

## Artist Bios & Statements

**Kathleen Aceto:** After an extended career in nursing, “Murfee” continues to pursue a passion in the fine arts. Working primarily in watercolor, she has expanded into other medias including acrylics, pastels, mixed media, and fabric art. Her mural artworks are locally in private homes as well as St. Edmond’s Home, St. Patrick’s Church and School, The Academia de Antonia Alonso and Community Volunteers in Medicine. She loves the interplay of light and shadows especially exhibited in nature. Her favorite subject matter is the beautiful landscapes and waterscapes of Chester County, PA and New Hampshire. She has participated in many invitational and juried shows including the Daylesford Abbey Show, The Gallery at the Devon Horse Show, Notre Dame Academy Show, The Miniature Show at Chadds Ford, The Penn Radnor Show, Paoli Hospital Show, and the Artist’s Circle Show. Her most recent award is best in show at The Art Gallery at Devon. She is a member of Delaware Valley Art League and the Artist’s Circle. loonacy6@comcast.net; www.designsbyksa.com

**Kathy Agostinelli:** My palettes, mainly oil, vary from monochromatic to employing a wide range of colors. My paintings explore both the fun side of kitsch as well as the more serious introspective subject of spirituality. Many of my paintings will incorporate grids and orbs as well as birds and flowers. They are slightly planned in the beginning but then progress intuitively. My paintings include a lot of elements which usually requires an average surface size of 24” x 36.” My color studies on the other hand explore individual colors which are usually painted on 6”x8” pochade panels. This gives me a chance to delve into specific characteristics and challenges that each color both inherent and learned attributes present themselves, especially when focusing on a single color. kathyagostinelli22@gmail.com

**Linda Barr:** A longtime resident of Chester County, Linda studied at Barnstone Studio in Allentown and with local artists Judy Antonelli and Larry Kuzmin among others. She is a participant in local shows and galleries. lindab128@comcast.net

**Steve Behmke:** After a 30-year career in advertising and marketing I escaped the corporate media world a few years ago and can now focus on creating my own work. In other words, I'm an outsider artist that has decades of ideas pouring out. My intent is primarily to create pieces of art that are highly visual and interesting to enjoy and study... but may often express ideas, ask questions, unearth feelings, debate opinions, or sometimes be provocative. Like many paintings though, they're often just a combination of lines, shapes, colors, textures, and space. That said; I hope my work presents a UNIQUE combination of art elements to you and that you like what you see. Why outsider art? Serendipity I suppose. My sister worked for and later volunteered with Habitat for Humanity, and in her basement we found some 2' x 4' plywood signs that were left over from a project she had coordinated. These signs gave me an idea; Repurpose, Reclaim, Recycle. I asked her to donate these signs to me so I could create artwork on the other side... the verso. She agreed, and thus began my outsider art journey. In addition to the verso sides of signs, I've worked on reclaimed ceramic tiles, hardwood floor scraps, and glass. And yes; on some canvases from time to time. (I soon ran out of Habitat for Humanity signs but eventually found others so both of these pieces for the Friends of Easttown Library have been created on the verso of hand lettered signs as shown.) behmke5@gmail.com; www.SaatchiArt.com/SteveBehmke

**Barbara Bigford:** For over 40 yrs, I have created, exhibited and sold fine art paintings. Most recent art works are created using mixed media, acrylic and oils. Additional artwork may be viewed on www.barbarabigford.com. I am a nature enthusiast and my art work reflects impressions using several techniques to create a spiritual presence and an immersion of landscape and abstract. bbigford@comcast.net;

**Joni Bixler:** I hope the painting brings a smile to your heart. I learned silk painting from an amazing teacher from Sri Lanka while I was living in the Middle East. jfsbixler@gmail.com ; @OtisWC

**Ronnie Bookbinder** enjoys painting in a loose and modern style, and sees beauty in the colors and shapes of the natural and man-made world. Her latest series explores the rhythm of urban life. She takes joy in reexamining and rediscovering the excitement of everyday sights. She has participated in numerous juried shows and has been recognized with many honors and awards. [bookbir@gmail.com](mailto:bookbir@gmail.com); [ronniebookbinder.com](http://ronniebookbinder.com)

**BJ Burton** is a writer and artist. Her artwork has been exhibited in galleries and museums in the Philadelphia area, Tennessee and NYC, and has been published in a variety of journals, including *Philadelphia Stories*, *Potomac Review* and *Photos for the Gulf*. Inspired by a sense of connection to place, she works from an emotional response to the natural environment. Most of her work is in acrylic painting and photography. She is also a produced and published playwright, and the author of *The Philadelphia Connection: Conversations with Playwrights*, which can be found in universities and libraries worldwide. She received her MFA at Rosemont College, where she taught in the Creative Writing program for many years. [bjburton20@gmail.com](mailto:bjburton20@gmail.com)

**Susan Butler:** I have been working in many different mediums for decades. Oil, watercolor, colored pencil and sculpture. I graduated from PAFA and am a member of PSBI. I have won numerous awards, had several one person shows, and am represented in several prestigious private collections. I work from my studio in Chester Springs. [m8tan@yahoo.com](mailto:m8tan@yahoo.com)

**Karen Calastri:** My oil paintings are from pictures I have taken on my travels. I see the beauty in nature, light, sky, and buildings. I try to evoke the feeling I had in that moment. I enjoy making subtle changes that make the subject more interesting to the viewer. I want the viewer to see the beauty in an old barn or sense the serenity and solitude of a beach scene. I enjoy working with different brush strokes and palette knife techniques. [karencalastri@yahoo.com](mailto:karencalastri@yahoo.com)

**Bob Ciocco:** Professionally I work with lengths of copper pipe that are arrow-straight and purely functional. In my art, I imagine gradually freeing the copper from its artificial structures, so that it can flow and inhabit organic forms. Some of my vases use a base of clear epoxy, which can be lit from underneath to evoke the frozen ground through which the first shoots of spring are breaking through. Others have a base of century-old dogwood or butternut, shaped to a pale ochre autumn hillside, from which copper tree trunks rise. In both cases, the vision is incomplete until the vase is used for its intended purpose. You have flowers, and you need a thing to put them in. This is that thing. [cioccor@tesd.net](mailto:cioccor@tesd.net); [ciocco@upenn.edu](mailto:ciocco@upenn.edu)

**Maria Costello** is a Russian-American nature photographer specializing in home decor and greeting cards. Her website, DRAMARTFUL, aptly reflects her dramatic style. She plays on contrast and texture to create arresting images which translate into one-of-a-kind wall decor. Rather than limiting herself to any one subject or technique, her visual story telling evolves with new discoveries. Whether realistic or abstract, DRAMARTFUL celebrates everyday beauty in the context of the artist's deeply personal connection. No rain drop is too small; no bird too fast; no fox too sly. Nature is both a challenge and an inspiration. Maria uses her passion for the outdoors to help create elegant indoors and benefit local communities. The DRAMARTFUL photo art has exhibited throughout Chester and surrounding counties as well as won prestigious international online contests. [maria@dramartful.com](mailto:maria@dramartful.com)

**Michael Cruz** is a painter and an educator from Exton. Mike paints local landscapes as well as pieces inspired by travel with his family. His works fuse observation of a place and the memory of what it felt like to be there. [Mcruz12@yahoo.com](mailto:Mcruz12@yahoo.com); [@mcruzpaints](https://www.instagram.com/mcruzpaints)

**Barbara Dirnbach:** The journey to find my voice as an artist began as an art student at NYU in the '60s and resumed in the last decade. Incorporating artistic ideas and techniques, past and present, is important in order to stay grounded in tradition but not be limited by it. Every day I embrace goals that I

set for myself as an artist by taking chances and delving into unknown territory using various materials, textures, and scale, to convey strong emotions. I explore my inner world and express my ideas by choosing subjects and images that are personal and meaningful to me. My intention is for every piece of art to tell a bold story through composition, design, and color. Creating art gives me a sense of purpose, achievement, and excitement. I hope the journey never ends. [barbaradirnbach@gmail.com](mailto:barbaradirnbach@gmail.com); [www.barbaradirnbach.wixsite.com/artist](http://www.barbaradirnbach.wixsite.com/artist)

**Louise Dusinberre** hunts for her subjects in the disappearing landscapes of Maryland's Eastern Shore and Chester County Pennsylvania. Known for her poetic scenes touched with a mood of loneliness, she has found the pastel medium to be an evocative tool to express her images. Rural America is a far cry from the fast-paced fashion world, where as a Senior Designer for Putumayo, a New York clothing company, she traveled extensively through India, Indonesia, and Europe. While gathering inspiration for seasonal collections, Louise was also gathering a love of color, line and texture. That love would become incorporated in her award winning pastels, often exhibited at The Wayne Art Center, the Devon Horse Show, and galleries on Maryland's Eastern Shore. "I came to love the paintings of Fairfield Porter, Wolf Kahn, Richard Diebenkorn and Henri Matisse, all of whom have clean luminous color and strong design". Louise earned her BA in Graphic Design from the Moore College of Art and Design in 1989. She has served on the faculty of the Wayne Art Center for fourteen years focusing on drawing, printmaking and collage. She teaches privately as well, with studio and online instruction. Louise is represented by Bishop's Stock Gallery, Snow Hill, Maryland. [louladu@gmail.com](mailto:louladu@gmail.com)

**Loretta Epps:** Art has been not only a major part of my life but my culture and family history as well. My mother was one of my first art instructors, teaching me how to shade and add depth to my artwork during my early elementary years. By junior high school, I was accepted to participate in summer semester programs at the University of Art in downtown Philadelphia. After graduating from college years later, I became distracted away from my artwork, which I later returned to with a new found passion for painting. My goal is to finally start living out my childhood dream of becoming a great artist. [llybella@aol.com](mailto:llybella@aol.com)

**Julia Ferguson:** Julie works as a freelance visual artist primarily in the media of pastel and oil paint. Julie draws inspiration from the great outdoors, her travels and everyday scenes. Julie enjoys long walks, hiking and spending time with her family. She has a B.A. in Economics and Studio Art from Duke University ('81) and a M.B.A. from The University of Pennsylvania Wharton School ('86). She has taken numerous visual arts classes in the Philadelphia area where she lives and resides with her family. [fergusonj1981@gmail.com](mailto:fergusonj1981@gmail.com); [juliefergusonart.com](http://juliefergusonart.com)

**Kristi Fontaine:** In 2007 I retired after 37 years of teaching elementary school art and have been having a great deal of fun making my own art, taking classes in the arts and traveling (pre-Covid of course). I found inspiration in many of the foreign countries I visited, especially Mexico, Guatemala, Japan and Cambodia. Seeking out their sculpture, pottery and folk crafts has given me lots of ideas with which to work. Over the years, clay has become my favorite and I enjoy hand building, creating mosaics and throwing on the potter's wheel. I have also collected lots of little found object pieces and turned them into jewelry and even used them in my ceramic mosaics. [kristi.fontaine@gmail.com](mailto:kristi.fontaine@gmail.com); [Mudpoundcat@gmail.com](mailto:Mudpoundcat@gmail.com)

**John Fried:** I have been an active photographer for more than 17 years. I specialize in Philadelphia-area photography as well as travel, landscape, and street photography. I have sold photographs at the Frame Station in Berwyn and also privately. I have been accepted into several juried exhibits. [jjfried40@gmail.com](mailto:jjfried40@gmail.com); [www.jjfriedphotography.com](http://www.jjfriedphotography.com)

**David Gerbstadt:** In his first year in college, his professor saw something in David's work that made him strongly suggest that David become an art major. David took a vow: 'through rich or poor, sickness and

health, no matter what - I will make art!' He simply lived and breathed art. After college, David decided to show anywhere and everywhere. He would load up dozens of paintings each weekend and head off to a new spot. Sometimes it was a tiny church flea market which had the best ribs, or maybe a huge art festival held over a couple days. Later David focused on selling his art in the streets at the First Friday event in Old City Philadelphia. In the beginning there were less than a half-dozen artists participating, but an underground following grew. David left art on street corners, train stations and all over his hometown of Berwyn. From there he left his "artistic calling-card," as one newspaper put it, in New York City, San Francisco, Mexico, Austria and Poland. In all more than 5,000 works were left for the taking. A film crew in 2000 produced the documentary film 'David was Here,' which can now be seen online. The film won an award at the Iowa international film festival, after which he stopped leaving his works out for the taking, but David's art is now in over 15 countries. When asked, "What does his art mean?" David says, "I let the art I create speak for itself. I simply make it and put it into the world." On December 28, 2007, he was in a near-fatal collision with a tractor trailer while riding his bicycle. When the EMTs got to David he had no pulse and had nearly bled to death. David flat-lined en route to the hospital but thankfully CPR was performed and brought David back to life. For the next nine hours David's heart stopped four more times, and he had 40 units of blood transfusions. His doctor said he should be dead, and asked him, why is he still here? David says, 'The truck did not stop me; it just slowed me down. Art healed me and continues to heal me. In the hospital I learned that I am truly loved, that I matter and have worth, and am in this world to create art and to continue on.' Today, David Gerbstadt lives in Berwyn with his three-legged pit mix 'Noel'. davidgerbstadt@gmail.com

**Amy Grant:** Local art teacher and practicing artist, working in the medium of soft pastel. grant.amy317@gmail.com; amygrantpastels.com

**Mimi Barclay Johnson** comes from a fine arts family. In the fourth grade, Mimi was made to choose between art and music, and she chose music. Years later, through music, Mimi came back to art. After singing with, then set designing for, Savoy and other area opera companies, Mimi began to paint fine art and studied with PAFA legends Beverly Garnett, Ton Gaughan, Homer Johnson, and Jill Rupinski. Still teaching privately and planning workshops on the Main Line and Long Beach Island, Mimi has retired from the Artists Circle but remains an active member of the Art League (former board member), the Franklin Inn Club (former board member), French Creek Art Colony (which she founded), Network, Painting Circle, and the Philadelphia Watercolor Society (signature member), where she served for many years on the board. artistmimi@hotmail.com

**Sally Kistler (1914-2014):** Sally Kistler painted in watercolor, oil, acrylic and with monoprint and collage. Her favorite medium was watercolor, which she taught for 20 years at the Community "Y" program, the Upper Darby Adult School and privately. Her column, "Art's My Line," appeared weekly in the News of Delaware County for six years. Mrs. Kistler took courses at the Moore College of Art, the Philadelphia Museum of Art and the Graphic Sketch Club. She studied with over a dozen outstanding artists, including Ranulph D. Bye. As a speaker, Mrs. Kistler presented to groups on watercolor, monoprints and collage. She participated in solo and group juried shows, as well as serving as a juror for other exhibits. Awards include those from the Community Arts Center, Upper Merion Cultural Center, The National League of American Pen Women and the Pennsylvania Petroleum Industries. She was active in local art groups and served on the board of The Artists Guild of Delaware County and The Art League of Delaware County. Her art has been donated from her estate by her son, Ken. kennethwkistler@gmail.com

**Johanne Lamarche:** Born in Canada, I came to Philadelphia to complete a residency in periodontics. I started painting in 2012. My experience as a dental surgeon has given me a good grasp of spacial interpretation and line and it honed a keen sense of observation. After creating representational still-life and landscape paintings, my work has evolved in an abstract direction. My work seeks to elicit an emotional connection with the viewer and to ignite and engage their imagination. My favorite medium is

cold wax and oil. It is an ancient medium where beeswax is added to oil paint. With cold wax and oil, painting is a spontaneous process of discovery, where multiple layers are often scraped back to reveal interesting surprises and textures. This very intuitive form of painting allows for the creation of depth, transparency and luminosity and is very process-driven, keeping the work open to all possibilities. My work is in the permanent collection of The Museum of Encaustic Art in Santa Fe, NM and in private collections in the US, Canada and Europe. My work has been represented in juried shows locally, nationally and internationally. I have been a featured artist at the Easttown Library, Galer Estate Winery, The Great Frame Up and Studioflora. I was invited to represent Pennsylvania at the 50 States/200 Artists show at the Museum of Encaustic Art. My work was recently featured on CTV news in Canada and is in the gallery shop at the Timmins Museum and National Exhibition Centre. frenchgardener@comcast.net

**Jae Martin:** Native to Brooklyn, New York, Jae Martin is a self-taught pop artist who creates pieces with graffiti undertones inspired by the fast pace of city living. Jae produces pieces that are far from the ordinary. Influenced greatly by the graffiti art style, he incorporates it into his work for due respect. To capture what he feels in the moment, Jae completes most of his pieces in only one day by using acrylics, sharpie oil markers, spray paint, and anything else he can get his hands on. With the passing of his father, a great influence on his life, Jae decided failure is not an option. Many anecdotes shared by his father are used to add depth to the artwork. By aligning himself with his close friends to help make his mark on the world, Jae wants to make sure that his two young boys have someone to look up to with pride. info@jaemartin.com

**Carol Matthews:** Painting has been a saving grace during this pandemic. I have the opportunity to express myself in the comfort of home. Being able to create, with a focus on texture and color, is a way to give life to my feelings. carol1567@aol.com

**Ally Morrison:** My love for painting started when I was younger and was ignited again over the past couple of years. I enjoy looking at surrounding environments and translating it to the canvas, mostly by abstract paintings. allymor55@gmail.com

**James Naser** is a mixed media artist from the Philadelphia area who is currently studying graphic design and printmaking at the Savannah College of Art and Design. Heavily influenced by the bold culture of street art, he works in a variety of mediums (digital, screen print, collage, spray paint) to visualize his thoughts. He has painted multiple murals, designed school apparel and supplies, designed and printed numerous t-shirts, and has had his work displayed in the Capitol Building in Washington, D.C. 19naserj@gmail.com; Instagram.com/jamn.it.art

**Sal Panasci:** The style in which I paint can be characterized as Traditional Contemporary. My interest lies in capturing the mood of the subject, rather than the tiny details contained within it. It's specific color and individuality is what interests me. I am able to achieve this through my color palette, the texture of the paint and the composition of the painting. salpanasci@comcast.net

**Abbé Resnick:** I am an artist who was born in Brooklyn, NY and lived on Long Island. My studio is now outside Philadelphia in Exton. As far back as I can remember the passion for exploring and creating art has always been a part of me. I am mostly self-taught, incorporated with courses at various colleges and continuing education through workshops. I have been in many juried shows as well as galleries in Philadelphia and surrounding areas. I have been interviewed for *Chester County Medicine Magazine* along with my work displayed on their cover. My goal is to abstract reality through bold colors and to introduce the viewer to a new visual experience. abberesnick@gmail.com; www.abberesnick.com

**Damion Richards** is a Jamaican fine artist specializing in oil paintings with art degrees from Jamaica and Cuba. aszumski@gmail.com

**Barbara Royer:** Being an artist of abstraction, it sometimes is quite difficult to begin a painting. My methodology is to consider shapes, composition, and color. After the initial paint is applied, the rest of the painting finally flows, but usually with great effort and struggle! bcr17@verizon.net

**Casey Saccomanno** is a fashion and print designer currently living in Berwyn. She earned her BFA in fashion design at Philadelphia University in 2008. Casey's fashion and print designs are frequently inspired by shapes, colors, & textures that create depth in her modern Bohemian designs. Casey relishes a handmade approach to design; she believes nothing should be created by looking only at a computer screen. Her mantra is to travel, sketch, create, explore, experiment, and test boundaries. caseysaccomanno@gmail.com

**Lee Walsh:** I am a long time pastel and oil painter who enjoys painting landscapes. This year has been both challenging and uplifting as an artist. I definitely have found more time to paint but miss my inspiration from travel and being with other artists. As a realist, I continue to work and challenge myself to paint more loosely and with more freedom. I find that I am always tempted by a beautiful sunrise and a spectacular sunset. I love color and like to play with light and shadows, but what really excites me as an artist are clouds and incredible skies. lee\_walsh@comcast.net

### **Emerging Artists from Conestoga High School**

**Varnikaa Arora** 22arorav@tesdk12.net

**Bria Brennan** 24brennanb@tesdk12.net

**Annabelle Devereaux** adxfineart.weebly.com; ab0506@icloud.com

**Mia Hamilton** 23hamiltonm@tesdk12.net

**Christine Jung** 22jungc@tesdk12.net

**Casey Kovarick** 23kovarickc@tesdk12.net

**Gael Moreno-Vargas** gaeldomorenovargas413@gmail.com

**Sabrina Zhang** sabrinazhangart@gmail.com

**Lila Ziegler** lilaziegler2024@gmail.com