

# #artinthetimeofcorona interview with Joanne Ungar



This is a one of a series of interviews with our customers to see how they are adapting to the COVID-19 world.

Joanne Ungar lives in New York City and is represented by the [Front Room Gallery](#) in New York City. She is a visual artist who makes poured wax artwork.

This is her #artinthetimeofcorona story.



USPSartproject collaboration between Mindy Dubin and Joanne Ungar.

[Mindy Dubin](#), started it as a charcoal drawing (on the right), and I finished it (left).

Charcoal, gouache and colored pencil on paper, 9" x 12", June 2020

**How was New York City affected by the COVID-19 virus? How have you been affected personally?**

I'm going to paraphrase from wikipedia: NYC was the worst-affected area in the country in March. By April, the city had more confirmed coronavirus cases than China, the U.K., or Iran, and by May, had more cases than any country other than the United States. By April, hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers were out of work with lost tax revenues estimated to

run to approximately 10 billion dollars.

I have freelanced part time in the video-post-production industry in order to support my art career for over twenty years. This year I've been out of work since mid-March, and I don't expect to work again until July or August at the *earliest*. That's a rough year! But I feel lucky to have stayed healthy during this time, and I'm doubly lucky that I have enough savings to get me through the economic drought. I only just started leaving my apartment to travel to my actual art studio for art-making two weeks ago, in early June. For most of March-May I used a temporary home-studio in a corner of my small apartment where I made little paintings and collages. It was a radical change for me in all ways: size of work, 24/7 access, materials, and ideas.

My friend [Christina Massey](#) started a pandemic project in April with the two pronged idea of keeping isolated artists connected AND supporting the ailing United States Postal Service (USPS). It's called [@uspsartproject](#), and basically, 2 artists each create  $\frac{1}{2}$  of a work, and then they mail them to each other for completion. I've been steadily doing this with multiple artists during my home studio time and now at my art studio. It's been refreshing and exciting. When it's all over, I'll have done 10-15 collaborations, each one producing 2 works of art. It feels great to experiment and try new ideas and new materials all while having a visual dialog with another artist. The image I'm showing above is one of these collaborations. Mindy Dubin, who is a compatriot video artisan as well as an accomplished fine artist, started it as a charcoal drawing (on the right), and I finished it (left).

There will be a traveling physical show of the @uspsartproject results beginning in August. More information can be found on the [Pelham Art Center](#) site.

**Do you have a daily routine that keeps you grounded these days?**

I am lucky to have a husband who cooks! I've been baking a little bit. I like to knit – it helps to keep me calm, so I've made big progress on my knitting project. But like most artists, I'm accustomed to being alone and being quiet, so lockdown didn't feel completely horrible to me. I feel bad for my extroverted friends!

**Are you reading, cooking, streaming, or doing any activity that is helping you cope?**

Now that I'm back at the art studio, the traveling to and from via bicycle is a steady and exhausting routine. (Formerly I took public transportation to get to my studio). I like to grumble about it, but I know it's actually very beneficial, both for the body and the head.

**With museums and galleries closed are you seeing a shift to the internet for viewing/selling art? How is this affecting you?**

Absolutely. I am represented by the [Front Room Gallery](#) in NYC. They have temporarily closed their physical gallery but are reopening in July. While the gallery has been closed, they created and have maintained a robust online program. They have also held a weekly zoom meeting for their artists which has been great. It keeps us all from feeling lost and alone in the art world. We discuss online shows and ideas that might work as well as what's happening in the larger world and to each of us individually. Artists can share tips about social media and share what they've got going on outside of the gallery. I've been very impressed and inspired. I'm proud to be a member of this gallery.

**Do you see any positive changes for artists in a post pandemic world?**

I wish I had a crystal ball so I could tell you how the world is going to be changed. For myself, personally, I don't think much will change. I will continue to make art as best I can,

as I always have. My gallerists are valiantly figuring out how to keep up with the changes from their end, and I'm grateful to them for that.

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# **#artinthetimeofcorona** **interview with Interact** **Gallery**



Artist Laurie  
M. working in  
her home  
studio.

This is one in a series of interviews with our  
customers to see how they are adapting to the COVID-19 world.

Interact is a progressive studio of artists challenging  
perceptions of disability located in Saint Paul, MN.

This is their **#artinthetimeofcorona** story.



Interact's first entirely online exhibition, featuring work by artist Katie Bretzman.

### **How was Interact affected by the COVID-19 virus?**

Pre-pandemic, our Saint Paul studio was home to the creative practices of over 70 visual and 30 performing artists every week, plus 24 staff who are also artists and performers, so we really miss being there together.

The pandemic presents new challenges daily, but we're doing the best we can to continue supporting the professional careers of Interact artists. Even though our building is temporarily closed, the artists are still making work. We've moved all our programming online. We're really fortunate to have an incredible studio staff who have been developing an extensive series of virtual workshops. Using group video conferences, Interact artists and staff are holding critiques and drawing sessions, collaboratively reading plays, and staging improv performances from their homes. We're adding new workshops to the roster every week and may offer public programs in the future.

### **Does the gallery have a daily routine that keeps the studio grounded these days?**

We have a daily digital coffee hour with staff and artists that has been really popular. A few pets have also made their way onscreen.

### **Are you reading, cooking, streaming, or doing any activity that is helping you cope?**

In addition to our online workshops, artists and staff have been watching films, refining favorite recipes, and gardening, among other things. Some of us recently saw *Crip Camp: A*

*Disability Revolution* (2020) and really enjoyed it. Artist Victor Van has been cleaning up his neighborhood, practicing daily meditation, and making hand-sewn masks to give away in his community.

**With art museums and galleries closed, are you seeing a shift to the internet for viewing/selling art? How is this affecting you?**

With more people operating in the digital world right now, we're excited by the opportunity to share Interact artists' work with new audiences.

On May 11, we launched our first entirely online exhibition, *We Are Not Disposable*. *WAND* is an artistic response to public perceptions of disability, and how access to critical healthcare is threatened for people with disabilities in the face of the pandemic. Our goal is to advance the recognition of Interact artists online and to raise money for the Disability Visibility Project – a digital platform that creates, shares, and amplifies disability culture. On August 3, 2020, our second online exhibition [\*Fresh Work\*](#) was launched aiming to amplify the voices of Interact artists at a time when online presence feels especially vital.

We're grateful to have felt a lot of support from the community around this exhibition. Interact artists have raised over \$2000 from the sales of their work, with 50% going directly to the artists, and remaining proceeds being donated to the Disability Visibility Project. You can view the exhibition at [shop.interactcenter.org](http://shop.interactcenter.org).

**Do you see any positive changes for artists in a post pandemic world?**

Lately, being connected with each other online has felt like an opportunity to grow. The artists are making and writing some incredible work from home. In these increasingly digital times, we've been sharing in-progress studio projects with an

audience beyond our building in a way that we couldn't have before. You can follow along on [Instagram](#) or [Facebook](#) through the hashtag #ArtWorkingFromHome.

We're so grateful to our community of supporters for keeping up with our work right now, even though we can't hold physical performances or exhibitions. Despite new challenges and uncertainties in today's world, we are fortunate to remain connected with people who value the voices of Interact artists.

During this time of remote learning and creating, we are also raising money in order to continue our programming and retain our talented staff. You can learn more about our mission and how to donate at [interactcenter.org](https://interactcenter.org).

We also welcome your inquiries and correspondence at gallery (at) [interactcenter.com](https://interactcenter.com).

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## #artinthetimeofcorona interview with Pete Myers



This is a one of a series of interviews with our customers to see how they are adapting to the COVID-19 world.

Pete Myers lives in Santa Fe, NM and has been a customer since 2008. Myers is a fine art photographer known for his vivid abstractions of the decaying ruins of the American West.

This is his [#artinthetimeofcorona](#) story.



[petemyers.com](http://petemyers.com)

**How was Santa Fe affected by the COVID-19 virus? How have you been affected personally?**

We have had 155 confirmed cases in our large county, and 3 deaths.

I may have had COVID-19 back in February, but have been unable to get an antibody test to prove it. No fever, but the oddest “flu-like” symptoms, with massive pain at times—a two week run. Exposed by some one that was in Italy in January and may have been a silent carrier in the very early phases.

I also had a self-proclaimed “red neck” confront me for no particular reason in a grocery store, yelling at me and my wife that we were “communists” and had “drunken” the Kool-Aide” for wearing face masks. The outburst was so severe that we nearly ended up coming to blows. The police and store manager made minimal effort to deal with the out of control customer. It was not a pleasant experience. It has made me wary of going to town or even traveling into rural areas where I use to photograph a great many of my works. I find it appalling when people weaponize the virus for political posturing in the midst of the pandemic.

I finally yelled at the guy, “hey, I *WENT* to science class!”, which oddly enough seemed to shut him up.

**Do you have a daily routine that keeps you grounded these days?**

We live on 10 acres of rolling hills in a rural area of Santa Fe County. I take our two Austrian Cattle Dogs on a hike around the periphery of our property. Not only is it a good workout, but the love from my dogs is never failing and keeps me sane.

**Are you reading, cooking, streaming, or doing any activity that is helping you cope?**

I am also a musician, and I can disappear into the ether for hours playing my Fender Stratocaster.

**With museums and galleries closed are you seeing a shift to the internet for viewing/selling art? How is this affecting you?**

Sadly, most of my patrons and supporters have all but disappeared during COVID-19. I feel that people are in such an emotionally raw state right now that they have virtually no ability to absorb anything new. So my job is simply to do the work. Courage, keep moving.

As an artist, this is one of the greatest times for doing the work. Reflecting even one moment of this time within one's work related to how humanity reacted to COVID-19 is important to our collective story. I would have never imagined the world coming to a dead stop in such a short period of time, and so drastically and dramatically. It exceeds belief by anyone.

Humanity should also be happy and proud that our losses were narrowed by unilateral action across the planet. In comparison, World War II was a five-year battle, with an estimated loss of 70-85 million people (mostly non-combatants) or about 3% of the global population at the time. Perhaps at a planet, we have taken a step forward together.

**Do you see any positive changes for artists in a post pandemic world?**

I think there is potential for great change ahead, especially in the arts. It would seem that most of the world had wandered off the beaten path many years ago, with numbness and emotional detachment being the norm. Post COVID, I feel that people want to re-gain their civility and humanity and our emotional connection to one another. Art, being a metaphor for *feeling*, offers a commonality among those experiencing it,

which simply results in us feeling more human and connected.

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## **#artintimeofcorona interview with Rob Evans**

✖ This is one in a series of interviews with our customers to see how they are adapting to the COVID-19 world.

Rob Evans lives in Wrightsville, PA and has been a customer since 2012. He is an artist and independent curator. He has been awarded numerous grants including a prestigious fellowship from the Pollock-Krasner Foundation.

This is his **#artinthetimeofcorona** story.

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Refuge, oil on panel, 1997, 48 x 48 inches

[robevansart.org](http://robevansart.org)

**How was Wrightsville, PA affected by the COVID-19 virus? How have you been affected personally?**

Like many small rural towns, Wrightsville has been impacted in a number of ways. While it is not seeing the wave of cases and hospitalizations experienced in the larger cities, it still has a number of documented cases and is a part of the greater lockdown implemented by the state in response to the pandemic. For the first several weeks we were in a complete shelter in place mode, with all non-essential businesses closed. Gradually, the state has eased back restrictions, with

businesses slowly opening with social distancing and mask requirements.

The dynamic here in Pennsylvania has been challenging overall. Our terrific Democratic Governor, Tom Wolf, who I have known personally for decades before he had any political aspirations, also happens to govern a state that is very red in the rural regions. So his restrictions and response to this pandemic, although less strict than those recommended by the President's own experts, have still created quite an outcry from Republican citizens and state lawmakers, creating harsh divisions (even among family and friends) between those arguing for a more careful reopening and those rushing to get back to normal. The already deep political chasm seems to be widening, creating a great deal of tension, mistrust and anger which often boils up on social media. I worry that some of these wounds may never heal.

Personally, the pandemic has had a limited impact. We live on a large self-sufficient farm property with solar panels, a garden, and studio space in a renovated barn on our property. My wife, Renee, and I are both self-employed artists and work from home, so in many ways our lives have remained the same. Our ability to make art has not been diminished, however what has changed dramatically is our ability to sell it, with galleries, museums and other arts venues closed. Even selling online often requires an eventual studio visit to see the work in person or to pick it up, which, during the lockdown, was not feasible.

Do you have a daily routine that keeps you grounded these days?

Actually, as self-employed artists, our life is relatively free of daily routines. Each day, the projects we work on, whether art related or personal, revolves around specific deadlines, the weather and our personal motivation rather than specific routines. Whether it is working in the studio

painting, or on curatorial projects, marketing, social media, framing, gardening, mowing, upkeep and maintenance on our farm property, renovation projects, etc. there is always something to do and they tend to get taken care of in a free form manner. Being able to work in this way, always having something to focus on, has helped keep us grounded through this and other challenging times.

Are you reading, cooking, streaming, or doing any activity that is helping you cope?

Interestingly, one of the activities that has taken center stage in our spare time, has been playing croquet. Our son and his girlfriend, who live in NYC, are staying with us temporarily while things are shut down there. Our daughter and her boyfriend also live close by. Although we rarely ever played in the past, we pulled out an old croquet set from the barn and set it up, and have enjoyed having regular family tournaments here as a way to escape the craziness of our troubled world, get away from our phones and computer screens, and engage with each other in a real rather than virtual way.

With museums and galleries closed, are you viewing art online? If so, what has inspired you?

A number of museums and galleries have been featuring virtual museum tours and artist studio tours which I have enjoyed viewing. In fact, my studio was featured recently by the Demuth Museum, here in Lancaster, PA, as part of a studio visit series they sponsored during the pandemic. My daughter helped film and edit the tour which also featured one of my recent curatorial projects (you will see many Metropolitan picture frames in the tour!). Here's a [link](#) to the film on YouTube.

How do you market your work? How are you adapting during this time?

Two decades ago, I left all commercial representation behind,

including prominent galleries in NYC and Washington, D.C., and began self-representation. I created a gallery space in our renovated barn where I hold regular open studios. I maintain a website with a private portal for collectors to view my available work. I purchased a large format printer which enables me to create archival reproductions of my work, allowing me to sell to a wider market including those who can't afford an original. To keep my work visible, I exhibit primarily in non-profit art spaces, university galleries and museums.

As a way to insulate myself from the ups and downs of the art market I have tried to form multiple income streams beyond those mentioned above, including book covers for prominent authors, art consulting, paid lectures, jurying exhibits, etc. We also utilize our renovated barn as a B&B and conference room rental (which also brings patrons into the gallery space there) and have solar panels on the roof which generates income. As an independent curator I have organized museum exhibits and published catalogs which also generate revenue. All of this has helped keep us financially afloat through tough times. This pandemic has been a little different, since many of the income streams require personal interaction which is now limited or public spaces which are temporarily closed. While a number of potential exhibits and curatorial projects have had to be put on hold, the self-sufficiency of our property and solar income has helped us get by temporarily until things gradually reopen and get back to some semblance of normalcy.

if you could look into a crystal ball how do you see the art world changing after the pandemic? Are there any positive changes you can foresee?

I do believe the art world will survive all this – however some of the less prepared or financially challenged galleries and art spaces may well struggle to stay open. What I do foresee coming from all this will likely be a greater self-

sufficiency among artists. I think many will be forced to discover ways to become less reliant on dealers or galleries during this extended shutdown, and will probably continue to move in that direction. I hope that one positive change that will occur and last is the comradery that has grown within the community of artists – a sense of working together and looking out for each other. This pandemic emphasizes the fragility of our profession, as well as our human frailty, and underscores the importance of art and a tightly knit arts community in these challenging times.