



Tropical Essence Series, 2020.

**Michael M. Strueber** was born in 1945 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He grew up in western Pennsylvania and was formally educated at Clarion State University, where he received his B.S. in 1967. Afterwards, he pursued graduate work in education and fine arts (painting), earning the degrees of M. Ed. at Duquesne University and an M.A. at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. In addition, the artist undertook graduate studies at the University of Pittsburgh and Carnegie Mellon University.

Strueber has shown his work throughout Pennsylvania and has been featured in one-man shows at Penn State University, Saint Vincent College, and the University of Pittsburgh as well as Iowa State University in Iowa City, Iowa. He was also the first artist to be given an exhibition in the new gallery space at Fallingwater. At present, his paintings are held in over 400 private and public collections in 38 states. Most of the landscapes and still lifes in this exhibition are borrowed from the Allegheny Art Gallery in Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania.

In addition to his work as a painter, Strueber served for 24 years as Director of the Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art. Under his leadership, the Museum expanded to include four facilities serving six counties in southwestern and central Pennsylvania. Strueber has been active as a trustee of several charitable, cultural, and educational organizations, including the Colcom Foundation, Fallingwater, the Cordelia S. May Trust, Juniata College, and the Phipps Conservatory of Pittsburgh. He was also Founder and past Chairman of the Pennsylvania Rural Arts Alliance and Chair of the Department of Fine Arts at Saint Francis University. Currently, Strueber divides his time between Hollidaysburg and Naples, Florida.



Morning Mist, 2021.



Frozen Juniata, 2020.

## Artist's Statement

I would like to personally thank all those who have made the twenty-five-year survey of my paintings possible. In particular, I would like to acknowledge the special commitment made by friends, collectors and trustees.

Dr. V. Scott Dimond and Dr. Graziella Marchicelli, both former curators of SAMA, articulated the essence of my artistic vision in the essays each wrote related to the artistic intent of mine. I still marvel at their highly educated perspective of my oeuvre.

When I “retired” over twenty-five years ago, I did so to fully commit one of my careers to painting. Since that decision, I was able to transform a significant part of my artistic endeavors from an evening, nighttime and weekend process to one where I had unlimited time to observe, reflect, interpret and paint the environment in which I live. Most importantly, I could work each day in natural light spending as many as eight hours a day pursuing one of the loves of my life.

As well, recently, a portion of my still lifes and florals have been impacted by spending time in

Naples, Florida during the winter. Living part time in Naples has been like residing in a giant and magnificent botanical garden filled with exotic flora and fauna. While Pennsylvania will always dominate my artistic vision, the abundance of natural light, brilliant colors, and the profusion of plants and birds have been inspiring.

I am also delighted to exhibit a series of abstract and non-objective pieces which I have consistently pursued during many Januarys since chairing the Fine Arts Department and teaching drawing and painting decades ago at what is now Saint Francis University. The seven distinct and separate galleries at SAMA Bedford have afforded me the first opportunity to display these works alongside my other paintings.

To that end, I have chosen a series of works that have been inspired by the new millennium, paintings that were impacted by the music of Stravinsky's “The Firebird”, mixed media pieces influenced by a series of American quilts, a series of French reflections, and pieces reflecting pure abstractions.

Finally, at my age, it is humbling to look back at what has and continues to make my life worth living.

## Acknowledgment

**Sponsored by the board of trustees and the following special exhibition patrons**

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Hours:  
Wednesday through Sunday:  
12 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.  
Closed Mondays and Tuesdays  
Admission is free



 SOUTHERN ALLEGHENIES  
MUSEUM OF ART

Front: October Glory Series, 2021.



# Twenty-five Year Survey

**AN EXHIBITION OF PAINTINGS BY MICHAEL M. STRUEBER**



**SOUTHERN ALLEGHENIES MUSEUM OF ART AT BEDFORD**  
**JULY 29, 2022 - OCTOBER 9, 2022**



# A Reflection

BY V. SCOTT DIMOND, PH. D

An ancient metaphor for creative energy and spiritual immanence, the garden is perhaps the dominant theme in the art of Michael M. Strueber. From his own garden in Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania, to nature’s garden in the surrounding Allegheny Mountains, Strueber works actively both in black earth and on white paper. Spade and paintbrush are the same tool, for as the artist sees it, gardening and painting are a means of charting a personal path. Powerfully expressed in his watercolors, Strueber’s path begins with the local and tangible, and moves toward the transcendent.

Of great importance to Strueber is the role of place in defining self and its relationship to the world and the greater cosmos. In his still life paintings, the artist uses only flowers that he has grown on his own property. These reflect not only his personal choices as a gardener, but what the land and climate will support. The particular qualities of the soil, the time of year, and the individual character of the season (wet or dry, hot or cold) are all suggested in the flowers themselves, which apart from their aesthetic value, serve as a telling index of where and when they were painted. Thus, Strueber subtly testifies to his own rootedness in a particular place and time. As the artist himself will tell you, he is as much a product of the western Pennsylvania soil as the flowers he portrays.

The same observations may be made of Strueber’s landscapes. Paralleling his work as a gardener, Strueber feels the necessity of getting close to the land when he depicts the Allegheny forests. Despite the large size of his landscape watercolors, each is painstakingly executed on location, even in the depths of winter. This practice enables the artist not only to absorb the visual character of his subject, but to immerse himself in its essence. Working slowly for as many as eight hours at a time, Strueber

uses all of his senses to arrive at an understanding of nature and his own connection to it. Nature neither dominates nor submits in Strueber’s landscapes; it is not the thunderously alien spectacle of the Hudson River School, nor is it tempered and tamed through the presence of man’s alterations. Anonymous, yet not insignificant, mysterious, yet unthreatening, Strueber’s woodland scenes display the artist’s deeply felt connection to the earth, trees, and sky of western Pennsylvania. His paintings reflect the boyhood sense of discovery upon entering a new clearing or crossing a new stream, yet there is a sense of quiet familiarity born of long experience with such scenes. As in his own garden, Strueber affirms his place in the larger garden of nature. He participates in the act of creation as both gardener and painter, and in so doing, he addresses spiritual issues touching on self-realization and the relationship between created and Creator.

Strueber’s still lifes are in some ways portraits of metaphysical states. While the depicted flowers locate his physical being in western Pennsylvania, their fragile and evanescent appearance points to immaterial things. Strueber is explicit about the spiritual meaning of arrangements such as *A Bouquet for C*, in which white flowers represent the ineffable beauty of the human soul. Moving beyond earthly boundaries, *A Bouquet for C* is a tribute to the highest and most lovely qualities of a person who the artist greatly admired. Yet the painting is more than a simple symbolic gesture. Strueber’s flowers are, as have been mentioned, a reflection of his own identity. In this light, *A Bouquet for C* asserts a complex spiritual reciprocity in which the attributes of C are acknowledged and celebrated within the artist’s own higher self. They are yearned for virtues which, ultimately, may be said to be divine.

The landscapes also encompass a distinct spiritual dimension. On one hand, Strueber recognizes their place within the broad tradition of transcendentalism in American landscape painting. Like the nineteenth-century nature poet, William Cullen Bryant, Strueber sees groves of trees as “God’s first temples,” holy places where man may commune with his Maker. On the other hand, there is a subtle narrative of spirituality woven into the paintings’ very fabric. The underlying paper is perhaps the most significant element and is regarded by the artist as sacred. Brilliant white and without form or image, the paper itself is suggestive of divine creative potential, and at the moment the first brushstroke appears on its surface (so the artist declares), “a new life begins for me.” In the presence of nature, itself an avatar of the divine, Strueber co-creates, weaving a complex tapestry of color and texture through which the white paper, a reminder of spiritual immanence, shines in passages of shimmering light.

In the Biblical Garden of Eden, Man lived in perfect harmony with nature. The echo of Eden reverberates through Michael M. Strueber’s work, expressing the fundamental connection of all created things, and their universal source in the Master Creator. Like Adam, Strueber diligently tends the Garden, and in his paintings, he suggests that we have not necessarily been cast out of paradise.



A Bouquet for C, 2005.

# Catalogue

A Bouquet for C, n. d.  
Watercolor on paper, 41.25 x 29.625 in  
Collection of the Southern Alleghenies  
Museum of Art

Abstract Evolution Series, 2017  
Watercolor on paper, 39 x 51 inches  
Collection of Mrs. Deborah DeGol

American Wildflower Series V, 2006  
Watercolor on paper, 36 x 47 inches  
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Lee Hite

Asian Symbols, 2010  
Watercolor on paper, 31 x 37 inches  
Collection of Mrs. Deborah DeGol

Canadian Birch Series IV, 2010  
Watercolor on paper, 40.5 x 50.5 inches  
Collection of the Phipps Conservatory

Chinese Peonies, 2010  
Watercolor on paper, 34 x 37 inches  
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. James Reber

Doldrum Series XXI, 2008  
Watercolor on paper, 47 x 36 inches  
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Martin Kooman

Ed O’Brien Memorial, n. d.  
Watercolor on paper, 47 x 36 inches  
Collection of Southern Alleghenies  
Museum of Art, Gift of Mr. and Mrs.  
Michael M. Strueber

French Reflection Series, 2018  
Mixed media on paper, 32 x 40 inches  
Collection of Mr. James Cayce and Mr.  
Thomas Dosh

French Reflection Series, 2018  
Mixed media on paper, 32 x 40 inches  
Collection of Mr. James Cayce and Mr.  
Thomas Dosh

October Glory Series, 2010  
Watercolor on paper, 47 x 36 inches  
Collection of Attorney and Mrs. David  
Andrews

Positive I. D., 2012  
Mixed media on paper, 32 x 40 inches  
Collection of Ms. Kerrie Kinzle

Spatial Abstract Triptych, n. d.  
Watercolor on paper, 30 x 80 inches  
Collection of Mrs. Chantel Ventura

The Imperial Lotus, 2004  
Watercolor on paper, 47 x 36 inches  
Juniata College Collection

The Little Juniata III, 2003  
Watercolor on paper, 36 x 47 inches  
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Earnest  
Ebersole

Trout Unlimited Series, 1999  
Watercolor on paper, 36 x 47 inches  
Collection of the Colcom Foundation

Winter Solstice, 2007  
Watercolor on paper, 30 x 40 inches  
Collection of Mrs. Christa Brenner

## Courtesy of Allegheny Art Gallery

A Bouquet for M, 2021  
Watercolor on paper, 36 x 47 inches

A Linear Still Life, 2022  
Watercolor on paper, 48 x 32 inches

A Natural Celebration, 2020  
Watercolor on paper, 36 x 47 inches

A Natural Harmony, 2020  
Watercolor on paper, 30 x 38 inches

A Special Occasion, 2019  
Watercolor on paper, 30 x 38 inches

Altoona Overview, 2022  
Watercolor on paper, 40 x 33 inches

American Jazz Inspirations, 2014  
Watercolor on paper, 30 x 38 inches

American Jazz Inspirations, 2014  
Watercolor on paper, 30 x 38 inches

American Quilt Composition Series, 2016  
Mixed media on paper, 30 x 38 inches

American Quilt Composition Series, 2016  
Mixed media on paper, 30 x 38 inches

Arizona Memories, 1998  
Mixed media on paper, 32 x 40 inches

Arizona Memories, 1998  
Mixed media on paper, 32 x 40 inches

Between Black and White, 2019  
Watercolor on paper, 30 x 38 inches

Between the Colors of Pink, 2014  
Watercolor on paper, 30 x 38 inches

Cresson Lake, 2020  
Watercolor on paper, 36 x 30 inches

Doldrums Series, 2019  
Watercolor on paper, 38 x 22 inches

Doldrums Series, 2019  
Watercolor on paper, 38 x 22 inches

Dragon Designs, 2018  
Watercolor on paper, 30 x 38 inches

Finds and Flowers, 2022  
Watercolor on paper, 36 x 47 inches

Floral Essence, 2022  
Watercolor on paper, 30 x 38 inches

Framed Flowers, 2018  
Watercolor on paper, 30 x 38 inches

French Reflections Series, 2017  
Mixed media on paper, 32 x 40 inches

French Reflections Series, 2018  
Mixed media on paper, 32 x 40 inches

French Reflections Series, 2017  
Mixed media on paper, 32 x 40 inches

Frozen Juniata, 2020  
Watercolor on paper, 27 x 30 inches

Millenium Series, 2000  
Watercolor on paper, 38 x 51 inches

Millenium Series, 2001  
Watercolor on paper, 39 x 51 inches

Molecular Movements, 2021  
Watercolor on paper, 40 x 30 inches

Molecular Movements, 2021  
Watercolor on paper, 40 x 30 inches

Morning Mist, 2021  
Watercolor on paper, 54 x 40 inches

Oak Knoll Series, 2018  
Pencil on paper, 30 x 24 inches

Oak Knoll Series, 2017  
Pencil on paper, 27 x 27 inches

October Glory Series, 2021  
Watercolor on paper, 36 x 44 inches



Stravinski’s Firebird Series, 2018.

Paradise Series, 2022  
Watercolor on paper, 14 x 17 inches

Paradise Series, 2022  
Watercolor on paper, 14 x 17 inches

Paradise Series, 2022  
Watercolor on paper, 14 x 17 inches

Pieced Symbol Series, 2015  
Mixed media on paper, 28 x 22 inches

Pieced Symbol Series, 2015  
Mixed media on paper, 28 x 22 inches

Pieced Symbol Series, 2015  
Mixed media on paper, 28 x 22 inches

Pieced Symbol Series, 2015  
Mixed media on paper, 28 x 22 inches

Sogetsu Ikebana Series, 2017  
Watercolor on paper, 30 x 38 inches

Sogetsu Ikebana Series, 2017  
Watercolor on paper, 30 x 38 inches

Sogetsu Ikebana Series, 2017  
Watercolor on paper, 30 x 38 inches

Southern Magnolias, 2017  
Pencil on paper, 27 x 27 inches

Spatial Attribute Series, 2019  
Watercolor on paper, 30 x 38 inches

Spatial Attribute Series, 2019  
Watercolor on paper, 30 x 38 inches



American Quilt Composition Series, 2016.

Spatial Attribute Series, 2019  
Watercolor on paper, 30 x 38 inches

Spring Sensations, 2021  
Watercolor on paper, 36 x 30 inches

Stravinski's Firebird Series, 2018  
Watercolor on paper, 30 x 38 inches

Stravinski's Firebird Series, 2018  
Watercolor on paper, 30 x 38 inches

Summit Series, 2000  
Watercolor on paper, 34 x 38 inches

Sun Symbols, 2014  
Watercolor on paper, 30 x 38 inches



Altoona Overview, 2022.

The Gloves of Foxes, 2017  
Pencil on paper, 27 x 34 inches

The West Loop, 2020  
Watercolor on paper, 38 x 30 in

Tropical Essence Series, 2020  
Watercolor on paper, 36 x 47 in

Tropical Essence Series, 2019  
Watercolor on paper, 36 x 47 in

Tropical Essence Series, 2017  
Watercolor on paper, 36 x 47 in

Tropical Excellence, 2022  
Watercolor on paper, 38 x 30 in

Trout Unlimited Series, 2019  
Watercolor on paper, 51 x 40 in

Valley View, 2020  
Watercolor on paper, 36 x 30 inches

Western PA Series, 2019  
Watercolor on paper, 51 x 40 inches

Western PA Series, 2021  
Watercolor on paper, 37 x 48 inches

Western PA Series, 2018  
Watercolor on paper, 48 x 40 inches

Western PA Series, 2019  
Watercolor on paper, 51 x 39 inches

Western PA Series, 2014  
Watercolor on paper, 51 x 39 inches