



# Christine Eggert

## FROM ART THERAPY TO CREATING

By Julia Jaegersberg

Last fall, Wauwatosa artist Christine Eggert's beautiful booth attracted my attention with its whimsical, colorful creations at Mount Mary University's Starving Artists' Show. I just had to step inside where I selected a sweet piece for myself. Then I met Christine and her family who were assisting her that day. I now have the privilege of sharing her story with you.

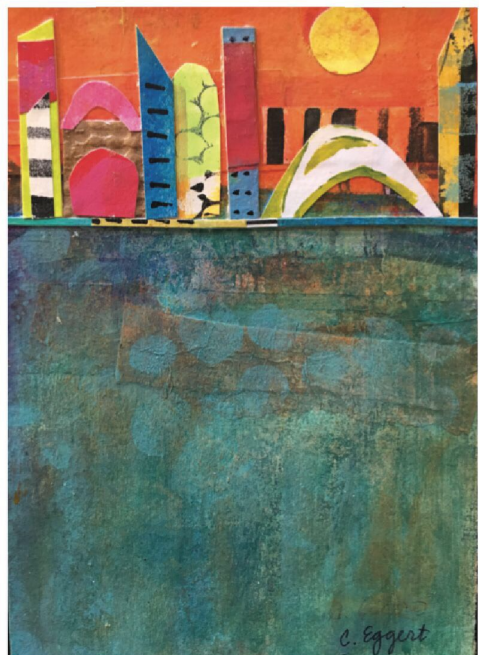
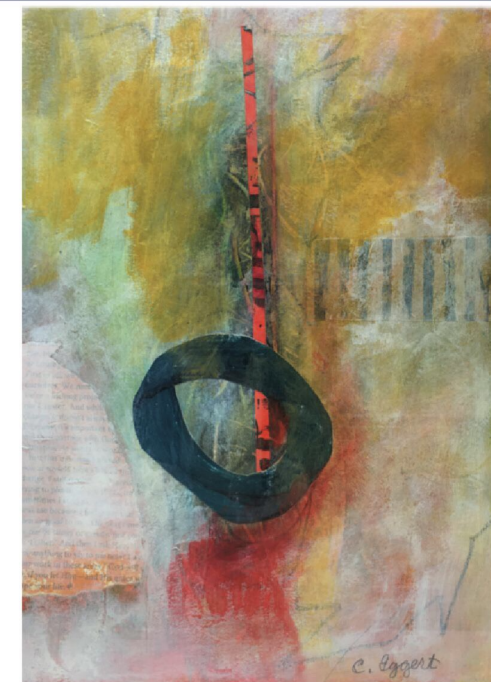
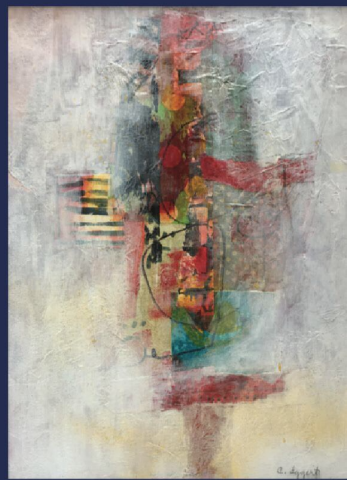
After the Mount Mary show was a memory, I sat down in Christine's sunny Montage Art Studio 121 in Wauwatosa and learned how she came to be displaying her art that day. She was originally from West Allis and later raised her family in New Berlin. Christine has loved art her entire life – although she didn't make it a career focus until her children were in school. "At age 38, I started college at Mount Mary initially with a general art focus. I wandered into the fashion design program, having a desire to create childrens clothing," explains Christine. "Not

feeling satisfied on this path, I went on to discover art therapy, eventually earning my master's degree."

After graduation and not finding employment in her field, Christine worked at The Cutting Table, a fabric shop in Bay View. "Best job ever!" she exclaims. "I loved being around color and creative people. In that position, I developed the store's curriculum and taught kids how to sew."

### Helping patients through art therapy

Then she received a call from (then) Milwaukee Psychiatric Hospital with an offer to work as an art therapist in its day treatment program – a position where she could use all her skills working with groups and one-on-one with patients. At the same time, she also trained to become a substance abuse counselor and licensed marriage and family therapist so she could help her patients even more.



After Aurora Health Care bought the hospital, Christine transferred to the in-patient unit using art therapy with patients struggling with detoxification, alcohol abuse and mental-health issues.

### Teaching art from a studio

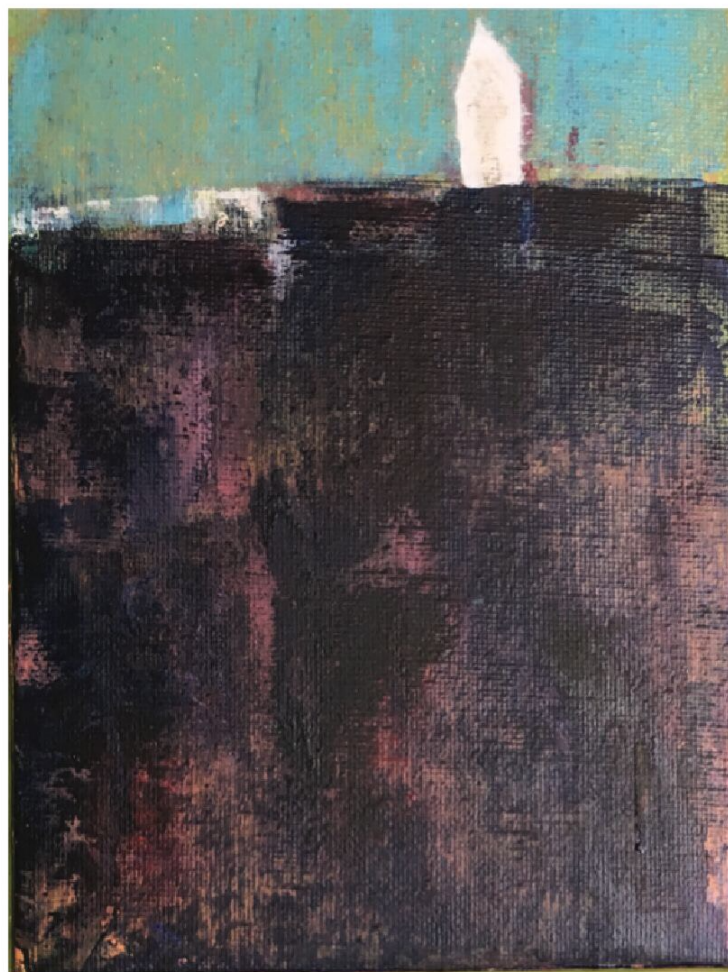
In 2012, Christine retired from her position at Aurora and started teaching art to home-schooled children. In 2017, she decided to open her own art studio, with summer camps for kids. "My studio's mission is to help students gain confidence as they work through the creative process," she explains. "My children

helped me with social media, and to create fliers and yard signs to promote the classes."

Over the winter, Christine switched her focus to teaching adults, where her students replicated famous artists' styles, which took her back to her art therapy roots. "Using a variety of art materials encourages self-expression," she notes, "allowing their inner artists to shine. One thing that's important to me is giving my students confidence – so they leave the class feeling good."

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Confidence often holds people back from exploring their talents. I love to see my adult students springboard to create other art as a result of my classes."

### **Creating little landscapes**

The quest to create her own art began 10 years ago. "I started with an acrylic painting class at the Cedarburg Cultural Center," explains Christine. "We started with abstract art, which can be hard to teach and understand. Then six years ago, I started painting and stamping papers, which I incorporate into my collages."

Christine starts her collages with paint, layering the paint for texture and depth – then adds the pieces of paper (she especially



likes to use deli paper). She usually creates 5x7 abstract collages that she calls little landscapes.

### **Preparing for her first art show**

After being accepted into the Mount Mary show, Christine worked hard to get ready. Her daughter built her website and her son built her booth with screens to hang her art – which let her focus on creating. "It's scary putting yourself out there," she admitted. "Will they like my art? Accept it into the show?"

In addition to the collages, she also created larger abstract paintings, along with batik pillows and mini journals. Her vibrant series of skyline collages were especially well-received. "I was surprised at how much art I sold at my first show and hearing people's kind comments," she notes. "When someone buys my art, it's very affirming. When I'm creating, I'm alone without a sounding board. But when a total stranger loves it, I am humbled by it."

Christine says, "It's so relaxing to create art. It's freeing, exciting and joyful. You don't know the end result. Each piece is a happy accident. The magic of art is that you can't always plan – you just use your intuition, relax and enjoy. We all need outlets because we live in a stressful world. We need to rejuvenate our souls."

Christine was recently accepted as a new artist to the Art in the Burg art show, to be held March 9, 2019, at Cedarburg High School Field House. Learn more about her art online at Instagram: [montage\\_art\\_studio](#) or Web: [montagestudio121.com](#).

