

## EARL GRENVILLE KILLEEN – ARTIST’S STATEMENT

In 2017, a cancer diagnosis spurred me to pick up my brushes after a long hiatus in my ability to be creatively productive. Painting since then with persistence and passion, and working now on my sixth series of watercolors, I have come to see the transformations in my works and in my process as expressions of transformations in myself as a person and as an artist.

As an artist, I have embraced the development of new methods, sometimes by the invention born of necessity, sometimes by happy accident. For example, a technique I rely on to burnish layers of paint, and to create textures and patterns I could not achieve with a brush, began as an attempt to entirely remove the paint from its support using a small power sander.

Recently-adopted techniques include applying water-soaked beach sand to the painting's surface and scraping it off when it dries, or spraying with water and then "twirling" (tilting and rotating the painting to coax the wet paint into softening sharp edges). Most importantly, I've been transformed as an artist, at each stage of the process, by lots of essential patience (learned the hard way) waiting for the paint to dry.

As a person, looking back over five years of my work, I discover the stages of an inner metamorphosis unrolling from one series to the next. The subjects of the first two series are machines and gadgets, made of metal, age-worn, depicted (not in their entirety but only as a portion) in stark isolation against a background color. The machines of *Totemics* are hulking construction equipment, worse for wear despite their heavy armor, consigned to exist on empty lots; the gadgets (antiquated household items and rusted bicycles) of *Mechanostalgia* are lighter and scaled to everyday life, but still (outwardly) inanimate.

Softer and more organic materials, integrated into whimsical compositions in *The Persistence of Promise* series, create settings for the ubiquitous "characters" -- the winged maple seeds that suggest possibility for new growth and flights of fancy. In the early images in this series, the seeds are stuck in place -- taped, pinned, dangling, trapped, or lying inert; as the series progresses, the seeds flit about, mimicking fireflies, moths, and even birds flying in the open sky. Upstretched human arms make an appearance in one painting. A very short series, *Transisiton*, depicts the passage of time, and fish that seem more at home in the sky than in a bowl of water.

The next series takes me *Through the Wormhole* into the abstract as a sort of brain-cleanser, to free the mind and spirit into pure design and color, dancing them into a holding pattern of balance and harmony.

Now, in *Out of This Soul*, I seem to have emerged from defensively painting in metaphors to showing myself in my human form. With a dreamlike sensibility, allusive elements help to evoke my vulnerability and, perhaps, self-empowerment.



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## Selected Awards

- 2021** ▪ New Haven Paint & Clay Club 120th Annual Juried Art Exhibition. Elizabeth L. Greeley Prize for a Watercolor.
  - The Contemporary Art Room Gallery "Open" exhibition. Merit Award for two pieces.
  - Lyme Art Association (Old Lyme, CT) "First Impressions" exhibit. First Place Award.
- 2020** ▪ Norwich Art Center (Norwich, CT) "Into the Darkness: Mysterious Images for Fall." Third Place.
  - Connecticut Office of the Arts \$3,000 Artist Fellowship Award.
  - Lyme Art Association "First Impressions" exhibit. Award of Merit.
- 2019** ▪ Connecticut Watercolor Society Autumn Exhibition. CWS Third Place Award.
  - Connecticut Watercolor Society 78th Annual Exhibition. Jerry's Artarama Gift Certificate.
- 1995-96** ▪ The Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts (New York, NY). Individual Artist Grant to continue *L4-5* series in acrylics.
- 1995** ▪ *The Artist's Magazine* Annual National Art Competition. Finalist in Experimental category.
- 1993-94** ▪ Connecticut Commission on the Arts (Hartford, CT). Individual Artist Grant to continue *Totemics* series in acrylics.
- 1994** ▪ Arts-Connecticut 47th Annual Juried Exhibition (Guilford, CT). First Prize.
- 1993** ▪ Arts-Connecticut 46th Annual Juried Exhibition (Guilford, CT). First Prize.
- 1992** ▪ *The Artist's Magazine* Annual National Art Competition. First Place in Still Life Category.
  - New Britain Museum of American Art Members Show (New Britain, CT). Educational Prize.
  - New Haven Paint and Clay Club 91st Annual Exhibition (New Haven, CT). Minna Walker Smith Watercolor Prize
- 1991** ▪ Connecticut Watercolor Society 51st Annual Exhibition (New Haven, CT). Paier College of Art Award.
- 1983** ▪ Choices '83 Statewide Juried Show (Guilford, CT). Second Prize.

## Selected Exhibitions

- 2021** ▪ Arts Benicia (CA), "That Which Surrounds You" exhibit.
  - Cabrillo Gallery (CA), "2020 Vision: Seeing Ourselves Through Challenging Times" exhibit.
  - Lyme Art Association (Old Lyme, CT), "First Impressions" and "Expanding Visions" exhibits.
  - Rhode Island Watercolor Society, "Painting Through the Pandemic" exhibit.
- 2020** ▪ Verum Ultimum Art Gallery (Portland, OR), "A Generous Kingdom" exhibit.
  - Las Laguna Gallery (Laguna Beach, CA), "2020 Political Discord" exhibit.
  - Rhode Island Watercolor Society, "It's All About Color" exhibit.
  - Mystic Museum of Art (Mystic, CT), "Americana" show.
  - Hudson Valley Art Association 87th Annual Juried Exhibition.
  - Slater Memorial Museum (Norwich, CT), Annual CT Artists Juried Exhibition.
  - Lyme Art Association (Old Lyme, CT), "First Impressions", "Yin & Yang", and "Birds and Bees" exhibits.
- 2019** ▪ Lyme Art Association (Old Lyme, CT), "Four Acts" and "First Impressions" exhibits.
- 2018** ▪ Lyme Art Association (Old Lyme, CT), "Four Acts", "Contemporary Look", "Summer Painting and Sculpture", and "Deck the Walls" exhibits.
- 2017** ▪ The Cooley Gallery (Old Lyme, CT). Four works included in seasonal show.

- 1995** ▪ The Aldrich Museum (Ridgefield, CT). Seven works included in the exhibit “Investing in Dreams”, Connecticut Commission on the Arts Statewide Museum Collaboration.
  - Gannett Galleries (Scituate, MA). “Novus ‘95” (invitational exhibition).
  - ARTSPACE (New Haven, CT). “Gifts of the 21st Century” (invitational exhibition).
  - WPKN Radio (New Haven, CT). “Art for Bread” (invitational exhibition).
- 1994** ▪ Connecticut Commission on the Arts (Hartford, CT). Two-artist show.
- 1993** ▪ Signature Gallery (West Hartford, CT).
- 1990-91** ▪ Goldsmith Gallery (Madison, CT)
  - Wexford Gallery (Guilford, CT)
- 1989** ▪ Cooley Gallery (Old Lyme, CT). Featured in “Four Contemporary Artists” exhibit.
- 1984** ▪ Wakefield Gallery (Pound Ridge, NY)
- 1983-84** ▪ Art and the Law/West ‘83 (nationally-touring invitational exhibit).

## Publications

- 1995** ▪ Killeen, Earl Grenville with Leah Raechel Killeen. *The North Light Book of Acrylic Painting Techniques* (North Light Publishing, Cincinnati).
- 1994** ▪ Wolf, Rachel Rubin, editor. *Splash 3* (North Light Publishing). Showcases “105 of America’s Best Contemporary Watercolorists.”
  - Killeen, Earl Grenville. “Unlock the Secrets to Acrylics,” *The Artist’s Magazine*, April, pages 34-43 (special section.)
- 1992** ▪ Elliott, Sheila. “Power Up Your Watercolors,” *The Artist’s Magazine*, July. The article deals with “the incredible effects Earl Grenville Killeen creates by taking a power sander to watercolor.”
  - *The Artist’s Magazine* Annual Competition Issue, December, features “Pelican” (watercolor) as First Place winner in Still Life.
- 1986** ▪ *Tennessee Bar Journal*, January. Cover features “Order Endures” (watercolor).
- 1984** ▪ Killeen, Earl. “Pushing Watercolor to its Thickest,” *The Artist’s Magazine*, July-Aug, pages 53-57 and “P.S.” page 104.

## Arts Organizations and Activities

- 2019** ▪ Connecticut Watercolor Society membership.
- 2017** ▪ Established the annual Earl Grenville Killeen Founder’s Award for Future Choices, to be shared between the teacher of the student who receives the Best in Show Award and another art student of that teacher’s choosing.
- 1996-97** ▪ Wrote “In the Spotlight”, *Shoreline Times* (Madison, CT). Weekly arts review column.
- 1994** ▪ Mentor for the Connecticut Commission on the Arts Inner City Cultural Development Program.
- 1982-94** ▪ Founded Future Choices Annual Juried Show (for regional high school students), and sponsored the Best in Show Award for twelve years.