



# maker monday

We are so excited for all the good things that summer brings to SCAA! Our summer classes start today, and there is still time to [sign up](#) for many of our offerings if you haven't already. One of our favorite exhibitions of the year is on display too: our Members Annual, where every member is able to submit a piece. This year marks our 98th annual exhibition, juried by David Barnes. It's on display until July 12, so come on by the gallery and cool off from the summer sun. While you're here, why not take a moment to read about our newest featured artist?

Embrace the abstract with...  
**Janet Maher**





Janet has been an exhibiting member at SCAA since 2021, and even juried an exhibition for us when she first moved to the area. In addition, she is a member of ACGOW in Westerly, and one of the featured artists in the current exhibit there.

She is a Juried Artist Member at Wickford Art Association, a Signature Member at the National Collage Society, and the winner of numerous awards. Janet's work truly stands out as being unique, utilizing a mixture of different materials and media. You will want to take a look at all the wonderful things she has been working on! To see more, view her [website](#) and two Instagram accounts, [@circlegarden\\_Studio](#) and [@janetmaherart](#)



## Where are you from, and what do you make?

I'm originally from Connecticut, but also lived for large amounts of time in New Mexico and Maryland. I make lots of things (baking, gardening, crocheting, sewing, books, photography, I used to throw pottery and work in clay, used to write and perform music). Artwise—these days I mostly combine collage/or assemblage with drawing/or mixed media in various ways.



**How long have you been seriously pursuing art?**

Since the early '70s. My first national juried shows were in 1975/76. Drawing and lithography were my first artmaking obsessions.





### What inspires you to create?

Showing up in my studio, starting a visual problem for myself that I don't know how to solve and requires figuring out, often trying something I've never done before. This usually begins a series in which each piece looks intentionally different, though they began in similar ways with the same general components. I am always trying to keep things interesting for myself and hoping that others will also feel they can enter the works and engage with them.

### Which artist outside of your chosen medium has had the most impact on your art? What do they do and in what way do they influence you?

I have been fortunate to have worked with several great teachers and have been inspired by so many artists. Since graduate school, I have tried to work in ways that are not like anything I have already seen, using materials that are unique to me. My undergraduate teacher, the etcher and masterful painter, Anna Held Audette, was an enormous influence on my early art life. Her impeccable sense of composition stunned me. She created powerful objective abstractions by focusing on content that was not inherently beautiful, but by making it become so. Her color sense and complexity of spatial relationships were truly amazing. My graduate teacher, Garo Antreasian, who worked meticulously in hard-edge angular perfections, generously urged me to try anything that came into my head, not to edit myself prematurely.

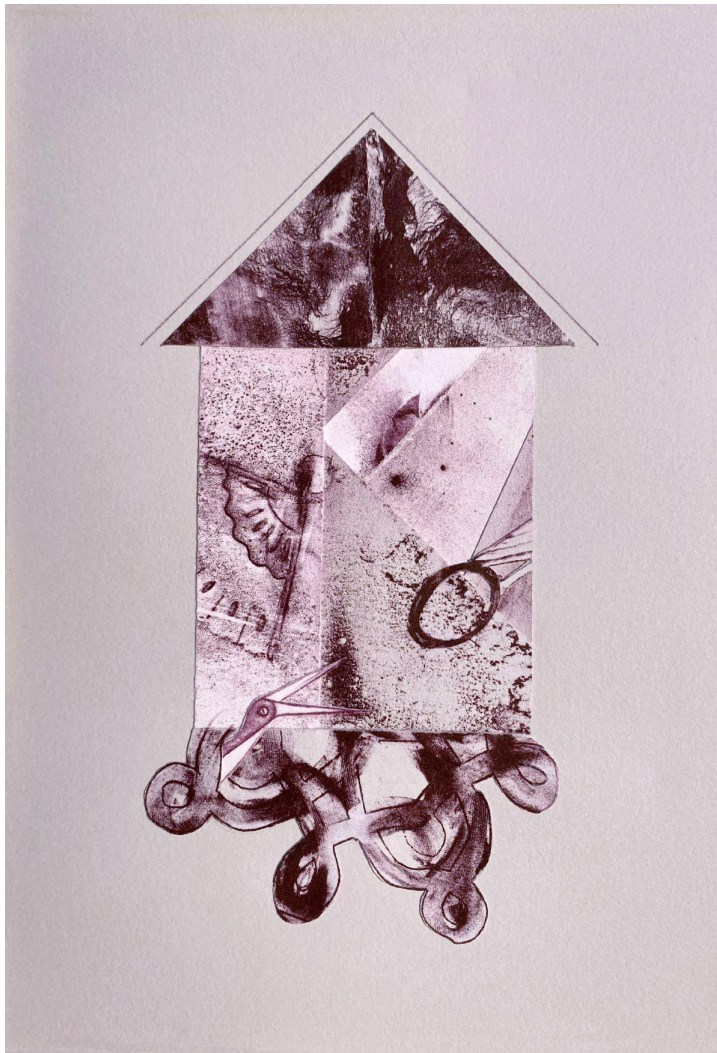
Their concepts still guide my work. I try to transform humble materials to the best of my ability, with an eye to strong composition, and proceed with whatever comes to mind. I work an idea until it finally gels, then take it as far as I can until it seems to run its course. Then a next idea emerges. There are always several ongoing series that I can delve back into as my mood shifts. What I produce each month is driven by what is holding my interest at the moment, in balance with all else that is going on in my small, and the larger, world.



**Is there a work of art that has changed your life or how you view the world in some way?**

Patti Smith's first album, *Horses*. At a time when women were not seen as potentially free or powerful, she showed an entirely other way to be in the world through her creative work. Her spirit emboldened me not to settle into the norm that was expected of me in my home town. I realized there was still so much to explore, learn about and work toward in the world and in myself—pretty much everything! That's when I headed to New Mexico.





**As a member of SCAA, what do you like most about us?**

Everyone at SCAA is a great individual, excellent at what they do, and together create a warm, welcoming feeling in a very professional-looking setting. You've created just the right balance between down-to-earth realness with high standards of quality.

**Tell us a joke.**

How many Zen Buddhists does it take to change a light bulb?

Three. One to change it, one to not-change it and one to both change and not-change it.

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If you would like to read about other featured artists, browse our [Maker Mondays blog](#).

[maker mondays blog](#)

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