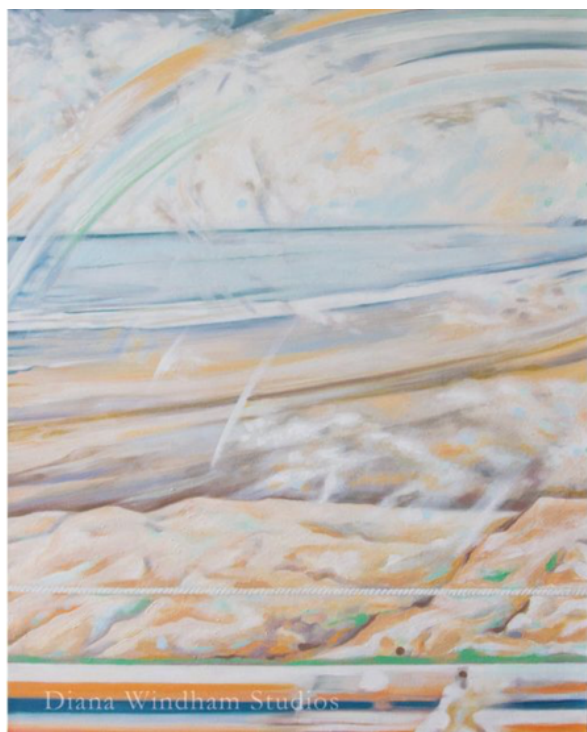


Double Feature: Southbury Artists Diana Windham and William Gramigna



"Child's Play, I, II, III" - oil on canvas, 30 x 40" each

Meet the Artist: Diana Windham

By Kelly Keenan, SACA

Photos courtesy of the artist

When Diana Windham moved to Southbury in 1995, her reason was simple. "I needed a garage," she says with a laugh. That garage came with a condo in Heritage Village, which has been home ever since.

Windham's artistic journey began in college, where she majored in English and nurtured a strong interest in music. But it was her art minor that slowly began to take over. "Once I started art, it just kept growing," she explains. Drawing became her foundation, and it remains central to her practice today. "Drawing is the basis—the fundamental. Everything else builds from there."

Although she is now primarily a painter, Windham continues to experiment with inspiration and form. One of her most interesting sources of creative inspiration comes from an unexpected place: folded pieces of paper. "I had been painting flowers, but I was ready for something new," she recalls. "So I said, 'I'm going to make something from nothing.' I took pieces of paper and folded them. And when I went to paint something like this, then I immediately got a very strong three dimensional illusion, because the folded paper takes on shadow and because it is three dimensional, and so it stands out as an image within the painting. It's just striking, and it's an interesting thing to combine with other objects. So the folded paper became objects that I placed with other objects, such as glass jars and feathers."

For Windham, painting is as much an internal process as it is external. "The moment my brush reaches the canvas in a full, intentional gesture—that's when I feel most alive as an artist," she says. "Painting is meditation. It's felt within and expressed through the body, guided by the heart and the mind. When it works, it's joyful." She pauses, "Of course, not every attempt works—but that challenge, the push to make it better, is what keeps me going."

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Like many artists, Windham admits the business side of art is not her favorite part. "Being my own promoter, staying organized, marketing myself—it's difficult. The internet can feel especially discouraging with all of its distractions. Sometimes I just set it aside and go paint."

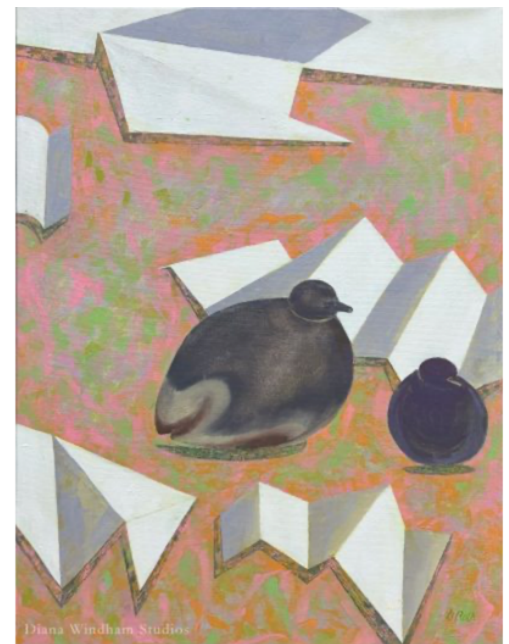
Her admiration for other artists shines through in conversation, especially when she speaks about her teachers. James McGarrell, whom she studied with at Indiana University, was an early influence. "He really got me going with drawing and encouraged me with painting. His work is experimental, but it honors the human figure." Another mentor, Edwin Dickinson of the Art Students League, left a deep impression as well. "He was a master of drawing and painting. His technique was to find a spot you loved on the canvas and build outward from there, like an embryonic flowering. That process really shaped how I think about painting."

Beyond painting, Windham writes poetry and enjoys working in watercolor and pastel. She's also taken on mural work in the past, and while she's curious about collage, she hasn't yet explored it in depth.

When asked what advice she'd give to emerging artists, Windham doesn't hesitate. She recommends a classic book by Betty Edwards, *Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain*. "She says there's no one who can't draw. Drawing is the basis for almost any art—it's like learning a language. Once you understand it, you can go anywhere."

From flowers to folded paper, from poetry to murals, Diana Windham continues to explore, create, and share her vision with the Southbury community. For her, art isn't just about the finished work—it's about the act of reaching inward, brush in hand, and bringing something new to life.

For more information about this month's maker, or if you are interested in being featured in an upcoming issue of the Southbury Makers Spotlight, contact us at info@southburyartsandculturealliance.org or visit www.southburyartsandculturealliance.org



"Mother Bird" - oil on canvas, 18 x 24"



"Jars and Feathers II" - oil on canvas, 18 x 24"



"Blue Glass, Feather & Stones I - Submerged" - oil on canvas, 30 x 40" each