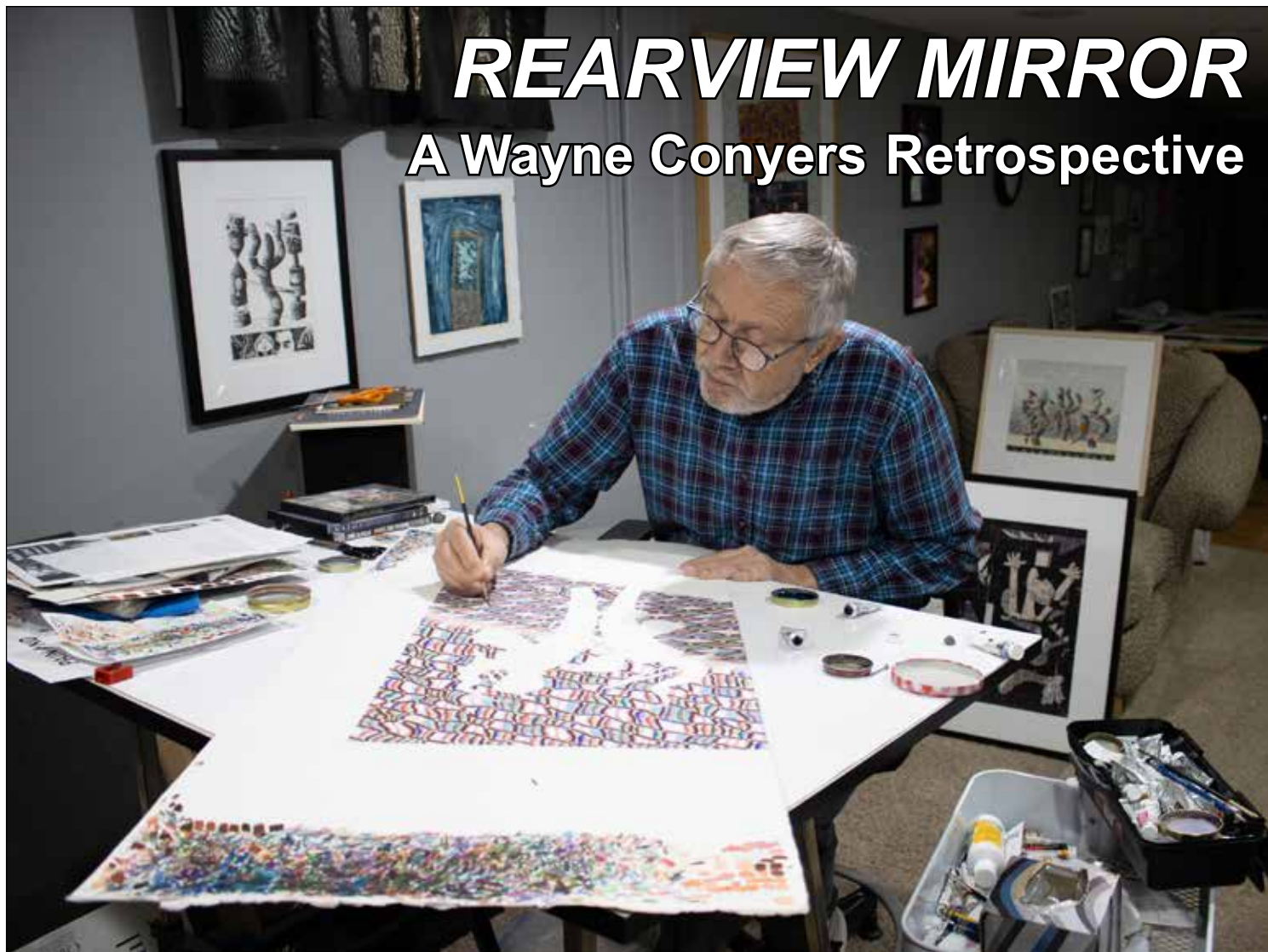


# REARVIEW MIRROR

## A Wayne Conyers Retrospective



Wayne Conyers has been pushing the boundaries of watercolor for...gosh, a long time. His commitment to the medium, along with drawing and ceramics, has elevated art in this region and served as a model for my own artistic journey. He has been a tireless maker, educator, and arts proponent and I think it's high time that he has a career retrospective – even though I sense he's not nearly finished creating. All of us involved with the Sandzén Gallery are very honored to host this exhibition and sincerely appreciate Wayne's efforts to pull everything together.

I believe I had my first glance of Wayne's watercolors when I was a student at Fort Hays State University in the early 1990s. That glance quickly turned into appreciation and amazement at the depth and intricacies of his work. The patterning is spellbinding and the focal points draw one into the compositional story. I am often trying to figure out what in the world is going on in his paintings. Usually it's something strongly intellectual and serious, but also humorous and quirky.

**Birger Sandzén  
Memorial Gallery  
Lindsborg, Kansas**

**January 26  
through  
April 20, 2025**

I've also had the chance to jury exhibitions with Wayne and appreciate the professionalism he brought to the process. We didn't always agree on award winners, but were able to work together, compromise to meet each other's high standards, and have fun.

Finally, as you engage with the show, I encourage you to slow down, look carefully, and let it all seep in. There is a lot to digest.

- Ron Michael, Sandzén Gallery Director

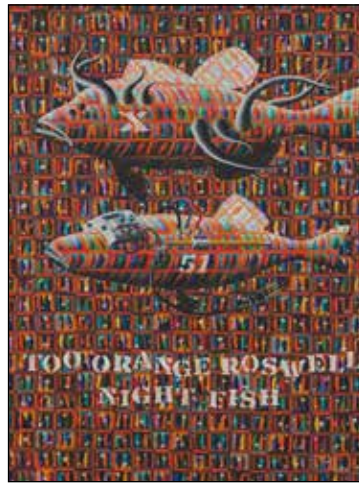


*Tandem Free Falling, 2022-23, watercolor,  
30 x 20 in.*





*Life Force with Mondrian Tattoo*, 1998, watercolor, 28 x 22 inches



*Too Orange Roswell Night Fish*, 2004-05, watercolor, 30 x 22 inches



*Warhol Almost Got It Right*, 2008, watercolor, 30 x 22 inches



*Dining in Tokyo: the Other Red Meat*, 2010, watercolor, 20 x 13 inches

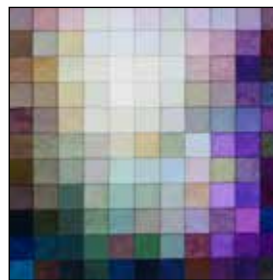
I have been an artist my entire life either as a student, an art educator, or both. I retired after 45 years of teaching, 35 of those years at McPherson College. My earned degrees include a B.A. in art education (Bethany College), M.A. in painting (University of Missouri—Kansas City) and M.F.A. in painting (Fort Hays State University).

This exhibition documents my aesthetic journey beginning in 1980. Looking back, that is the year that I first started developing my personal “style” of tightly controlled watercolor paintings. Pencil and ink drawings gave way to watercolor paintings which progressively increased in detail and took increasingly longer to create. Many pieces here took months to develop, others a year or two. How long it takes to produce my work is not important to me. I find no sacred value in working quickly. My high school teaching career at Baldwin, Kansas, followed by teaching numerous art courses at McPherson College consumed the majority of my time, which included evenings and way too many weekends. Finding the time to produce my artwork proved to be a challenge. Quite often,



*Can Anyone Up There See What's Beyond the Sky*, 2009-11, watercolor, 42 x 15 inches

I found myself working for just 10-15 minutes. I cherished those times that I could draw, paint, and work with clay for at least 2 hours. That changed drastically upon retirement.



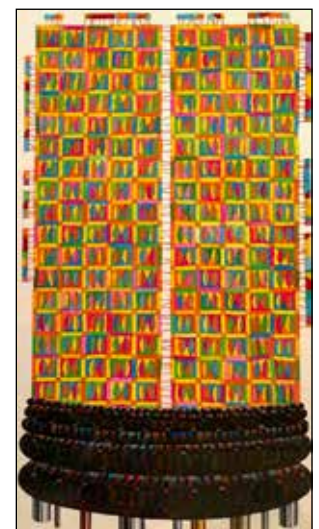
*Quantum Chromodynamic Fluctuation #1*, 2009, watercolor, 13 x 13 inches



*Every Attempt to Separate Exotic Energy From Dark Matter Will Always Result in Two Anomalies*, 2013, watercolor, 11 x 10 inches

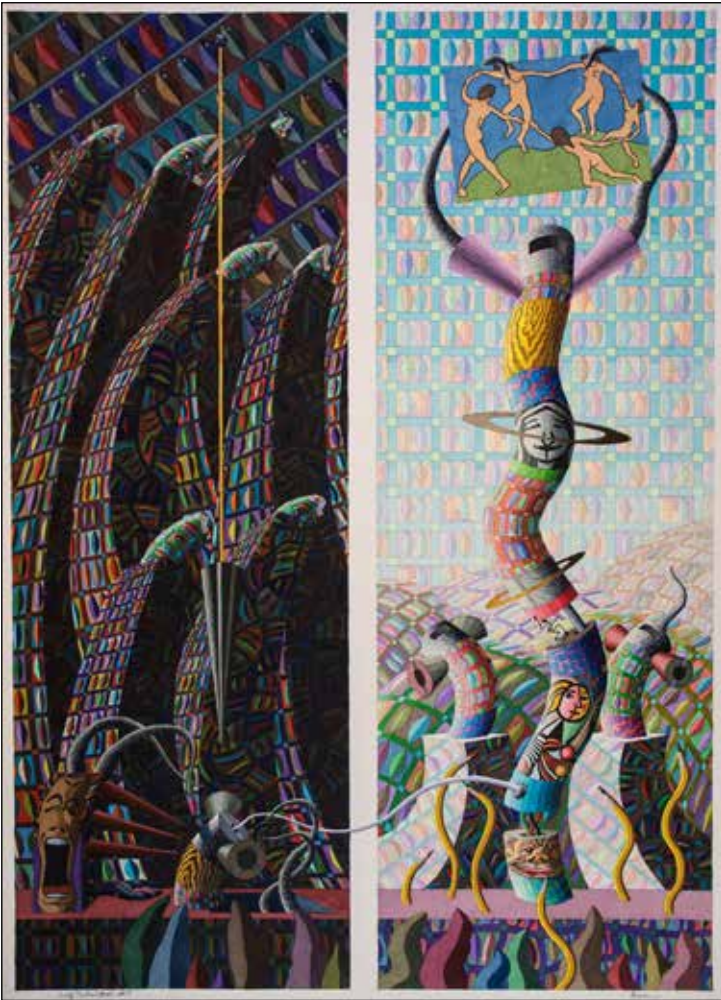
As I searched for my artistic voice while I began to teach, I worked with a wide variety of media. So why did watercolor eventually become my primary medium of choice? I loved the process of layering watercolor paint. Most colors would begin as light values that, more often than not, would be adjusted darker and/or more intense. I found watercolors easy to transport with little time needed to set up and without requiring large spaces for me to work. But mainly, I was not able to produce the images I desired in any other medium.

All paintings begin with a concept, and they all have a story to tell. Personal meaning is my pursuit, not nature’s beauty, or tapping into subconscious streaming, or exploring cultures and the role of myth, or intentionally making social/political statements. Almost always, the title is determined before I begin any preliminary sketches. I enjoy setting up a visual problem and then finding a solution that has

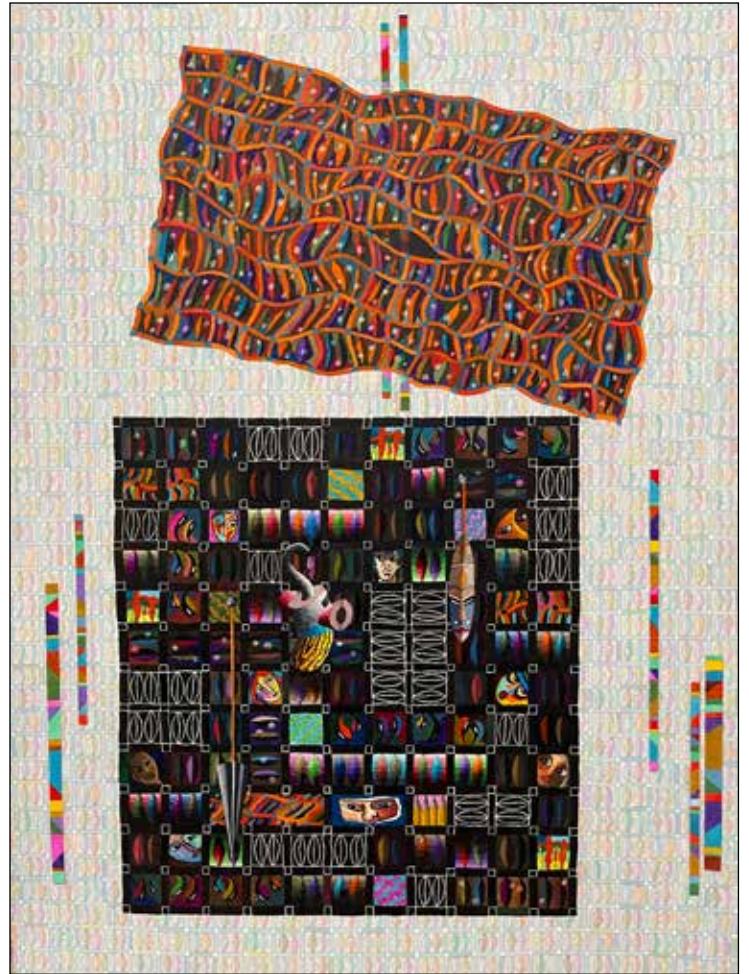


*When Six-Dimensional Matter Deflates It Produces Two-Dimensional Slabs of Exotic Matter With Red Strings*, 2014-15, watercolor, 23 x 13 inches





Self-Portrait @ 65, 2008-17, watercolor, 30 x 22 inches



6-Dimensional Exotic Energy Will Veer To The Right If It Somehow Encounters 6-Dimensional Dark Matter, 2016-17, watercolor and ink, 30 x 22 inches



And It Couldn't Be Put Back Together Again, 2018-19, watercolor, 34 x 13 inches

visual impact--creating an image that fits the title. Sometimes the title/concept comes from a casual conversation taken completely out of context (*Nothing I Do Is Ever Good Enough*), or lyrics from a song (*Baby Can Dance*), or from resources that relate to the field of theoretical physics and alternative realities that can only be explained mathematically or conceptually. With theoretical physics I have fun mocking that which cannot be visualized (*6-Dimensional Bright Matter Leans Slightly to the Left When It Separates from 6-Dimensional Dark Matter*). Specifically, I am enthralled by quantum mechanics at the sub-

atomic level, the debate on the existence vs. non-existence of time, the staggering issue of Post-Quantum Gravity, and the frustrated efforts (so far) to discover a grand unification theory that will define how all matter and energy in the universe inter-relate.

Several paintings can be lumped into specific series of work. There's my mutant series, my night fish series, my sunset series, my tornado series, my appropriation series, my quantum mechanics series, and my most recent free-falling series. What constant flows among all paintings? Whimsy and humor are always present and intentional. When viewers take the time to look at my paintings, read the titles, then crack a smile or smirk, I know that I have connected with them.



There Are Too Many Pencils On My Too Mauve Night Fish, 2006-19, watercolor, 30 x 22 inches





*Red Stripe*, 2018-20, watercolor, 23 x 18 inches



*Five Well Hung Totems*, 2019, watercolor, 30 x 22 inches



*Free Falling Through Darkness*, 2019-20, watercolor and ink, 29 x 12 inches

I've included a few side trips from this journey that have been a nice release from the tedious watercolor paintings. The drawings and portrait oil paintings come from my association with the Kansas Figure Drawing Group in Salina. And I dare not leave out my longstanding love of clay. Wheel-thrown functional pottery was a major part of my identity for many years, but the body says no more.



*Free Falling Out of the Light*, 2021, watercolor and ink, 30 x 16 inches

You may be familiar with the phrase "publish or perish." For art educators and professors, it's "show or go." My first acceptance into a juried exhibition was an acrylic painting in 1972, my sophomore year as an undergraduate student. 52 years later the count is 214 art exhibitions (juried shows, invitational group shows, and solo exhibitions), two of those being international invitationals. I rarely decline invitations to

jury/judge art exhibitions at any level. In 2023 sculptor, ceramist, and painter Austin Center (Chattanooga, Tennessee) joined me in jurying and judging the 50th Annual Great Gulf Coast Art Festival in Pensacola, Florida.

Throughout my teaching career I have found several artists, past and present, that have had some influence on my own work and ways of thinking. They include Piero della Francesca, Camille Pissarro, Paul Cezanne, Henri Matisse, Paul Klee, Rene Magritte, Roy Lichtenstein, Peter Max, Mark Rothko, Warren Taylor, Robert Barnum, Robert Lee Mejer, Michael Florian Jilg, Donald Lake, Soon Warren, and oh-so-many more.

- Wayne Conyers



*Previously Undetected Gravitational Waves Passing Through Puget Sound On Any Given Tuesday at 10:44 a.m., 2023-24*, watercolor, 9 x 12 inches



**Birger Sandzen**  
MEMORIAL GALLERY

401 N. First Street  
Lindsborg, KS 67456  
www.sandzen.org



Cover image: Wayne Conyers at work in his studio