

Community Medal of Arts

Mary Brodbeck



Mary Brodbeck is a leader in her field of Moku Hanga printmaking and an artist who has achieved a significant body of creative activity. Mary's prints have been recognized and awarded at the local, regional, and national levels; and, her 2014 short film, "Becoming Made" received an Award of Merit Special Mention in the Best Shorts Competition in 2015. Through her art, teaching, and advocacy, Mary makes a substantial, positive impact on the Kalamazoo community.

In 2017, Mary's work won the prestigious, international Loeschner Art Competition sponsored by the Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park. Also that year, she was the recipient of a 2017 Distinguished Alumni Award from Western Michigan University Frostic School of Art. To date, she is the recipient of six Artist-in-Residencies in the state of Michigan as well as the esteemed Bunka-Cho Fellowship to Osaka, Japan in 1998 to enhance her chosen field of study in the Japanese woodblock printing technique, Moku Hanga. For 20 years, Mary's work has consistently received recognition and awards at the local, regional, and national levels.

Due to her expertise, Mary is invited to numerous regional, national, and international venues as a workshop presenter and guest lecturer. Mary has taught Japanese Woodblock Printmaking not only in Michigan, but in Nevada, Nebraska, Oregon, and Ontario, Canada. She willingly and openly shares her experiences, techniques and knowledge with her audiences and participants. Mary is an excellent ambassador of the Kalamazoo arts community and has managed to connect our community with the larger arts community both nation- and worldwide. Mary's impact on the arts and community is long. At present, she has concurrent exhibitions at Michigan Technological University in Houghton, MI and the University of Michigan's University Hospital impacting diverse communities within our state.

Mary's influence on her peers is to be admired. She has created and organized exhibition opportunities for her peers at local, regional, and international venues. From 2002-04, she was the exhibition coordinator for a traveling group exhibition of her peers work, "Reflections of Superior", which was displayed at eight regional venues, and one international venue. On the heels of this accomplishment, she initiated and orchestrated the "East Meets West Print Exchange" where 120 woodblock prints were exhibited both in Tokyo, Japan, and Kalamazoo Michigan. A full-color catalog accompanied this exhibition as well. The entire project with all its administrative details were executed by Mary who embodied the term "grace under pressure" throughout the process. And with this enormous endeavor, Mary successfully provided a meaningful cultural exchange that all of the Japanese and American participants will long remember.

Mary works tirelessly to promote Moku Hanga printmaking in both the Kalamazoo area and in our nation at large. Her workshops and lectures are well attended due to her esteemed reputation. With her teaching, Mary pays it forward mentoring and nurturing, sharing her passion for her chosen medium with professionalism and gusto. She openly shares her techniques, and her enthusiasm shines through.

Having served as a teacher and mentor for a number of artist/printmakers, Mary has had a significant, positive impact on our printmaking community. One of her former students, Tamara Hirzel, has

gone on to become dedicated printmaker and teacher. Many of the students in the Print Studio at the Kalamazoo Institute of Arts have referred to her teachings and techniques, and apply them to their individual prints.

Mary inspired Vicki VanAmeyden, who nominated her for the Community Medal of Arts Award, to revive the Southwest Michigan Printmakers, which currently has a roster of over thirty, regional artist/printmakers. Her support of Mary's efforts is no small thing, and her commitment to our informal organization helps it to thrive. "Through her example, and with her help, was galvanized to take an active role and leadership position with this group. Mary inspires everyone in the group with her technical prowess and artistic vision, always submitting new works for our ongoing exhibitions."