

PEGGIE BLIZARD

# Preserving Beauty

Peggie Blizard grew up in rural North Carolina. “Preserving food was just part of everyday life back then so Mason jars were everywhere,” she says. “I remember pickled peaches and pickled okra that my grandmother had made. I have also painted flowers in milk bottles, something not seen any more, but I prefer the Mason jars because of the wider opening and, in some cases, the blue color. In the beginning, I bought a few jars at antique stores, but now people just keep giving them to me.”

John Mason created and patented the ubiquitous canning jar in 1858. They were the first hermetically resealable jar. In 1884 the Ball Corporation improved on Mason’s jar and the distinctive company name in script appears on millions of bottles worldwide. Some have screw tops and others have a distinctive metal clamp.

“I happened on the idea of using the Mason jars because the raised letters captured and distorted reflections of the flowers, water, light and shadows adding interest to the composition and helping to create a feeling of depth of space,” Blizard explains. “The wires being solid are a good contrast between the solid and the transparent.”

“The fun part of painting at this point is the Trompe l’Oeil aspect of my work as it injects a bit of humor into the picture and brings a new perspective to an otherwise overused subject—flowers,” she continues. “The flowers I use in the still life arrangements come from my garden in the summer and from grocery stores in winter. One of my most successful pieces was based on flowers bought at the Chelsea Market in New York City one cold winter day. Recently, I have begun to add a flower down in the water, the purpose being to move more color around in the composition and create a bit more interest.”

Her 36-by-24-inch *Goldenrod and Anemones* are in a jar manufactured between 1926 and 1952, a riot of color and shapes, transparency and reflections, and





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the ephemeral flowers casting an ephemeral shadow on the wall. The jar will go on to hold pickled peaches or fresh flowers.

Her magical and poetic flower arrangements will be shown in a solo exhibition at George Billis Gallery in Westport, Connecticut, through February 27. ●

**George Billis Gallery** 166 Main Street • Westport, CT 06880 • (212) 645-2621 • [www.georgebillis.com](http://www.georgebillis.com)

**1**  
*Goldenrod and Anemones*, oil on panel, 36 x 24"

**2**  
*Stop n Shop Still Life*, oil on panel, 18 x 24"

**3**  
*Three Jars with Petunias*, oil on panel, 24 x 36"