

THE WOMEN OF WIREGRASS

BY: LAUREN HAMILTON

This month, we recognize our female artists at Wiregrass Gallery for their many wonderful masterful creations. Wiregrass Gallery acknowledges each woman's hard work and dedication that led to where they are today. The Women of Wiregrass include seventeen talented ladies whose imagination has led to eccentric hand-fused glass products, paintings that take you to the misty mountains or tranquil shores, elaborate beadwork, or an unknown place to meditate through blending colors, wax, script, hand-melded mermaids peeking up at you on the side of your coffee cup or explosions of color appearing under your cocktail's coaster. Wiregrass is honored to spotlight our female artists and their incredible talents this May, so join us throughout the month at *130 E. Jackson Street*, in Thomasville, Georgia, to appreciate their astounding pieces!

MEET OUR ARTISTS

Wiregrass Gallery has twelve fantastic artists specializing in painting, wood burning, beadwork, and drawing. Not only are each genuinely talented in their ways, but some are even offering their gifts to you! So while you're looking for your next prized possession, make sure to ask about our workshop classes and monthly live demonstrations!

Fran Buie

"The true work of art is but a shadow of the divine perfection of God."

– Michelangelo

Fran Buie believes that art is a universal language and expression that can bring people from different backgrounds and life experiences together into a common community. Fran has degrees in Commercial Art, Music Performance, Pre-Med Science, and a Master's in Administration (MBA). Shortly after moving to Tallahassee, Fran worked as an instructor in an art studio, setting up and running various art shows. She also worked for the state of Florida as an administrator and project manager for thirty-three years before her retirement. After retiring, Fran returned to

the art studio and displayed her work at Tallahassee's Downtown Marketplace, Gadsden Arts Gallery, Jefferson Arts Gallery, Sea Oats Art Gallery, Rivers Edge Art Gallery, and Wiregrass Art Gallery. For the last thirteen years, Fran has also served as the Art Curator at the North Florida Fair, and she currently teaches oil and acrylic painting classes in Monticello and Tallahassee, Florida.

Mellissa Buie

Mellissa has worked in various media and art forms throughout her life. Finding her passion in the functional arts, she has successfully displayed and sold her work at Wiregrass Gallery and various shops in North Florida and South Georgia. Mellissa displays her art in juried and non-juried art shows and has assisted in mounting art shows in North Florida. Mellissa's art is displayed and available for purchase at Wiregrass Gallery and Buie's website at seedsoflifesoaps.com.

Milissa Campbell

If you spend much time in front of your kitchen window, a votive within a vintage lantern composed of a spiral of individually crafted glass designed windows will lift your heart and brighten your day and evening. Milissa Campbell also teaches classes on creating affordable and inspiring designs that adorn one's home for a lifetime.

Terri Eggers

Joining the coop in 2020 after winning first place at the Leon County Fairgrounds of a blacksmith from Charleston, South Carolina, Terri Eggers has been painting since her retirement in 2011. Eggers discovered her love of drawing by creating comic books in middle school when she was in a wheelchair for over a month due to a leg fracture. As an Air Force family member, Terri was fortunate to spend her life traveling and later studying under artists from Canada, California, and Florida, which helped her develop her painting techniques using watercolors, acrylics, and oils as she paints to please. Terri brought artists to Florida's juvenile justice facilities through community and statewide grants as the former Director of Education and still enjoys inspiring youth as a substitute teacher. Being a grandmother of seven, Terri draws inspiration for her art from activities, places, and people pursuing happy times. Terri's work is on

display at the Capital City Country Club, where all sales go directly to the Peyton Tuthill Foundation!

Lindajo Haythorn

Lindajo Haythorn is a contemporary artist, painter, muralist, art educator, and art therapist. Lindajo has been an art educator since 1982, primarily focusing on multicultural expression through visual and performing arts. Her artwork reflects a deep appreciation and respect for the world around her and a spiritual connection to a Higher Power. After receiving her Master of Art in Art Therapy in 2010, Lindajo began her second career in this field. Her goal as an artist and a therapist is to help others find their own visual voice. She works with students at Pathways Educational Center, helping them to regulate their emotional reactions. Lindajo also works with patients and families at the Lewis Hall Oncology Center. For Lindajo, working as an art therapist has enabled her to feel and portray an emotional and insightful side to her artwork. She loves to spend time outside enjoying the warm climate in her Southwest Georgia community, the nearby Florida beaches, or the North Carolina mountains. Her paintings illuminate images she finds embedded in the shapes of trees and rocks and the splash of the surf on the sandy beaches. Lindajo's original clay, "Garden Angels," explores colors and textures found in nature. Lindajo's work is available for viewing and purchase at Wiregrass Art Gallery.

Joan Kanan

Joan Kanan began her second career as an artist after years of working in education and with the state and local government. From January 2021 to April 2022, Joan served as the president of Wiregrass Art Gallery. Working with clay, acrylics, and oil, Joan says that while her style varies, she tends to reflect strong colors and bold statements in all her work. Much of her subject matter is taken from her travels, reflecting the beauty of the coastal south. Joan's work has been featured in galleries and shows around Tallahassee, Apalachicola, Florida, and South Georgia, including the Annual Art at Gadsden, shows in Westminster Oaks, FAMU, the Apalachicola Art and History Center, the Senior Artist Showcase at the Tallahassee Senior Center, Nomads Gallery in Tallahassee, and the Waterfront Gallery in Apalachicola. To view Joan's paintings and clay sculptures, visit Wiregrass Gallery in Thomasville, Georgia, or online at her Facebook page, at *JoanKananExpressions*.

Mary Sterner Lawson

Mary Sterner Lawson has been making art since she was four, or at least that's what her parents tell her. Knowing from a young age that she wanted to be an artist, Mary took two periods of art a day throughout high school to help explore her passion. Her love for the arts, clay, and sculpture took off from there, and over the years, she has taken many classes and workshops in ceramics and watercolor. Her artwork is motivated by people, nature, scenes, new places, situations, and experiences that touch her heart. Mary recently completed a clay hand-built bas-relief of a New York City view that really inspired her. The piece depicts a night view in the back of the Whitney Museum, with people on a walkway looking out over the lively city of New York. Mary says, "It was so extraordinary to do something unusual" by creating this bas-relief. "Whitney by Night" is on display along with forty other Lawson artworks in Mary's "Deeper Look" co-exhibit, March 3rd until April 16th, 2023, at Tallahassee's Venvi Art Gallery.

Chantal Littleton

Chantal has always felt deeply connected to angels; in 1995, after fifty years of feeling this connection, she began painting her Angels and was touched by the overwhelming support and emotions her Angels evoked. Those who have bought Chantal's paintings have told her that her Angels affect them in many ways, some as guardians, others bringing peace, and some as healing. Chantal says that "Angels comfort us in poignant moments throughout our lives and can manifest themselves in the people we encounter every day." After working in the travel industry for over forty years, Chantal lives in Tallahassee, Florida, surrounded by her family and working on acrylic paintings over tar board, which do not need to be framed. Chantal's art is characterized by vibrant colors and contrasting shapes, and are always endowed with a passion for the life she loves.

Susi Martin

"Susi," Darlene Martin began her journey of art as a child, always sketching. She moved from her family home in Valdosta, Georgia, to Miami, Florida, in the 1960s. During this time and through the 70s, she pursued a fashion and modeling career. Years later, in Miami, she met renowned artist Gideon, who became her inspiration, friend, and mentor, telling her, "Art is an

ascending journey," a mentality Susi undoubtedly incorporates into her art. He encouraged her to continue her art path until his passing in 2010 in Thomasville, Georgia. Susi of Madison, Florida, is one of the original members of Wiregrass Gallery, whose self-taught "Pyrography" wood burnings and acrylic paintings of nature and meditative, religious icons can take you to another time. Describing herself as an Expressionist artist, many who have observed her work have experienced feelings of peace and tranquility. She draws her inspiration from living in a hardwood forest. Susi endeavors, through her art, to give others a sense of calmness and serenity, touching the spirit within. She is also a poet. Her work has been displayed in the Madison Gallery, Meridian Gallery, and, most recently, in Wiregrass Gallery since its opening over ten years ago.

Wyatt Nocera

Raised in Northern Virginia, Wyatt Nocera is no stranger to fiber art. Being the proud owner of seventeen looms, Nocera spends her days dying home-spun thread and going through hundreds of spools to create her own unique and intricate designs that can be cherished for a lifetime. Earning her Bachelor's degree from Virginia Tech and her Master's degree in Math Education from the University of North Carolina, Nocera spent thirty-five years teaching high school mathematics and directing programs for gifted students in Arlington, Virginia. In her final year of teaching, the art department attempted to discard a vintage Appalachian rug loom which sparked her passion for fiber art. Now, having studied extensively, both at home and abroad, learning traditional and modern weaving and spinning techniques, it is safe to say Wyatt has developed her passion for fiber art. Nearly twenty looms and three spinning wheels later, Nocera's world is spinning with fiber, color, and countless exciting ways to use them.

Cheryl Sattler

Cheryl Sattler has been working with glass since 1999, and now, all these years later, she is still in love with the medium, the color, the light, and the movement. Cheryl grew up picking sand spurs out of her bare feet and climbing seagrape trees, and although she no longer lives on the coast, she dreams of the ocean, and being a Florida native, she has found it difficult to grow up in the tropics and not love color. It is easy to tell by looking at her glass what is important in her

life; her furry babies (both cats and dogs), her garden, and the ocean, although when she is not making glass, Cheryl can be found reading, weeding, traveling, or play with her furry ones!

Susan Stubbs

Susan Stubbs is an active photo-realistic artist who has created her work with colored pencils for over four years. Drawing her inspiration for her first pencil drawing from her cat, Gadget, Susan received a first-place award at an international competition which led to mentoring other artists using the colored pencil medium. Recently, Susan began her oil painting journey under the guidance of fellow gallery member Fran Buie and excelled in the medium. After exhibiting her work at the Jefferson Art Gallery in Monticello and the Tallahassee Senior Center Showcase, Susan won another award. She is now offering to teach classes for the first time!

MEET OUR JEWELERS

Four professional jewelers also share their hand-crafted works at Wiregrass! Each pours hours of love and effort into creating their handmade, unique pieces for you to treasure forever, and that will bring a lifetime of joy to someone special.

Lynda Hartnig

After her career of being a teacher and administrator in Florida's Community Colleges system, Lynda was looking for something to engage her time in retirement. Creating unique jewelry became her focus. Lynda studied with many talented artists throughout the area and through the Florida Society of Goldsmiths. While working with several media, her primary focus today is working with precious metal clay, a product that has fine particles of metal suspended in the clay with a binder, which allows the clay to be shaped and textured. Once the piece is fired at roughly 1,500 degrees, the binder burns off, leaving fine silver, bronze, or copper jewelry. Lynda also enjoys beading, Kumihimo, and enameling.

Lori Nelson

Lori Nelson, a licensed mental health counselor specializing in the recovery of traumatic stress, dedicates much of her time to improving the lives of others within our community. Growing up in New Orleans, Lori always appreciated vintage, deco, and luxury Bohemian-style art and

jewelry, which she wanted to keep present in her updated yet classic one-of-a-kind fiber art and beadwork to represent her fifty years of experience in multiple creative disciplines. In using the best premier glass or gemstone beads, artisan or gemstone cabochons and components, quality leather, natural objects (shells, stones), and vintage or ethnic beads, Nelson justifies the time and creativity she devotes to each of her hand-crafted pieces, with her steadfast intention being technical excellence and the highest quality of workmanship. Lori's fiber arts include sewing, knitting, felting, and leatherwork; her bead weaving and bead embroidery are either traditional or contemporary and include three-dimensional (boxes, vessels) and jewelry (cuffs, pendants, earrings).

Starr Payne

"I think I have always been a creator," Starr Payne says. Some of her earliest memories are of making things and wanting to try the latest art of craft projects. Starr began making beaded jewelry in 1995 and, after moving to Florida, continued developing her metalsmithing skills with the Florida Society of Goldsmiths. In 2001, Starr discovered metal clay, which has been her metalwork's main focus ever since. Starr holds the Metal Clay Certifications from Rio Grande, Art Clay Silver, and PMC Connection. While she works predominately in silver metal clay, bronze and copper clays have begun to appear in more of her work. Starr says that he loves to work with metal clay because of the feel of it and how the clay can be textured and shaped into beautiful designs and pieces of wearable art; however, she continues to be interested in all forms of craft, including enameling, glass fusing, and metalsmithing, expanding her knowledge and adding to her jewelry designs. Starr's work is currently being shown at Wiregrass Artist Cooperative in Thomasville, Georgia, River's Edge Gallery in Apalachicola, Florida, and the AHA Gallery in Havana, Florida.

Lou Schneider

Lou Schneider is a Tallahassee artist who has been making beaded jewelry and other artworks for over thirty years. Lou loves vibrant colors and sparkles and "ain't afraid to show it." She loves nothing more than for a jewelry piece to elicit a smile. Happy homes are her goal. Besides traditional jewelry, Lou creates larger pieces such as tiaras and beaded wall art. Lou finds her inspiration in nature, music, the earth, the sky, animals, and even dreams. "Inspiration can alight

upon you like a butterfly or crash over you like a tsunami: the trick is to catch it before it gets away.”

Big thank you to all our Wiregrass artists for participating, and an even bigger thank you for sharing your artwork with us!

For more information about Wiregrass Gallery, our artists, or becoming a member, please don't hesitate to contact Fran Buie at Franbuie@yahoo.com or check out our website at Wiregrassartcoop.org!