; Rock Hill, SC; 2009
- Arts & Culture Alliance; Art at the Airport; Knoxville, TN; 2009
- NC Artists Exhibition; Raleigh Fine Arts & NC Museum of Art; Raleigh, NC; 2009
- 5ive & 40rty, for Reynolda House, Museum of American Art, Winston-Salem, NC; 2008
- Mobile Museum of Art; Southeastern Juried Exhibition; Mobile AL; 2008
- Green Hill Center for NC Art; Facing South: Portraits by North Carolina Artists; Greensboro, NC; 2008
- Chapel Hill Public Arts Invitational; Town Hall; Chapel Hill, NC; 2007
- Solo Exhibition; Sechrest Gallery at High Point University; High Point, NC; 2005
- State of the Art in NC - Juried Exhibit; Milton Rhodes & AAWS Galleries; Winston-Salem, NC ; 2004
- Solo Exhibition; Theatre Art Galleries, Inc.; *Diverse Portraits*; High Point, NC; 2004
- Dimensions Competition; Portrait of *Blacksmith*, AAWS Gallery, Sawtooth Building; Winston-Salem, NC; 2004 & 2005
- Highlands Visual Arts Center; Bascom Louise Gallery; Honorable Mention; Portrait of *Blacksmith*; Highlands, NC; 2003
- Avampato Discovery Museum; Appalachian Corridors Competition; Portrait of *First Grade School Teacher*; Charleston, WV; 2003
- Exhibition Award; Durham Art Guild, Inc.; *Diverse Portraits*; Durham, NC; 2003
- Solo Exhibition; Grace Wang Gallery; *Diverse Portraits*; Raleigh, NC 2003
- Group Exhibition; Fayetteville Museum of Art; *The Best Artists of Winston-Salem*; Fayetteville, NC 2003
- Two-Person Exhibition; Salem College; *Diverse Portraits*; Winston-Salem, NC; 2002
- 20th Annual Juried Show; W. H. Moring, Jr. Arts Center; Honorable Mention; *The Blacksmith*; Asheboro, NC; 2002
- Solo Exhibition; Whistling Women's Community Center; *Diverse Portraits*; Winston-Salem, NC; 2002
- Best in Show & Merit Award; Greenhill Center for NC Art; 8th Annual Artists Hang-Up; Portraits of *Art Collector* and *Blacksmith*; Greensboro, NC; 2002
- Solo Exhibition; Stokes County Arts Council; *Diverse Portraits*; Danbury, NC; 2001
- Solo Exhibition; Urban Artware; *Diverse Portraits*; Winston-Salem, NC; 2001
- 29th Annual Competition for NC Artists; Fayetteville Museum of Art, Portrait of *The Art Collector*; Fayetteville, NC; 2001
- Realism 2001; Cultural Center of Fine Arts, Portraits of *Migrant Worker's Family* and *Blacksmith*; Parkersburg, WV; 2001
- 17th Annual Woman's Center Show; University of NC, Juror's Choice Award; *Homeless Man*; Chapel Hill, NC; 2001
- Arts Council of Winston-Salem; Invitational Exhibition; *Local Artist's Perspectives of Winston-Salem, NC*; 2000
- Office of the Mayor of Winston-Salem, NC; *Diverse Portraits*; 2000
- Biennial 2000; Museum of York County; Portrait *The Folk Artist*; Purchased for the museum's permanent collection; Rock Hill, SC; 2000
- Davidson County Community College; Group Show; Lexington, NC; 2000
- Worrell Professional Center at Wake Forest University; Group Show; Winston-Salem, NC; 2000
- GUILD.com*; Juried site and hard backed book, described as "The Source of the Finest Artists and Their Work"; Madison, WI
- Hoyt Institute of Fine Art; Solo Show; New Castle, PA; 1997
- Diptychs & Triptychs Invitational*; Arts Council of Winston-Salem/Forsyth County; 1997
- 10th Annual Woman's Center Show; University of NC, Chapel Hill, NC; 2002; 2000, 1996
- Theatre Art Galleries; Solo Show; High Point, NC; 1990

COMMUNITY ARTS INVOLVEMENT:

ArtPop Street Gallery; Painting reproduction rotating for one year on 8 billboards in 12 counties. Awarded by Lamar Outdoor, ArtPop Street Gallery and Winston-Salem/Forsyth Arts Council. 2019-2020

Clean Air Carolina; Charlotte & Chapel Hill, NC; Paintings copyright donated for reproductions as wall prints and note cards; 2016 - 2021

Creator, Co-curator & Participant; *The Art of NC Native Plants*; Blowing Rock Art & History Museum; Group Show; Sponsor NC Native Plant Society; Blowing Rock, NC 2016

Guest Speaker; NC Extension Master Gardener Conference; *Meadow Making*; 2014

Guest Speaker; Rockingham Naturalist Club; Wentworth, NC; *Art and the Meadow*, 2013

Guest Speaker; Reynolda Gardens of Wake Forest University; *Meadow-Making*, 2010 and *The Art of Pressing Plants*, 2013

Juror; Sacred Space for the City, Exhibition and Conference; The Servant Leadership School, Greensboro, NC April 2012

Guest Speaker; Native Plant Meadow as inspiration and material for art; multiple locations in NC; 2010-current

Guest Speaker; Statesville Art League; Title: "*Overlapping Images*"; Statesville, NC April 2007

Guest Speaker; Muddy River Art Association; "*Overlapping Images*"; Clemmons, NC February 2007

Board of Directors; Sawtooth Center for Visual Art, Winston-Salem, NC; 1991-2006

"*Blurring Racial Barriers*"; Creator/Director for a cross-cultural art exhibit featured in 4 major galleries in Winston-Salem, funded by a \$16,000 grant from the WS Foundation 2004-2006

Guest Curator for exhibitions at Wake Forest University, Worrell Center; Winston-Salem, NC 2003-2004

AAWS - Show Chairman, Members Show 2003; Show Chairman Cultural Crossroads 2010; Winston-Salem, NC

PUBLICATIONS:

CODAworx/The Guild: Architect's Source of Artists and Artisans; Madison, WI; 1992-2020

US-Air In-flight Magazine; Blowing Rock Feature; June 2013
Winston-Salem Magazine; Artist in Residence/Feature; April; 2011

WFDD Public Radio; Series of interviews about the events and inspiration for "*Blurring Racial Barriers*"; Forsyth County; Throughout 2005 & 2006

Latitudes Magazine (4 Cover articles about the events and exhibitions for "*Blurring Racial Barriers*"); Forsyth County; Throughout 2006

The Herald-Sun (The Delicate Art of Portraits by Blue Greenberg); Durham, NC; March 9, 2003

ArtView (Cover article about Diverse Portraits and art community involvement); Fall issue, 2001, 2005

Furniture Today (April 9th issue, 2001 - feature article about painting for Emerson, et Cie Furniture Manufacturing Company and their use of it for the upcoming Furniture Market)

Domicile (May issue, 2000-2001 - article, cover/feature artist; Winston-Salem, NC

The Winston-Salem Journal; Winston-Salem, NC; 1985 – 2019

Public ART Review; Fall/Winter Volume 2; Issue 21 (Recent Projects); 1999

Business Life (Profile); Greensboro, NC; 1998

High Lights (Cover and feature artist January & June); High Point, NC; 1998

Burridge Index; (Featuring distinctive architectural art); Carpinteria, CA; 1996

The Triad Style (feature article on artist studios); Winston-Salem, NC; 1994

Artists of the Carolinas (featured artist of NC); Albuquerque, NM; 1990

PACE Magazine (feature artist of the month); Greensboro, NC; 1982

AUTODIDACT:

American Indian Women's Conference, Wake Forest University; Winston-Salem, NC; 2007

Tools to Compete for Public Art Commissions, Workshop; Page Walker Arts Center and Cary Visual Arts; Cary, NC; 2003

Public Art and the Commissioning Process; NC Public Art Network; Greensboro, NC; 2001

Urban Oases: Public Places; Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art; Winston-Salem, NC; 1997

Future Visions: A Forum on Public Art; University of NC; Greensboro, NC; 1996

Artsearch, Contemporary Art Showcase; Southern Arts Federation; Atlanta, GA; 1991

Public Art Symposium; Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art; Winston-Salem, NC; 1990

Public Art Dialogue - Southeast Conference; Durham, NC; 1989

Sawtooth Center for Visual Art; Winston-Salem, NC
University of Tampa; Tampa, FL

Award Winning Commercial Designer for Art Studios in Florida and North Carolina, Art Director for Ad Agencies and finally for AT&T in Winston-Salem, NC until 1996 when I began painting full-time.

Art Instruction, Inc.; Minneapolis, MN

ARTIST STATEMENT

STORY

... **An interconnected series of smaller paintings that tell a story through dramatic visuals that overlap, and weave together in multi-layered paintings.**

MEDIUM

...Water-proof, color-fast durable acrylic paint on canvas.

STYLE

Over the years I have developed my own original style. "White-on-White", the technique for which I am known, sometimes utilizes the natural raw canvas and bright colors as a subtle counterpoint to the white acrylic paint with colorful scenes painted over all.

COLOR

...areas of my work has been described as a transparent, painted montage. The unique base of white then showcases the overlapping transparent images of vibrant colors. Painted scenes overlay each other to form a kaleidoscope of colors. Real world visuals come alive through the use of "windows" created by the overlapping images, adding layers to the story which becomes deeper the longer one studies the work.

DIMENSION

...is achieved in many ways: sectional pieces wrap around a corner; or suspend from the ceiling on swivels; unexpected materials such as extra canvas, plexiglass, twine, or sawdust are often sewn or adhered to the canvas. Different textures, such as matte and gloss, are often found on a single painting. These techniques combined with the repeated applications of the white on the natural canvas, result in an unusual vibrancy and lifelike quality. I sometimes add pressed plants or leaves such as you would find in a Herbarium to some of the work which also adds dimension.

SUBJECT

...matter is thoroughly researched before deciding on any images or shapes to be used. One central theme or image predominates each piece, with many overlapping and interlocking images filling out the rest of the painting and the background. The overall effect created by the transparency of the images is somewhat surreal, however, as the viewer approaches the work, details come into focus. Each image is realistic and each stroke has meaning. As I overlap images, matching the same curves and angles from one image to another is very important to me. I prefer images from nature and like the overlapping of animals, birds, plants, food or landscapes within one overall shape.

SHAPE

...of the piece as it is viewed from a distance is very important. The shapes themselves are geometric. Many of my larger works are done in sections which stretch across walls or wrap around corners. I have also suspended paintings from the ceiling on wires and spinners, with other paintings of related themes mounted on either side of the suspended work. I may take a rectangle and hang it on the wall at an angle and paint the images straight up and down. I want to add a bit of playfulness to each piece.

ORIGINALITY

...I want my work to be more intriguing than a single glance can satisfy.

THANK YOU

...for your interest in my work.