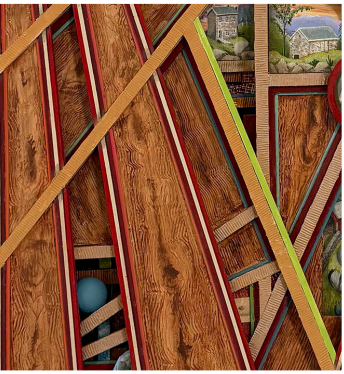
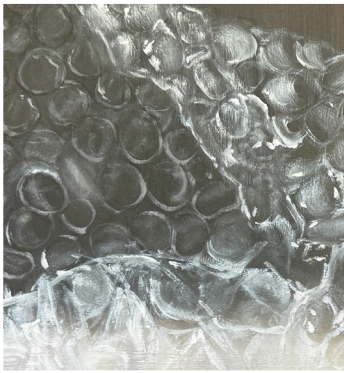
Perception
Deception







Chuck Fischer **Brian O'Leary** **Gene Underwood**

Hicks Art Center Gallery

November 21, 2026 – February 27, 2027

HICKS ART CENTER

BUCKS COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

www.hicksgallery.bucks.edu



Chuck Fischer
Self Portrait
Wood, acrylic, gesso on painted wood panel
12” diameter



Brian O’Leary
Self Portrait
Encaustic, oil on sheet metal
12” x 12”



Gene Underwood
A Lot on His Mind
Oil on panel
8” x 10”

Artists have long dealt in illusions and visual deceptions. Pliny tells the myth of a competition between Zeuxis and Parrhasius. Zeuxis created a painting of grapes so realistic birds tried to eat them. Then Zeuxis saw Parrhasius had put a curtain over the painting that he had made. So Zeuxis attempted to lift it, only to discover the curtain was the painting. Parrhasius was declared the winner, because he fooled a man, not just birds.

Why do artists use illusion?

Feelings, moods, memories, and ideas can’t be seen directly. Illusion—like realistic depth, dramatic lighting, or symbolic images—lets the artist give those inner experiences a visible form.

By creating the illusion of space, light, motion, or texture, the artist can focus your attention, guide what you notice first, and shape how you “read” the image. This helps communicate their personal viewpoint.

An illusion that looks convincing—or deliberately distorted—can affect the viewer emotionally, producing calm, tension, awe, or unease. The illusion isn’t just trickery; it’s a tool to invite you to feel what the artist feels.

We live in a three-dimensional, moving world, but a painting or construction is flat and still. Illusions of depth, perspective, and movement help the artist recreate how the world appears to them, including how it feels to be inside that space.

We hope you enjoy sharing in our perceptions and deceptions.

Chuck Fischer

chuckfischerstudio.com

Perception Deception

Bucks County is renowned for its distinctive stone houses and barns, which reflect the region's history and natural landscape. Built primarily from local fieldstone and native wood, their weathered surfaces and variations in color, texture and pattern have inspired this series of work.

The region's artists, architects, and craftspeople are also known for using natural materials, particularly live-edge wood, in their work. The knots, grain, and imperfections of the wood become part of each piece's character, and these qualities have informed my approach to this work as well.

Some elements of my abstract constructions are exactly what they appear to be while others are painted to deceive the eye. This interplay between reality and illusion plus primitive painted landscapes draws upon skills I have developed over four decades and reflects the through-line that connects the many phases of my creative career.



Live Edge Sculpture
Wood, canvas, aluminum, gesso, acrylic, metal wire
22" x 22" x 4"



Live Edge No. 2
Wood, aluminum, gesso, acrylic, gold leaf
52" x 36" x 3"

Chuck Fischer

chuckfischerstudio.com

Perception Deception



Live Edge Sculpture
Wood, canvas, aluminum, gesso, acrylic, metal wire
22” x 22” x 4”



Live Edge No. 1
Wood, canvas, aluminum, gesso, acrylic, metal wire
32” x 32” x 3”

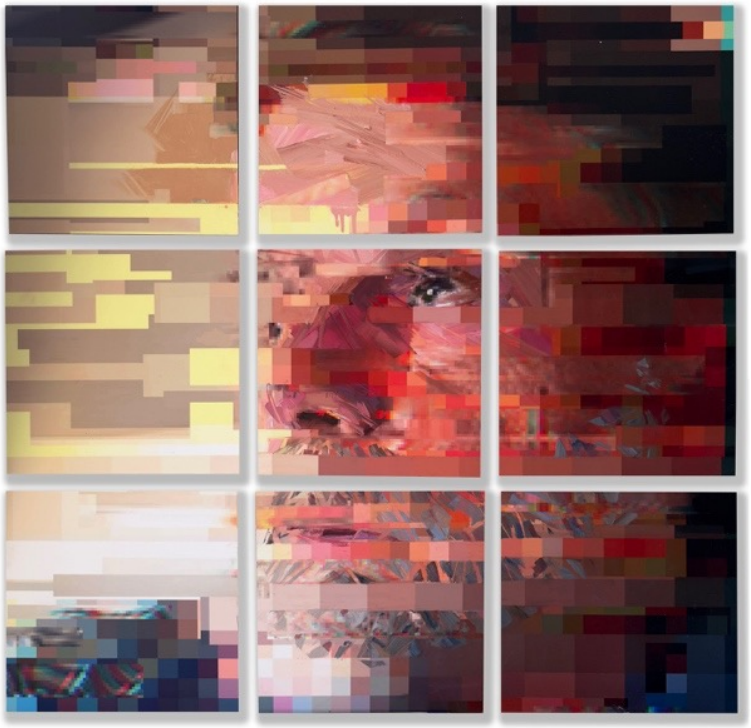
Brian O’Leary

brianolearyart.com

Perception Deception

My central curiosity lies in exploring the tension between mechanically or digitally rendered images and the handmade, organic, expressive, and gestural nature of painting.

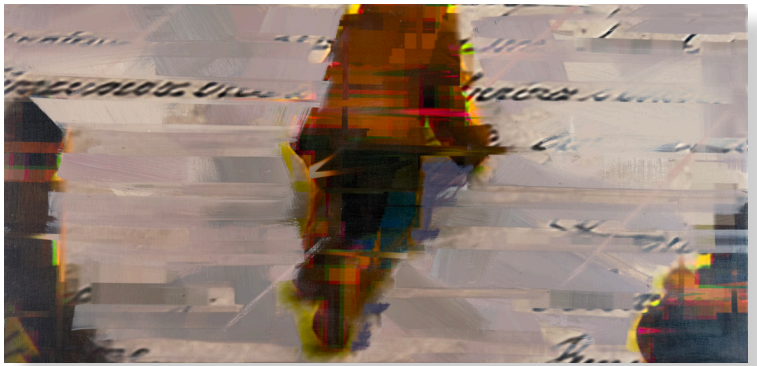
Since attending Mason Gross School of the Arts and working closely with my mentor, Michael Madigan, my work has evolved over the past three decades, exploring the space between the damaged or “glitched” photograph and an attempt to correct its distortions through the hand-painted stroke. Other works more intensively interpret the “evidence” presented by AI-generated imagery, often obscuring the subject matter.



Self
Dye sublimation print & oil on metal, nine panels
8” x 8” each







Agreement
Archival ink jet & oil on canvas, three panels
30” x 14.5” each

Brian O'Leary

brianolearyart.com

Perception Deception



Debate
Archival ink jet & oil on canvas
30" x 18"

Gene Underwood

geneunderwood.artspan.com

Perception Deception

I pursue the irony of rendering commonplace items in traditional oil paint. My subjects are rarely featured in still lifes—bubble wrap, Post-its, paper coffee cups, and Ziploc bags.

The paintings stop time and ask viewers to look more closely at the overlooked items around them. These paintings begin with looking and I'm hoping to show you how I see. Maybe viewers can find beauty there in the ingenuity and utility of these familiar objects. Looking deeper, perhaps they can acknowledge a bit of ecological anxiety in the way we use resources. When viewers encounter the portrait of a hand-painted machine-made object, they may reconsider how our lives look now. Convenience is king; does consequence come into consideration?

In these paintings of machine-made objects, two persons always hover. There is the artist who chose these particular things to paint, and the viewer processing personal feelings about what is shown to them.



Keeping Time
Oil on panel
12" x 16"



Protection and Threat
Oil on panel
16" x 20"

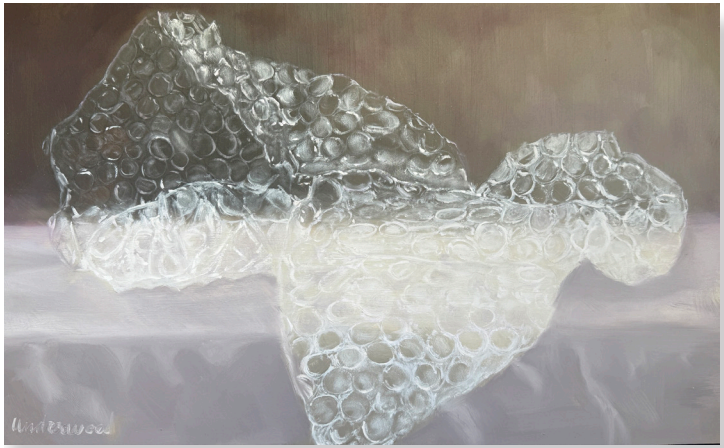
Gene Underwood

geneunderwood.artspan.com

Perception Deception



Bubble Double
Oil on panel
12” x 12”



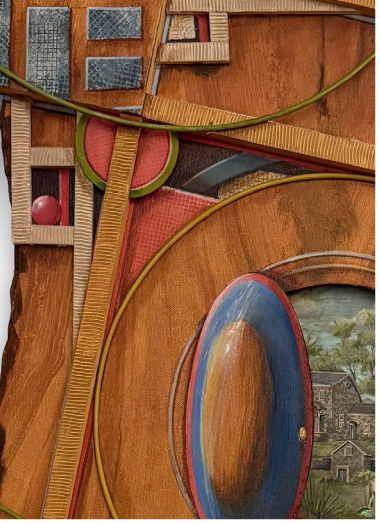
Unwrapping
Oil on panel
12” x 20”



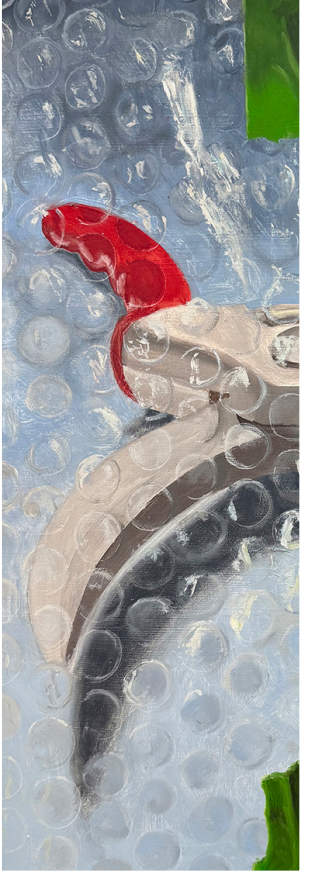
Foiled Kisses
Oil on panel
12” x 12”



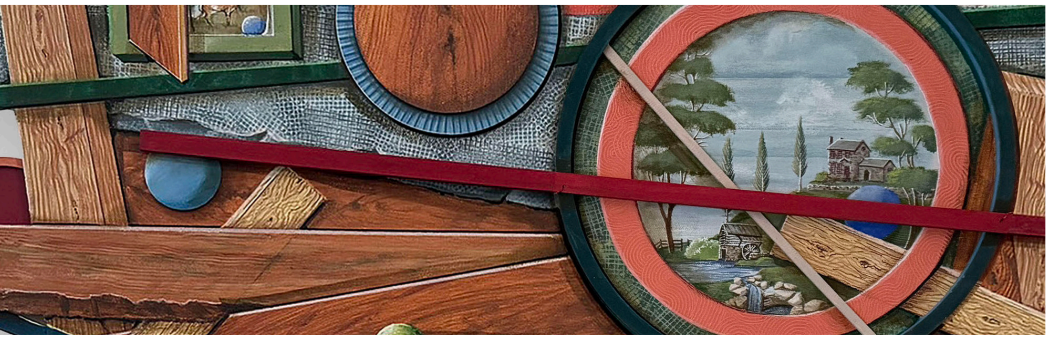
Cross Purposes
Oil on panel
16” x 16”












DUBBLE
BUBBLE

