



Mary Ann McKay

Opening Reception:

July 8, 2023, 1-3 pm

About the Artist:

Mary A. McKay's career as a multidisciplinary artist began in 1976 when she moved to South Jersey, eventually meeting her mentor and friend Pat Witt a few years later at the [Barn Studio of Art](#). McKay studied life drawing and painting at the [Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Art](#) in 1982, eventually redirecting her studies to graphic design at the [Hussian School of Art](#). Throughout her schooling, McKay became increasingly interested in portraits, spending her free time honing in on her painting skills and capturing human emotions within a work.



Mary Ann McKay, Lunchtime, 16" X 20"
Mixed Media on Board

McKay was a successful graphic designer for years when she decided to retire to Cliffwood, NJ, and create art full time. Her work has received wide recognition and awards over the years, and McKay has been featured in numerous exhibitions throughout the New Jersey and Pennsylvania areas. This includes the gallery *artspace 88, LLC*, in Keyport, NJ, that McKay is not only featured in, but also partially owns.

About the Collection: *Children of Glass, Silent Voices*:

Artist Mary Ann McKay presents *Children of Glass*, a mixed-media collection that concentrates on the predicament of the glass industry's children in the United States in 1910, specifically within Southern New Jersey. McKay experiments with a plethora of acrylic and oil paint, glass, metal, cold wax, oils, and film to brilliantly recreate original images of the boys working during their midnight shifts. This collection includes captivating portraits of the boys, half of them created with oil paint on linen, featuring hues of brown and blues to convey the innocence of the children and the other half of portraits in a more experimental light using glass, photography, and acrylic paint. Other parts of the collection include media collages of the boys at work and larger scale pieces encapsulating the factories and surrounding environment.

Artist Statement:

"The paintings represented here are my abstract interpretation of a former thriving New Jersey industry: glass. These works are a socio-economic statement inspired by the failure of this industry, realizing the loss of jobs as these factories were left to decay while many jobs were sent overseas or replaced by cleaner environmental options. My ongoing focus has been the plight of the child laborers in America circa 1911 and the hardships they endured." (*Mary Ann McKay*)

Historical Background:

During the Industrial Revolution in the early 1900s, South Jersey witnessed the rise of the glass industry, which had a profound impact on the lives of young boys in the region. These boys, often from working-class families, found themselves drawn into the labor-intensive world of glass production. As the demand for glassware grew rapidly, factories in South Jersey became bustling centers of production, relying heavily on the cheap and readily available labor of children.



Mary Ann McKay, *Typical Glass Boys*, 12" x 12",
Mixed Media on Board

These young boys, typically between the ages of 10 and 16, endured long hours and hazardous conditions in glassworks. They toiled amidst intense heat, handling molten glass, operating heavy machinery, and performing repetitive tasks. Their small hands were adept at delicate work, such as polishing and shaping glassware, but they paid a high price in terms of their health and education, as many had little access to schooling and suffered from respiratory ailments due to prolonged exposure to glass dust and fumes. The young boys working in South Jersey's glass industry during this time were the unsung heroes of the Industrial Revolution, contributing to the rapid growth of the industry but also bearing the burden of its harsh realities.

More About Mary Ann McKay:

Artist Website: www.maryannmckay.com

The Noyes Museum of Art of Stockton University · <http://www.noyesmuseum.org> · (609) 626-3420

The Noyes Arts Garage of Stockton University · <http://www.artsgarageac.com> · (609) 626-3805

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