



Mary Mabry's "Pink Peonies with Blue and White"
Oil on canvas • 30" x 24"

by Polly McGrory

Last summer, shortly after we moved to Waldoboro, I was out in the yard trying to make sense of the disastrous state of the gardens. The few recognizable plants looked anemic, and the weeds were clearly winning the battle for space. Bugs had drilled holes in every available leaf, and hideous hordes of army worms had blanketed what was left of a circle garden with a demolished young tree.

What a godawful mess, I thought. A few ragged day lilies lingered here and there, and an overgrown rosebush was crushing the border fence with its thorny tentacles. All I could do at this stage of the season was to clean up the junky stuff and wait till next spring to introduce some worthy new plants.

I stood there by the gate, dismayed at the memory of the lush gardens I'd left at our old house in Warren. I heard a voice say "Good morning," and I looked up to see a pretty silver-haired woman strolling down the hill with a huge black dog. "Looks like you've got your work cut out for you," she said with a grin.

The black dog came right over to me to be patted, and I took a tiny dog treat out of my pocket and handed it to him. He took it ever so gently.

"What a perfect gentleman," I said. "What's his name?"

"He's Tristan, an English Shepherd and I'm Mary, an artist," she said. Another kindred spirit! This neighborhood was shaping up to be fantastic! Friendly people, well-kept homes, pretty gardens, close to everything. And I suspect there was a law making it mandatory to own a dog and walk down our street.

We had Mary and her husband Eric over for coffee and my homemade Wild Maine Blueberry Muffins. We chatted about the local art scene, and how Waldoboro's handful of galleries struggled to get the word out about the seasonal Saturday Art Walks. Together we came up with some good ideas, and I went to work creating newspaper ads and press releases. Mary was always the first one to sign up, and pretty soon, we had 5 regular customers for some saucy ads in the Lincoln County News. Christine, the arts editor, was always happy to run press releases for us.

One of our brainstormers was to have Mary lend us one of her paintings to hang in our gallery. Her studio is at the end of the Art Walk map, and she mentioned that she would like to see more traffic come her way. So I thought having a second venue for her might bring more gallery goers up to her place. And it certainly wouldn't hurt us to have a gorgeous original Mabry gracing one of our display easels. When I suggested it, Mary said, "Great! So how about some tomatoes from the garden as a reward?"

Works for me!!

Mary and I have very different painting styles, but we share a passionate appreciation of art. She has a definite touch of the Impressionist sense of color and paint strokes. Probably the most obvious quality in her work is the brilliant sense of light. And she *loves* painting flowers.



Mary Mabry's "Peonies in Blue Glass" • 30" x 40"
This one has gone down to Renjeau Gallery in Boston. Mary's paintings have been shown in New York's Salmagundi Club, Pastel Society of America, Women Artists of the West, Oil Painters of America, American Artists' Professional League, and many others.

Naturally, her stuff reminds me of Monet at Giverny, since he was also a devoted and knowledgeable gardener. Like his phenomenal estate, Mary's property is covered with blooming colors — roses, peonies, irises, and countless others I've never heard of — plus impressive stepped rows of huge vegetable boxes built by Eric. Chest-high fragrant basil plants, overloaded tomato vines, ruffled kale leaves the size of elephant ears, dark pine-needle green Swiss chard.

I stopped by to give her a couple of small posters for her studio and to pick up her painting for our gallery. She said she was grateful for all of our help.

I said, "Happy do do it, Mary. Just pay me in tomatoes." 

Work in Progress



Thanks again to Anne and Tom for allowing me to work from their great photo of Dick's Pub in Dingle, Ireland. I'm about 75% done at this stage. The rows of bottles on the shelves took forever to paint!!

TRISTAN



and his favorite treat



TOMATO SEASON

This recipe is a snap to make — about 6 minutes prep time. It's best to make this in morning, or at least a few hours before serving, to let flavors blend in fridge. Take it out an hour before dinner to serve at room temperature. Serves 2



Polly's Basilly Cherry Tomatoes

INGREDIENTS

- 12 cherry tomatoes
- 3 or 4 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1 Tablespoon basil-infused oil
- 1 teaspoon white balsamic vinegar
- 10-12 basil leaves, finely chopped
- Salt, coarsely ground black pepper
- White pepper
- Dash each of dried oregano and crushed rosemary

DIRECTIONS

1. Wash tomatoes in lukewarm water and dry on a paper towel.
2. Slice each tomato in half length wise and place in mixing bowl.
3. Add oil, vinegar, basil leaves, salt, both peppers and herbs.
4. Gently mix to coat all tomatoes.
5. Cover bowl and refrigerate. Take out an hour before dinner serve at room temperature.



The BIG SWITCH

Wolfgang, the other half of McGrory and Wolf Gallery, is also a Mary Mabry fan. He has signed up to take lessons with her this fall.

Wolf has spent the last couple of years painting in acrylics, but recently decided that he wanted to switch to oils. He likes the look of them —the brilliance, and even the aroma. And the traditional use of oils in great masterpieces through the centuries appeals to him.

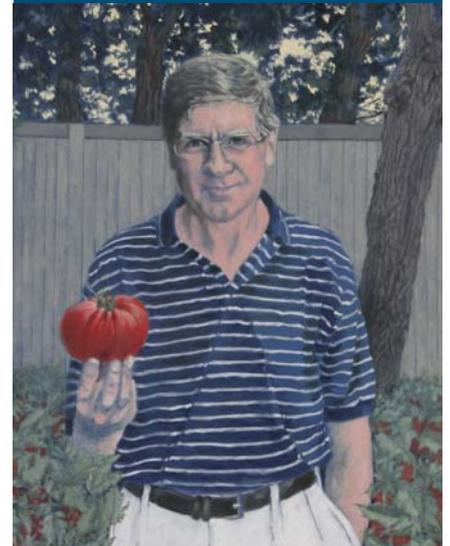
“The problem is that I really don't know anything about how to use them,” he said. “So I want to learn the basics from an expert.”

Mary will be starting up group lessons soon, so anyone who is interested in joining a group can see more of Mary's work and contact her through her website marymabry.com, or email her at mabrymary1@gmail.com



“You can never be too rich or too thin or have too much basil.”
F. Scott Fitzgerald

Tom's Tomato



TOM AND ANNE are experts on growing tomatoes. And every year, they like to send me photographic evidence of their superior skills. Last year, in a brilliant stroke of one-upmanship, I did a dazzling portrait of Tom and his robust tomato from his photo. I think he said he was going to hang it in his office, so all of his co-workers would be jealous.

The GALLERY GROUP

- ★ Heywood Gallery
- ★ Long Winter Soap Company
- ★ Mary Mabry Studio
- ★ McGrory & Wolf Gallery
- ★ Medomak Arts Project
- ★ Philippe Guillerm Gallery
- ★ Pinky Larue
- ★ Roberta Goschke
- ★ Sara Hotchkiss
- ★ Tidemark Gallery
- ★ Valerie Greene Studio
- ★ Waldo Theatre
- ★ Waldoboro Historical Society
and don't forget to grab a bite to eat at
- ★ Narrows Tavern

GALLERY HOURS
 WED through SAT
 Noon to 4p.m.
 or by appointment.
 Call 790-7003

ArtWalkWaldoboro.com ★ Saturday, September 8 ★ 4-7p.m.

