Meet Dana Hargrove

STORIES & INSIGHTS | April 9, 2024

Dana, thanks for taking the time to share your stories with us today When did you first know you wanted to pursue a creative/artistic path professionally?

From a young age, my uncle, an artist himself, introduced me to the possibility of pursuing art as a career when I visited him at art college. I was captivated by the experience, and even at the age of 7 or 8, I began to envision myself following in his footsteps. Later, my uncle generously gave my sister and me lessons in his massive artist's studio, further fueling my passion for the arts. With a clear goal in mind, I set my sights on attending that same art college, pursuing it with unwavering determination. My journey to college was a direct path, driven by my deep-rooted desire to immerse myself in the world of art—a passion that has remained constant throughout my life.

Dana, love having you share your insights with us. Before we ask you more questions, maybe you can take a moment to introduce yourself to our readers who might have missed our earlier conversations?

Hello! I'm Dana Hargrove, a Scottish artist who has found a home in the strange but wonderful landscapes of Florida, USA. My journey as an artist began in Scotland with a deep-rooted fascination for the interplay between human interventions and the natural world. I'm especially captivated by the complexities of simulacra, where

the boundaries between reality and representation blur, turning landscape into a cultural product. Upon my relocation to Florida, this fascination took on new dimensions as I immersed myself in a landscape where the simulacrum reigns supreme. It was here that I discovered many sources of inspiration, such as theme parks, strip malls, airports, and most recently, a local nature preserve that has been threatened by rezoning.

At the heart of my artistic practice lies a commitment to exploring diverse mediums as vehicles for conceptual inquiries. While painting remains my touchstone, I also venture into sculpture, installation, and multimedia projects, each offering a unique lens through which to convey my ideas.

One aspect that sets my work apart is its immersive and experiential nature. Through collaborations with galleries and museums across the United States, I've had the privilege of curating installations that go beyond traditional boundaries, inviting viewers into a dynamic dialogue with the art itself. This holistic approach allows me to conceive of my paintings and works not merely as individual pieces but as interconnected elements within a larger narrative.

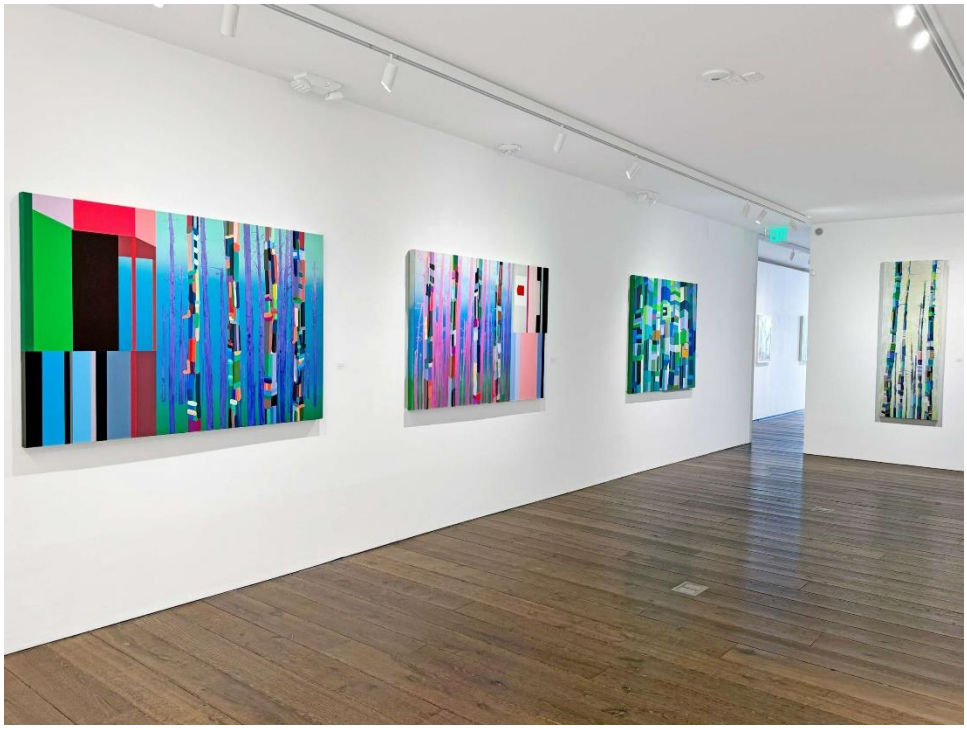
I take pride in the opportunities I've had to provoke thought, evoke emotions, and ignite conversations through my art. Whether it's through a thought-provoking exhibition or a captivating installation, I aim to create spaces where viewers are invited to engage, question, and reflect upon the world around them.
I invite you to explore my portfolio, attend my upcoming exhibitions, or connect with me on social media to stay updated on my latest projects.

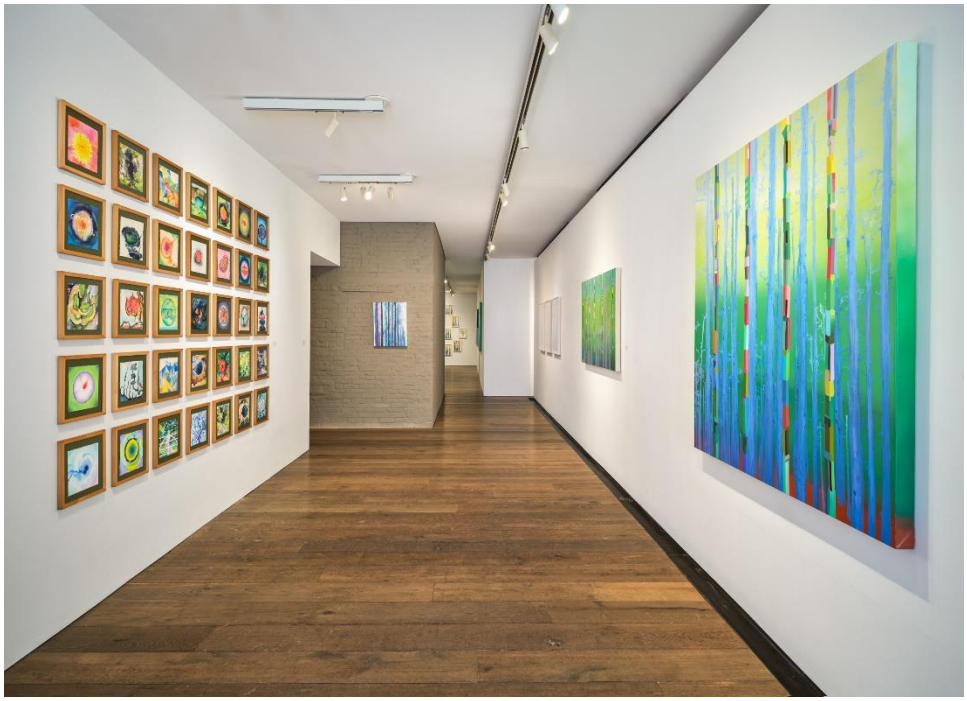
We'd love to hear a story of resilience from your journey.

For nearly 25 years, I've navigated the waves of culture shock ever since my move to the USA to pursue my MFA in Illinois. Leaving behind cherished family, including my adored 8-year-old brother (shoutout to Conor!), and the familiarity of my previous life in Scotland, I felt like a fish out of water. The initial months were challenging and isolating, filled with a sense of disorientation and melancholy. However, as time passed, I came to realize that my experience was a common one among expatriates. Armed with this understanding, I embarked on a journey of self-discovery and adaptation. With the help of resources provided by SIUC, I identified and acknowledged the symptoms of culture shock, ticking off each box on the pamphlet they gave me. It was a turning point when I decided to embrace my outsider perspective and channel it into my art.

Today, I view my unique lens as an asset rather than a hindrance. Through my travels and experiences, I've gained a nuanced understanding of cultural differences, allowing me to see the world from multiple angles. This newfound perspective infuses my artwork with depth and richness, as I draw upon diverse influences and comparisons from around the globe.

My journey through culture shock has not only shaped me as an individual but has also empowered me to approach life and art with resilience and creativity. I now embrace the absurdities of life with ease, leveraging my multifaceted worldview to create meaningful and, hopefully, thought-provoking art.





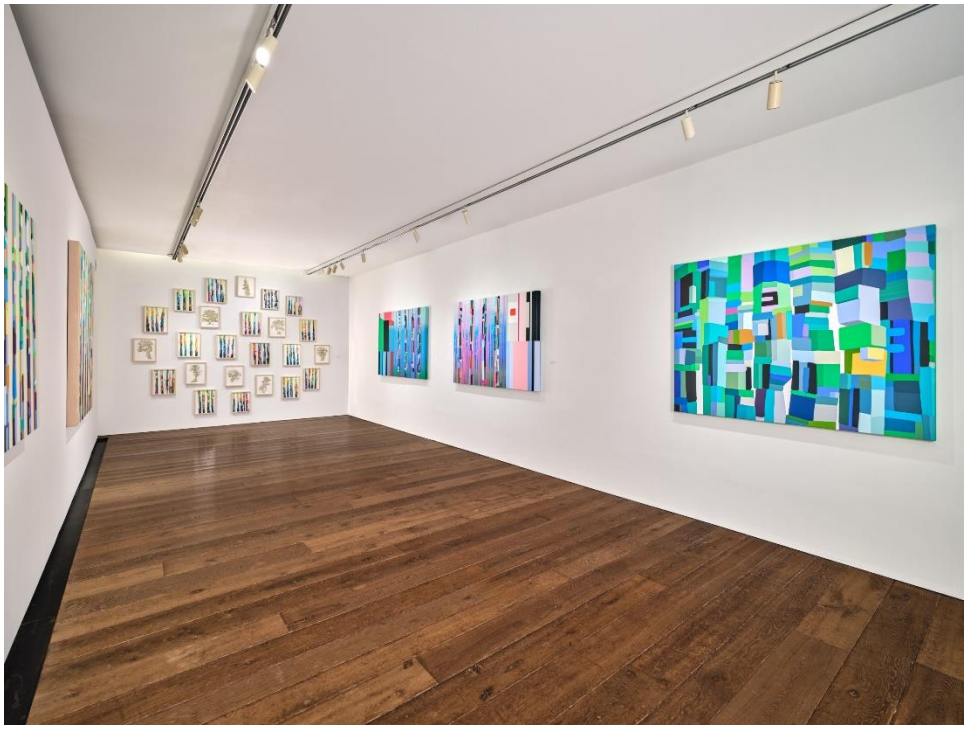
For you, what's the most rewarding aspect of being a creative?

The most rewarding aspect of being an artist, for me, is its consistent support during challenging times. It serves as a lifeline, helping me navigate rough patches and process complex emotions like culture shock. Art provides a

purposeful outlet, allowing me to contribute my thoughts to society and reshape my frustrations about our relationship with the land and environment.

Engaging in broader conversations, such as advocating for the preservation of natural spaces like Split Oak Forest in Florida, fills me with a sense of purpose and fulfillment. Through art, I can amplify important messages and contribute to meaningful causes that resonate with me.

Furthermore, working with students at Rollins College to explore the transformative power of art is incredibly fulfilling. Witnessing their growth and seeing how they utilize art as a tool for change or daily practice reaffirms the profound impact creativity can have on both individuals and communities. I feel immensely fortunate to have art as a companion throughout my life.



Full article: https://canvasrebel.com/meet-dana-hargrove/

709 Walnut Street 1st Floor Philadelphia PA 19106 tel 215 413 8893 fax 215 413 2283
email bmayer@bridgettemayergallery.com www.bridgettemayergallery.com