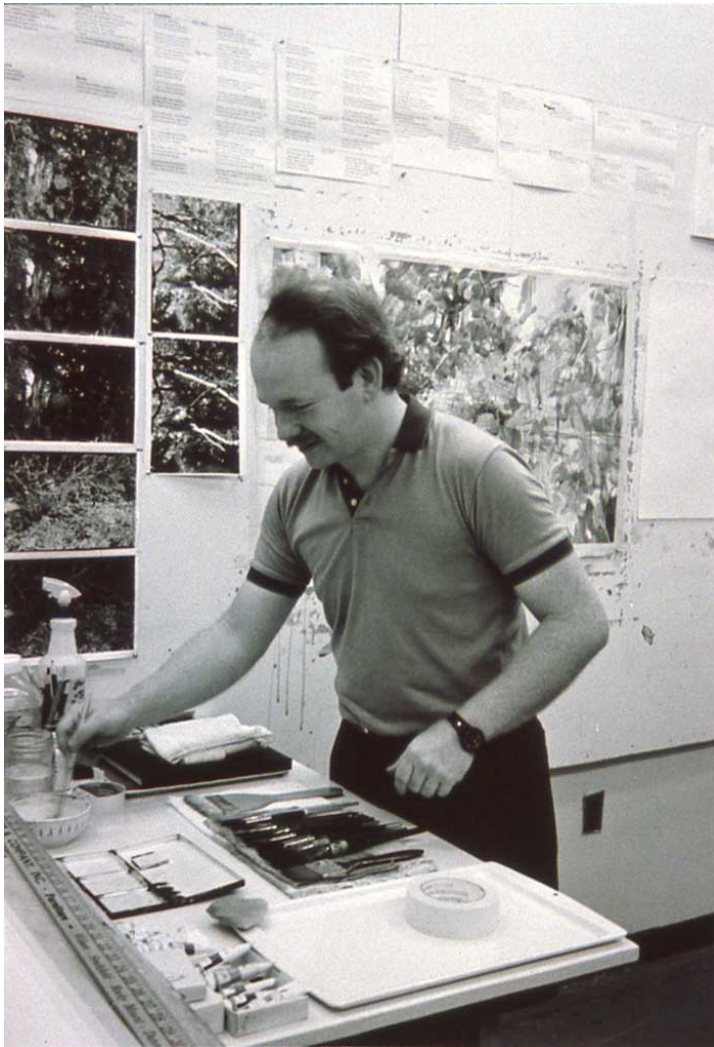


Artist Bio



My Art Work

I usually start with the direct observation of nature. I often spend hours and hours walking, bicycling, or driving around town and the countryside, stopping to make visual notes (sketches and studies) and to make photographs. What catches my eye might be a panoramic view, but it is just as likely to be an intimate scene along the side of a small creek or one glimpsed in a neighboring town's old business or industrial centers. I find nearly infinite interest in the wild or urban landscape, even in the few square inches of land at my feet.

In the studio, I pour over my drawings, sketches, photographs, as well as my notes, before I begin working. Don't get me wrong though, I do not plan out each piece completely. Instead, my approach to watercolor, gouache, or acrylic is much more like a jazz musician. I practice and plan, but then I improvise based on that exploration. I am also likely to incorporate materials associated with printmaking, collage, as well as new industrial or digital processes into my drawing and painting as I experiment with the image.

From my childhood on, I have had a love of naturalists' illustrations of plant life and animals as well as antique and contemporary maps and diagrams. Sometimes these find their way into my work alongside the images I glean from the natural world. I am not always sure when I first find, combine, or create an image what its final destination or format will be. It may end up being a final collaged piece that is 4x5 inches, it may be a medium sized painting, or it may become the central image in a larger installation piece that is 20 feet long.

No matter which path I take, what way I work, I bring together naturalistic and abstract elements into a balanced, if rather tentative, harmony.

In the studio, early 1990's

Professional Background

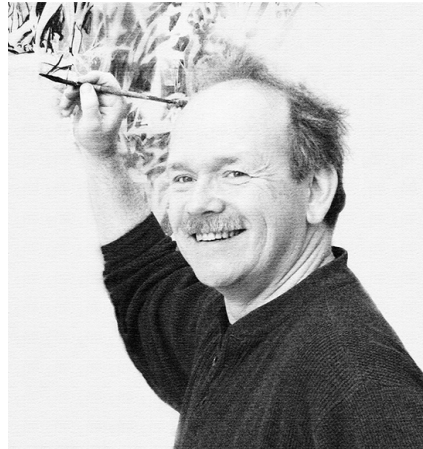
I have regularly exhibited my art around the country and have even shown in England. While I love being able to have my work available to folks far away, I also like to be involved in the cultural affairs of my community. To this end, I volunteer, serve as an artist/educator advisor, and as a board member for several local and regional art centers and organizations.

For many years, I taught as a college art professor and also led a statewide summer program for gifted teens studying visual art. Being able to interact with so many gifted teenagers, traditional college students, and returning adult learners, I always wanted to honor and respect their artistic dreams and passions.

Now, as an independent artist, I still teach workshops and classes and also have time to make presentations to local and professional art organizations. I try to bring both the intensity

of my college teaching, along with a truly human and humane approach to my work with adults who want to explore and expand their engagement with art. It is quite an honor that so many fine folks have trusted me to help them become who and what they want to be as artists.

Another art project that I love to work on is organizing exhibitions. I began doing this as a young professor and continue to do so when I get a chance. I've organized shows that concentrated on contemporary works on paper, drawing, and watercolor. My next project is likely to be one that brings together artists from around the US, and maybe even Canada, who are part of the new Urban Sketching movement.



Me working, and a view in my first Virginia studio, in the early 2000s



A view of my current studio space

More Life Before & Beyond the Studio

I grew up in what was for me very exiting environments, towns and cities that were home to colleges, universities, military bases, and the aerospace industry but were surrounded by open natural and agricultural landscapes. Having lived throughout the Southeast and Midwest (from Atlanta to Wichita, from central Florida to eastern North Carolina), early on I thought of home as being wherever it was that my family and I were.

Perhaps because of my father's family being from the United States and my mother remaining proudly Irish and adamantly British! (*Ask me sometime how she balanced those two identities!*), early on I realized that people and places were somehow exactly the same, yet totally different, wherever it is that we find ourselves.

So, as I grew up living around the country and visiting extended family in the US, Ireland, England, and Guernsey, I was entranced by those visual differences that culture and location offered up. I would spend many hours exploring the natural and the built world. I sought out grand vistas and small quiet places; spending hour upon hour in a type of visual reverie. To be honest, I still do.

Balancing the fact that I am something of a natural contemplative, I was also very interested in social and cultural history, as well as archeology, natural history, biology and geography. All the while, I was constantly making images. So, when I went to college, it came as no surprise to my family that I followed all of my interests ... but chose to do so by being an artist. I think many of these interests are quite evident in my teaching but also in my Natural-Family-History series of drawings.

I greatly enjoy the exploration of such exciting communities as Taos, Montreal, London, Florence, and Paris but I am just as drawn to the salt marshes of southern Florida or the rocky riverbeds of the Osage Hills. Moving about the country so much fueled my love of travel but it also created a love for being home. In 2000, I relocated to teach, make art, and live in the shadow of Blue Ridge Mountains of central Virginia. These ancient mountains and valleys somehow felt like home to me the moment I saw them.

Now, as an artist, I am at home with my love of visual ideas and images, with my passion for color and design, and with sharing my work with family, friends, and the people I meet.



*Gathered with fellow artist friends for sketching
(Yes, that is me seated ... back in my college days!)*