

Upstate Artists

December 2 - January 7



"Through The Window" 8" x 20" oil

Layering a Beautiful Life The Front and Backstory of Artist, Terry Teitelbaum

by Rona Mann

Some people call them "Chapters."
Others use the term "Stages."
Taylor Swift titled them as "Eras."

In the case of Terry Teitelbaum, a Cambridge, NY-based artist, her story, her achievements, her awakenings, and the entire body of her evolution as an outstanding artist and delightful human being could likely be referred to as "layers" because right from her earliest childhood years, Terry has been adding one layer upon another and living life in the texture and richness they have provided.

FIRST LAYER: It did not begin with drawing or painting, rather it began in Teitelbaum's childhood with her inordinate interest in color and fabric. This was fostered by a grandmother who had pieces of this and bits of that and would marry the irregularly shaped fabric swatches together in a wildly colorful crazy quilt with an embroidered center. This fascinated Terry, who as a little girl would play with the pieces and delighted in making her own colorful combos. "It was the beginning of my love of color," she said. "My grandma also taught me to sew, and I delighted in making clothes for my dolls."



"Ignite" 20" x 40" oil



"Connectors" 20"x 20" oil



"Growing Wild" 18"x 18" oil

Fast forward to Terry's teenage years when she discovered the art and artistry of pattern-making as well as designing her own clothes. "People told me I should go into fashion design especially since women were under-represented in this area."

SECOND LAYER: She took their advice by first seeking a formal education and applying to the famed FIT (Fashion Institute of Technology) in New York. "It was the only school I applied to!" Call it naive or call it a "brilliant move," but when Terry went to FIT for her interview with the

school's pattern-making panel, she was the only candidate who did not bring along a beautiful, professionally done portfolio of her work. Instead, she stuffed the actual clothing samples of all her designs into a suitcase and dragged the suitcase along. Result? She was awarded a full scholarship to the two-year program at FIT. After earning her degree in Fashion Design, she won another full scholarship, this time allowing her to move on to the prominent Pratt Institute in Brooklyn where she graduated with yet another degree and an added bonus: she met her future husband, Andy, who was enrolled in Pratt's School of Architecture.

THIRD LAYER: It was the late 60s, and a time of radical change for the country - a time of protest, a time of moving from conservative designs to an explosion of color which Terry readily embraced. "You could do anything in fashion then." It was a time when the country was moving in a new direction, and Andy and Terry decided to move as well. They left the fast pace and



"Secluded" 18"x 18" oil



strong rhythm of the New York streets for a quiet place where they could live and thrive in nature, where they had room to breathe and walk and grow and raise a family. They found their next layer together in 26 acres in Cambridge, NY at the base of the foothills of the Adirondacks with Vermont's Green Mountains in full view and together built a house on a cliff. Andy started making furniture (self-taught) and designing custom



"Side By Side" diptych 40"x 40" oil & acrylic



kitchens, while Terry plunged headlong into decorating, gardening, raising the couple's three children, and flourishing in the nature that surrounded them. This provided a different explosion of color, one that changed with the seasons and one of which they never tire of being a part.

FOURTH LAYER: It was time. Time for Terry Teitelbaum to set up her studio, a place she would walk to every day as Andy purposefully and purposely designed the structure so that she would have to walk a path through the woods to reach the door, thus being inspired by the sights and sounds of nature before ever picking up a tool for her next design. Teitelbaum thus fulfilled herself by coordinating the design and construction of costumes for all the dance and drama productions presented by the theatre department at nearby Bennington College in Vermont.

FIFTH LAYER: Now followed years of working with textiles, thousands of yards of fabric, many explosions of color, and designs that popped off the cloth and into fruition. But now, Terry Teitelbaum felt the urge to pick up a brush, to get up from the sewing machine, and look in a new direction. In 2017, after a lifetime in textiles, she turned to oil painting, and a whole new layer was added to her life. Never leaving her penchant for explosions of color behind, she merely transferred her talent, her passion, and her feel for color and texture to canvas, and within a very short time was exhibiting her work in juried shows! "Textiles were my source of everything so I simply transferred my technique onto canvas." Working feverishly, as though she were making up for lost time, the artist would paint layer upon layer...clouds, water, skies, her tools of the trade not being brushes, but instead brayers (small rubber rollers for applying a thin coat of paint), palette knives, and squeegees. "I would work to build up layers, looking for the colors beneath the surface. That's my voice."

SIXTH LAYER: "But I never thought I would exhibit," Terry says, a sense of wonder and disbelief in her voice. "I have had six solo shows in six years." Just one year after painting her first oil, Teitelbaum had her first solo event at Maple Ridge Gallery in Cambridge. That was followed by her being juried into other shows included among them the Laffer Gallery in Schuylerville, Cooperstown Art Association's 89th National Show, the Lake George Arts Project, and a multitude of exhibitions, both past and upcoming this fall, throughout the Capital Region. Her work is also part of many private and public collections nationwide and just last month, she was a featured artist at the ASA (Agricultural Stewardship Association) "Landscapes for Landsake" exhibition in Greenwich, NY. Additionally, many artists have added Terry's work to their own collections.

"When an artist chooses to buy your work to add to their own personal collection, that is the highest compliment and honor I can think of."

"In Between" 24"x12" oil

THE NEXT LAYER:

This space has been intentionally left blank, for when you live in a house on a cliff, when you are awed and challenged daily by the wonder of nature as you walk a path to your studio, and when you walk that path hand in hand for years with someone you love who shares the same passion and wonder, you never know what that next layer will be. You let the thoughts fly, you allow the colors to work their own way onto the canvas, layer upon layer, wild with color and abandon. You take the time to step back and see if it works; and if it doesn't, you start over, textiles being your "source of everything," the colors in nature being your tools. "The landscape inspires me." Terry says. "The color and texture pushes it to abstraction."

This then, is a story of a life lived in layers. Her work is incomplete. The layers continue to evolve, one on top of another, and always, in live and living color!

For more information on current exhibitions, log onto www.terryteitelbaum.com (518) 683-1672 to contact for a studio appointment or email: tjteitelbaum@gmail.com



"Lost In Dreams" 20"x20" oil



"Tucked Away" 15"x30" oil