

JULY 25, 2018

Meet Deanna Sirlin



Today we'd like to introduce you to Deanna Sirlin.

Deanna, please share your story with us. How did you get to where you are today?

I grew up in Brooklyn, New York and I knew early on that I wanted to be an artist. I went to the Brooklyn Museum Art School on Saturdays as a child, taking the D train and making my way through the galleries to my classes. I was passionate about this Museum and my time there. We made pencil drawings of the works in the galleries. One of my favorites was an Egyptian sandstone relief

sculpture of Queen Nefertiti from 1300 BCE, which I constantly made drawings of this work onsite and in the galleries.

Living in New York, I spent many hours at MOMA, the Whitney, the Guggenheim and the Metropolitan Museum studying the paintings. I went to college at SUNY Albany, where I studied painting, and then on to Queens College CUNY for my MFA. In 1987 I had a solo exhibition at Berry College in Rome, Georgia and it was then that I visited Atlanta for the first time. I moved to Atlanta that summer from Virginia. In 1998 I was commissioned to create a work of public art for a new library in Fulton County. I convinced the committee that a painter could make a significant public work and I realized *Looking Forward Looking Back* in 1999. The work is a tribute to change in the rural area of Alpharetta where I lived. It is hand-tinted and laminated glass panels that have been etched with text that are suspended from the library's ceiling.

That same year, I was commissioned by The High Museum of Art in Atlanta to create my pivotal work, *Retracings*, which covered 265 windows on the Meier Building overlooking Peachtree Street. The work was a kind of kaleidoscope that poured moving color and light through the atrium and at night became a beacon on Peachtree Street. It was last on view in 2005 and remains in the museum's permanent collection. Since then, I have become known internationally for large-scale installations that have covered the sides of buildings from Atlanta to Venice, Italy, and many points in between.

These projects made me realize that how interested I am in creating public art and I have long sought to present my work in both traditional and non-traditional venues. My work can be seen on the street, in gardens, on light boards, even on stairs or in a fountain, as well as in museums and galleries. I like the way my work takes on various forms as I address different sites and audiences. Whatever form it takes, my work is always ultimately about painting and creating new ideas about what painting is and where it can be found.

My upcoming solo exhibition, *Translucence*, at Gallery 72 of the Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs, which will open on August 16th, curated by Kevin Sipp, will feature new work in several genres, including paintings, mixed media works, a collaborative video work, and a site work for the windows that face Marietta Street.

We're always bombarded by how great it is to pursue your passion, etc – but we've spoken with enough people to know that it's not always easy. Overall, would you say things have been easy for you?

It is not easy to be a woman artist. A few years ago, I decided to seek out women artists whom I knew about when I was a young artist still in college. My criteria were that I had to have known about these artists then and that they still had to be working. I visited nine artists over two years to talk with them about their lives, their work, and their experiences as women artists. These conversations became the basis of my book, *She's Got What It Takes: American Woman Artists in Dialogue* published by Charta Art Books in 2013.

Having conversations with artists who had been working for more than fifty years was a journey of affirmation. One of these artists told me "it does not get any easier." I thought I was writing a book about these nine artists but what I have realized after the fact is that this is a book about my own journey as an artist. It has been gratifying to meet many young artists who have told me that they have read my book and how the story my journey is important to them.

We'd love to hear more about your business.

I have always been interested in writing about art from an artist's perspective. In 1997, I went to The Venice Biennale to write about Robert Colescott, who represented the United States that year, for *Art Papers Magazine*. This was my first serious venture into art writing, and I have written about art for a number of local publications since. In 2007, I started *The Art Section*, an online Journal of Art and Culture, now eleven years old. We have published 88 issues with 279

articles on Art, Music, Poetry, Video, and Performance as well as Curated Projects.

We have published 107 different writers who live and work in Australia, Brazil, Canada, PR China, Columbia, Costa Rica, England, France, Germany, Italy, The Netherlands, Turkey, and the United States. This publication is read internationally and is well known in the art community. You can see it at www.theartsection.com The Art Section is based in Atlanta, but its focus has always been international.

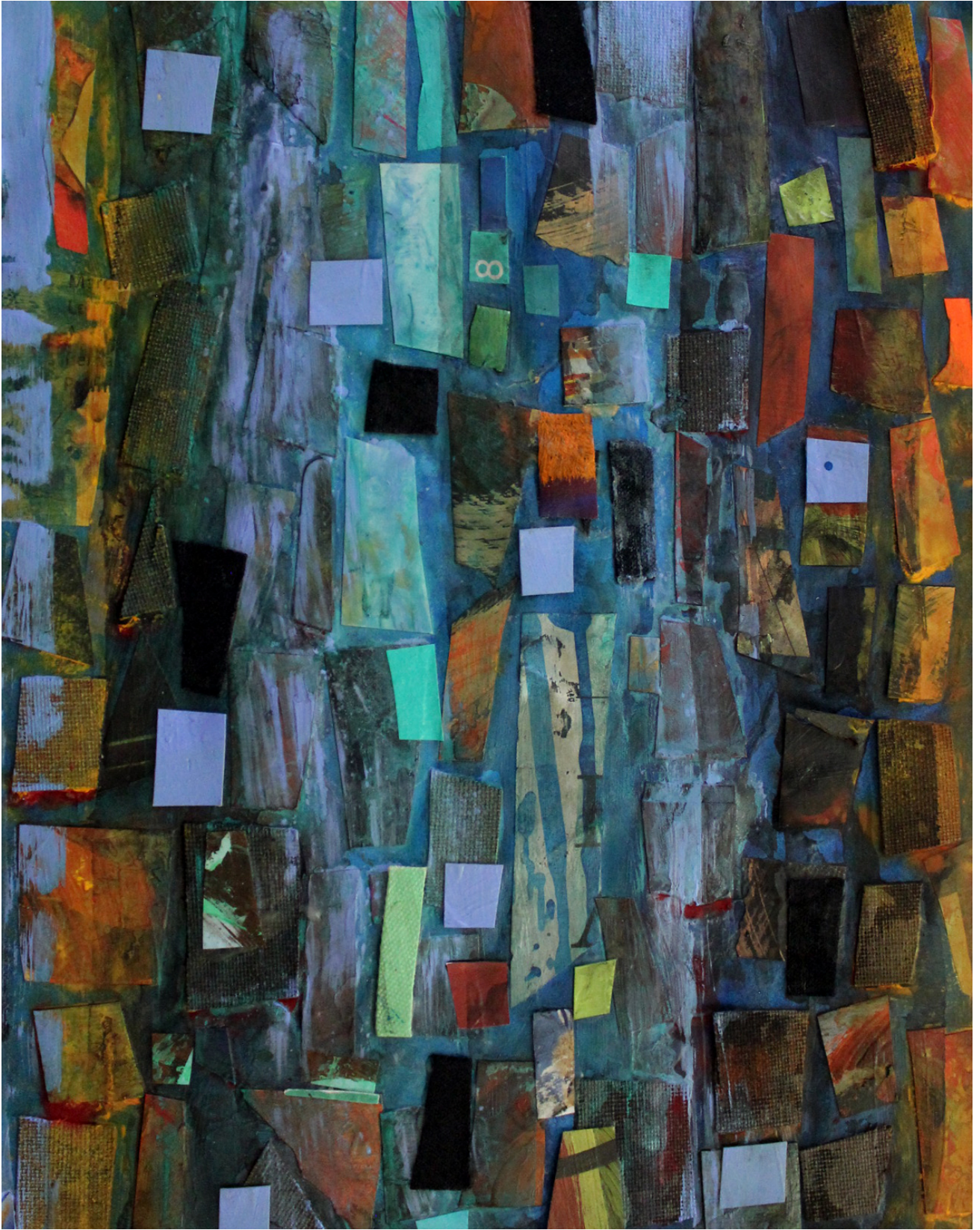
What were you like growing up?

I have always been focused on art. The things that I am passionate about I have always been at the center of my existence since I was a small child.









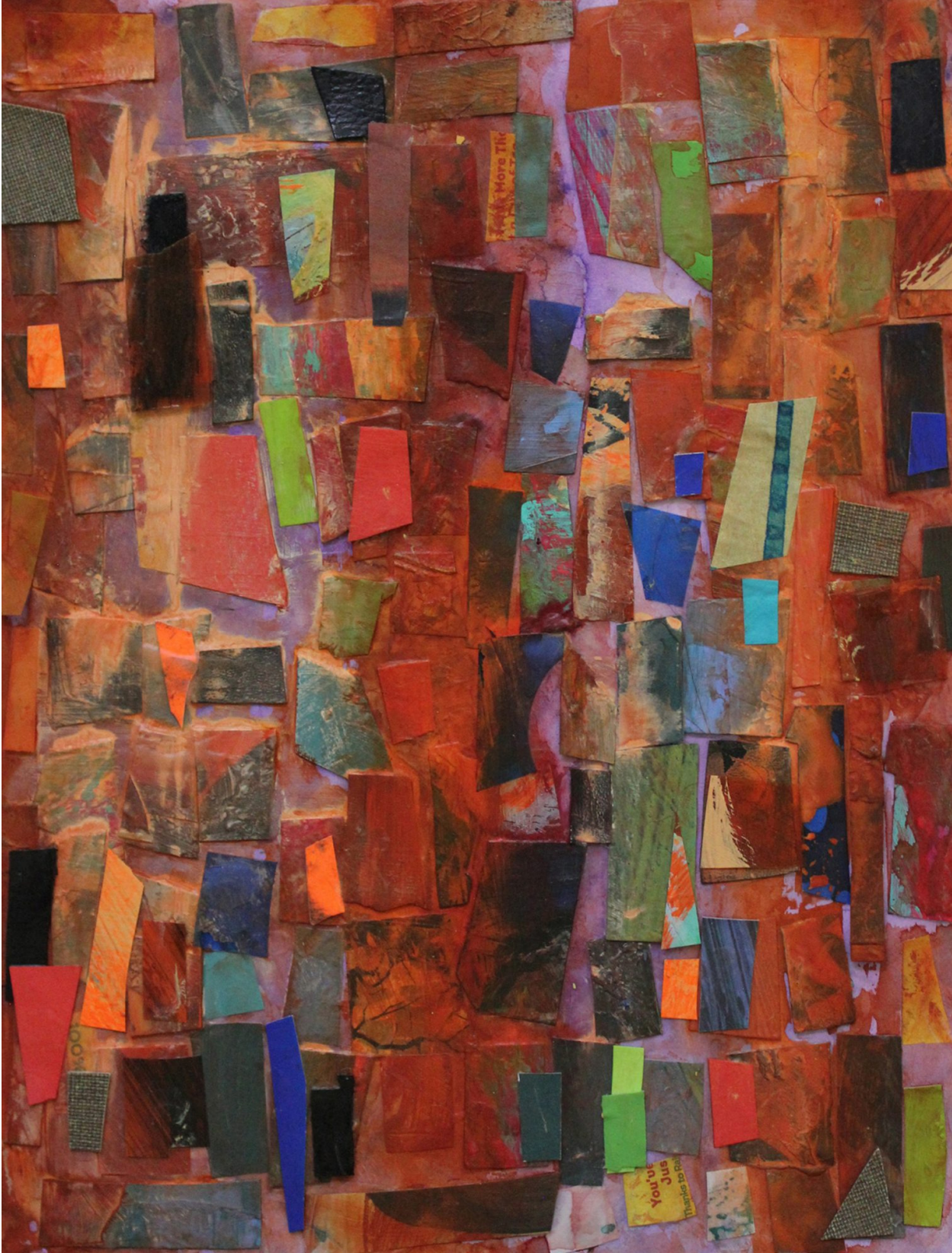








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