

Mary Ahern Artist



Catalog of Art

My Art My Garden

As a passionate gardener, my art is as intricately entwined as the gardens surrounding my studio. Cultivating and tending these gardens is the first stage of creating the art that grows in my studio.

Flowers represent to me a microcosm of the universe in their cycles of living and loving, families and relationships as well as their quest for survival and eventual senescence and rebirth.

With a duality of external and internal vision, I invite the viewer to see, larger than life, the beauty and intricacy of flowers and in their boldness I suggest a contemplation of their relevance and ours in the social order of our universe.

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“If we could see the miracle of a single flower
clearly our whole life would change”

-Buddha

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Just Waiting - Free Spirit Rose

Oil on Canvas. 36x36" Gallery Wrapped. \$5,000.

At a recent art show a visitor was staring at this painting on the wall when she turned to me and said “Your colors make my mouth water”.

That was such a happy compliment!

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Pay Attention Here - Orange Hibiscus

Oil on Canvas. 36x36" Gallery Wrapped. \$5,000.

For years I've overwintered this Hibiscus in my home where it blooms for me all winter. Joyously it also adorns my porch all summer with its complex double blossoms.

I think I could paint this flower for the rest of my life and never duplicate the form and diversity of colors she offers.

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The Concept Behind These Flower Portraits

This body of work has come from my focus on simplifying my life, my work and with what I choose to surround myself. As I focused on downsizing the work of tending the thousands of plants in my garden I began to contemplate what the essence of my garden is to me.

This simplification entered my studio along with me. I wanted to strip away extraneous material and get to the center of my art. This simplification of my life lead me to concurrently reduce the scope of my paintings from landscapes to the study of a single flower.

This narrowed focus of seeing and depicting the centers of these flowers in my art, gave rise to my questions of the purpose of their existence.

This lead me to the questions of the purpose of existence not just for them but also for us.

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Circles in Squares

For decades I have been creating art in circles surrounded by squared edges. When I first made this type of work it was in the mid-1970's and the circle was most often represented by an apple inside a square or sphere in my three dimensional work. At that time it represented to me the yin and yang, female and male complements to our lives and our characters.

I have returned to this theme but using flowers from my garden as the subjects. It feels so calming to me when I create these rounded flowers. This peony was the first in a series of exploring again the circle in a square imagery so I named it "Centering" because that is how I feel towards these works. A balance of my exterior and interior lives.

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Centering - Pink Peony

Oil on Canvas. 36x36" Gallery Wrapped. \$5,000.

Everyone brings their own interpretation to a work of art.

To me, I see the depth of the universe inside this flower, others have shared wildly different visions of experience.

Art is endlessly fascinating for these reasons!

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I'm Not Hiding - Pink Amaryllis

Oil on Canvas. 36x36" Gallery Wrapped. \$5,000.

Amaryllis bulbs are big and boastful as are their flowers when they emerge.

There is nothing shy about these bold and beautiful flowers. They often bloom for us in the dead cold and dark of winter, brightening our senses with their bursts of color.

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Influence & Meaning

It may come as no surprise that I've been influenced by the person and the artist, Georgia O'Keeffe. Many years ago, before I knew I was an artist, I wept upon first seeing images of her work. She wrote that she painted flowers larger than life in order to get people to actually stop and see them in their otherwise hectic lives.

Although we share some of the same soul, we don't share the same painting technique. O'Keeffe painted in a more direct style of paint application. I however, enjoy the glazing and layering style more akin to renaissance artists and practiced by the Dutch painters, Rembrandt and Vermeer. I begin each painting with a grisaille underpainting and apply thin coats of 15 to 30 layers of glazing. It is a long process which takes weeks to complete.

These layers hold for me a journey, a depth of color but also a depth of meaning. They speak to me of who I am and what I create as an artist.

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Why Such Large Flowers?

Not until I studied botany and viewed flower structures under magnifying glasses and microscopes did I really appreciate their magnificence.

As a life-long gardener I looked at and created landscapes, matching groups of plants to be seen from a distance, blending distant views of overall colors and shapes. Matching seasons & cultivation needs contributing to the designs I created in gardens and on canvas in my landscape paintings.

But that aha moment of peering dramatically close to the magnified parts of a flower opened a whole new world of vision and contemplation for me.

By painting my flowers overly large and entirely out of scale from the real world, I try to bring that same sense of awe to my viewers. Show them something of what I see. I try to create for them their own aha moment of joy and wonder to take on their journey.

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My World - Pink Anemone

Oil on Canvas. 36x36" Gallery Wrapped. \$5,000.

When I began painting this pink anemone I used as inspiration the snapshots I took in my garden the previous spring since it was the dark days of a New York winter.

By the time the painting was nearing completion, the anemones were blooming in my garden again. So each day I gathered a few new blossoms to keep us company in the studio.

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Together Again - Peach Freckles Rhodi

Oil on Canvas. 24x36" Gallery Wrapped. \$3,000.

These individual rhododendron flowers show the speckled blotches which signify to their pollinators where they'll find their treats.

Rhododendrons are always seen in their rounded trusses but I decided to see each of the blossoms as individuals sharing a space companionably together and letting us see them for their separate beauty and complexity.



We Are Sisters - Coral Roses

Oil on Canvas. 30x24" Gallery Wrapped. \$2,500.

In this painting I wanted to show these two sister roses as related but different. I did this by painting the rose in front with a warmer tone and the one behind cooler. As we view things from a distance they have tend to have less definition and appear in a cooler hue.

I imagine one sister rose is engaged with the warmth of the moment while the other is looking beyond for other ideas and dreams.

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Prints Are For Sale Too



A wide selection of my work is available for purchase as prints in various sizes on canvas, fine art paper, aluminum and acrylic in my online Art Shop.

I know that it is often difficult to imagine what my art will look like in your home or office from just seeing it online. So to help you decide what will work for you and what will suit your own personal design ideas I've installed some viewing options in my online Art Shop.

There is a wall preview tool that will allow you to see various sizes of a print in a variety of rooms both residential & commercial. You can even change the wall color to match your own.

In addition, I've just added an Augmented Reality Live viewer to my shop. This allows you to select a print on your mobile device & preview it on your own wall through your on-board camera.

No apps for you to download. It is live right on my website.

I'd Love to Hear From You!

Contact me directly if you have questions about my work or to make a direct purchase.

I also love to hear from my collectors. It's one of the perks of being an artist. Hearing how my art has brought sunshine into their lives. The smiles on the faces of those friends and family to whom gifts were given. Or how the bright colors of my paintings light up their long white winters. I love being an artist!

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