

PEGGIE BLIZARD

Fresh Cuts



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Contemporary realist painter Peggie Blizard often feels that inspiration comes when its least expected and “there is no way an artist can artificially create it,” she says. For her floral subject matter, prominently on view at George Billis Gallery in Connecticut beginning early April, inspiration begins with a bit of play between found objects, like Mason jars, and botanicals from her own backyard.

“Before becoming intrigued with painting flowers, I was fascinated by antique kitchen objects—the way they seemed to be speaking to each other,” Blizard explains of her process. “So, while going through antique stores in search of these objects, I found a few Mason jars that were pretty [and] I ended up with them at home. It was summer, I had flowers in the yard, so once they were together in a jar, I just felt like painting them. The line of water and



1
Pansies in a Jar, oil on panel, 48 x 36"

2
Five Ball Jars with Flowers, oil on panel, 36 x 30"

3
Summer Flowers with Lavender Bells, oil on panel, 24 x 18"

4
An Ideal Eclipse, Part I, oil on panel, 36 x 24"

it's a bold yet refreshing display that also showcases Blizard's talent for still life realism.

In terms of style, the artist continues to be "fascinated with trompe l'oeil because it delivers a bit of fun to the viewer and a challenge to me as an artist," she says. "As for technique, it was Leonardo da Vinci who taught us 'sfumato,' which is the slight blurring of edges. We live in a 3D universe, so there are really no flat edges to objects. To convey this feeling of roundness in the objects, this slight blurring does the job." Blizard also references floral still life from masters of the Dutch Golden Age.

We certainly see Blizard's scenes pop with extraordinary detail, with the flowers themselves as an obvious but still significant facet to her work—a tool in which to communicate the unique structure of a painting. "When I began painting flowers, I just picked what I could find in the yard or in my neighbor's yard and I enjoyed mixing a variety depending on the colors, size and shape. An artist friend once said that all painting is abstract and I agree with him. Artists who are classically trained use all the elements in a painting to make the piece work—balance, shape, contrast, scale etc."

The show at George Billis Gallery will open April 4, with a reception on April 6 from 5 to 8 p.m., and will close April 30. Above all, Blizard's hope is that "people will find [the paintings] cheerful and uplifting at a time when the world feels as if it is coming unglued." ●

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its distortions began to intrigue me. Also, painting the words cut into the jars was a fun challenge."

In her upcoming show of approximately eight new pieces, Blizard offers larger views (and larger paintings) of her jars and exquisite floral arrangements, which fill the canvas from top to bottom. Two examples are *Five Ball Jars with Flowers* and *Pansies in a Jar*, both pictured here, with the latter measuring 48 by 36 inches

of oil on panel. As noted, the Ball Mason jar reaches the very bottom edge of the scene, and the pansies graze the top, while the flowers and petals suspended in the water add yet another element.

"I wondered how the picture would change if I shoved some flowers down into the water," explains Blizard of the pansy piece, along with other paintings in the show. "This put color behind the cut letters and created new shapes." All-in-all,