

ELAINE O'NEIL

Textile Collage Artist

elaineoneil.com 919-624-1871

Artist Biography

For textile collage artist Elaine O'Neil, life is a collection of experiences that inspires her the way that breathing new life into found fabrics does.

Elaine's self-proclaimed "idyllic childhood," her love for her ancestors, and her desires to serve the simple joys in life are key elements of her art which focuses equally on personal narrative and local culture. Growing up on the family farm in rural Maine, Elaine and her older brother and younger sister spent their time among gardens, the greenhouse, chickens, and with a constant sound of the sewing machine. Elaine's fondest memories were learning to sew with her mother, a home economics teacher, and her beloved grandmother, the daughter of a lighthouse keeper in Maine. Today, this nostalgia is indeed its own lighthouse, keeping Elaine steadfast in her medium and constantly guiding her toward the heart of the stories she wants to tell.

Elaine attended college at the University of Wyoming and then later at the Philadelphia College of Textiles and Science. The new sceneries offered Elaine an exciting contrast to the seascapes of Maine, while the studies diversified her knowledge of fabric-making and sparked her interests in fabric design and pattern-making. Elaine enrolled in a summer internship program at Moss Tent of Camden, Maine which was down the street from O'Neil's, a restaurant where her sister worked which was then owned by Elaine's future husband Glenn. Elaine and Glenn met and fell in love and later married. Over the next 5 years, while raising their young sons, Elaine worked as a freelance designer building

gardens and furniture. She and her husband eventually moved to Chapel Hill and opened the restaurant, The Grill at Glen Lennox. Elaine painted the walls and slip-covered the chairs, leaving her mark on the restaurant's interior design. As the restaurant became a favorite local hub, Elaine was simultaneously flourishing in her work as a freelance designer and loving every minute of it.

Invited by her friend, a gallery owner in Maine, to create and exhibit five collaged fabric scenes of Maine, Elaine embarked on a first-time gallery experience that would inspire her future as an artist. When all five works sold on the show's opening night, Elaine thought "wow, I like this better than anything I've ever done" and, quickly inspired, she created scenes of Chapel Hill and exhibited them at the restaurant. The connection was clear. Illustrating special places resonated as emotional gold for Elaine who thought, "I do things in Maine and people connect with their place and now people in Chapel Hill connect to this work of this place, too." And so began the heartfelt fabric collages of the places that people love, and hence her Luv This Place® trademark was established. The local press recognized the popularity of Elaine's artwork which was diversifying in new ways from art on a local realtor's mailed postcards to illustrations for the popular *Goodnight Carolina* children's book. She soon discovered her art could also raise funds for causes she cared about, one of which is healthcare. Her annual Luv This Place® North Carolina Calendar which features images of her original artwork, generates funds from a portion of the sales to benefit the North Carolina Cancer Hospital. In 2019, the calendar celebrated its 10th year.

Elaine lives in Hillsborough, North Carolina with her husband Glenn and their dog Chico. They have three adult sons. She works in a studio on her property adjacent to her home.

Artist Statement

I create textile collage art of places and scenes that either have a personal meaning to me or a collective, special value to a community. Much of my work originates from subjects related to my ancestors and fond memories of my childhood in Maine, in addition to symbolic places and landmarks of my home state of North Carolina. The scenes I create are inspired to convey a sense of an idyllic and joyful life.

I begin each collage design with a simple sketch before layering the fabric which is either purchased or re-purposed or found. My fabric palette includes a variety of thickness, color, fibers, and sheen, offering a visual and tactile experience to accompany the emotional sensations and qualities that relate to the subject matter. I often stitch text to accompany the collage and use techniques such as hand dyeing, dye printing and hand painting to alter the fabrics adding dimensionality and richness of color. My subjects are very stylized, with whimsical characteristics found in the line quality, bright colors, and quirky angles meant to suggest movement and joy. I apply dense compositions, multi-point perspectives, and an interpretive scale of size, all of which point to the unique traits of our memories which are often skewed upon reflection, while also suggesting that the inanimate objects have a positive energy and are full of life. The moon, which has become an important signature in my work, is the last detail I add to almost all of my pieces. For me, it represents a connection to ancestors and to future family as we have all looked up to see that same moon and will continue to do so ; it's our shared view from the places where we live and love.

- Elaine O'Neil

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Artist CV

EDUCATION

Philadelphia College of Textiles and Science, Bachelor of Science in Textile Design, 1986.

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2019 North Carolina Cancer Hospital, solo show, Chapel Hill, North Carolina
- 2019 This and That, Featured Artist of 2nd Fridays, Carrboro, North Carolina
- 2019 Arts and Health Gallery, "Connecting Threads," Duke University Hospital, Durham, North Carolina
- 2019 Public space, solo exhibition during artist residency, Eagle Island, Maine
- 2019 Crook's Corner, "Annual Solo Show," Chapel Hill, North Carolina
- 2019 Chapel Hill Orange County Visitor's Bureau, "Outskirts," Chapel Hill, North Carolina
- 2019 Crook's Corner, "A New Season," Chapel Hill, North Carolina
- 2018 Crook's Corner, "Vittles," Chapel Hill, North Carolina
- 2017 Chapel Hill Orange County Visitor's Bureau, "Outskirts," Chapel Hill, North Carolina
- 2017 Crook's Corner, "A New Season," Chapel Hill, North Carolina
- 2016 Liquidambar Gallery, Featured Artist, Pittsboro, North Carolina

- 2016 Crook's Corner, "Vittles," Chapel Hill, North Carolina
- 2015 Theatre Art Galleries, "North Carolina: A Sense of Place," Highpoint, North Carolina
- 2015 FRANK Gallery, "CH NC 27514," Chapel Hill, North Carolina
- 2015 Hillsborough Arts Council, "Elaine O'Neil," Hillsborough, North Carolina
- 2013 FRANK Gallery, "Blues," curated show, Chapel Hill, North Carolina
- 2013 Seasons Downeast Designs, "LOVE. MAINE. SUMMER," Rockport, Maine
- 2012 Horace Williams House, "Elaine O'Neil's Chapel Hill," The Preservation Society of Chapel Hill, Juried Show, Chapel Hill, North Carolina

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2018 Horace Williams House, "Invitational and Members Show," Chapel Hill, North Carolina
- 2018 Frank Community Garden, "Holiday Show," Orange County Artists Guild Chapel Hill, North Carolina
- 2013 Center for Creative Leadership, "In Our Care," invitational show, Greensboro, North Carolina
- 2013 FRANK Gallery, "Animals: Forces of Nature," invitational show, Chapel Hill, North Carolina
- 2012 FRANK Gallery, "Member Spotlight," Chapel Hill, North Carolina
- 2012 Carrboro Branch Library, "Spiritual Places," juried group show, Carrboro, North Carolina
- 2011 FRANK Gallery, "Black and White," juried group show, Chapel Hill, North Carolina

ARTIST RESIDENCIES

- 2018 Artist Residency and show on Eagle Island, Maine
- 2017 Lake Roosevelt National Recreation Area, Kettle Falls, Washington

SELECT PUBLICATIONS OF ARTWORK

Road Trip Carolina. 2015. Book illustrations.

Goodnight Carolina. 2012. Book illustrations.

Grandma Elf's Letter Sweaters. 2011. Book illustrations.

Remembering Chapel Hill, the Twentieth Century As We Lived It. 2009. Book cover illustration.

City of Light, City of Dark. 2007. Book cover illustration.

Walter Magazine, May 2015. Magazine cover.

Carolina Alumni Review. March/April 2012. Magazine cover.

Chapel Hill Magazine's 2011 Visitors & Relocation Guide. 2011. Featured cover.

UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center Honor Roll, publication. 2010-2011.

Chapel Hill Magazine's 2010 Visitors & Relocation Guide. 2010.

"Annual Report." University of North Carolina at Asheville. 2005-2006.

"President's Report." Salem Academy and College. 2005.

SELECTED PRESS

"The Creatives." Chapel Hill Magazine. November 2016.

"Elaine O'Neil's Textile Art." Our State Magazine. July 28, 2014.

"Memories of a Maine Childhood." The Free Press. July 24, 2013.

"Love. Maine. Summer.' opens at Seasons Downeast." Penobscot Bay Pilot. July 31, 2013.

"Goodnight Carolina Brings Local Flavor to Classic Children's Book." Chapel Hill Weekly, July 5, 2012.

"O'Neil Gallery on Display at Cancer Hospital." Daily Tar Heel. February 1, 2011.

“Artist Stitches Places into Collages.” The News & Observer. February 5, 2011.

“Piece By Piece.” Our State Magazine. 2007.

"From Creating to Curating." The Chapel Hill News. April 5, 2006.

"A Feel For Art." The Chapel Hill News. May 8, 2005.

SELECTED PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

The Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minnesota

Yale New Haven Hospitals, New Haven, Connecticut

Maine General Medical Center, Augusta Maine

North Carolina Cancer Hospital, Chapel Hill, North Carolina

University of North Carolina Orthopedics, Chapel Hill, North Carolina

University of North Carolina Health Care System Hospital, Hillsborough, North Carolina

North Carolina Wesleyan College, Rocky Mount, North Carolina

Salem College, Winston Salem, North Carolina

UNC Asheville, Asheville, North Carolina

Kidzu Children’s Museum, Chapel Hill, North Carolina

Morehead Planetarium and Science Center, Chapel Hill, NC

411 West, Chapel Hill, North Carolina

Breakers, Palm Beach, Florida

Inn On The Creek, Jackson Hole, Wyoming

Chapel Hill Orange County Visitors Bureau, Chapel Hill, North Carolina

The Carolina Inn, Chapel Hill, North Carolina

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

The Orange County Artists Guild, Member

FRANK: Franklin Street Arts Collective, Founding Member, Board Member.

Collective of National Textile Artists, Member of Critique Group.

Craft Industry Alliance, Member.

Triangle Weavers Guild, Member.

Online portfolio available: elaineoneil.com