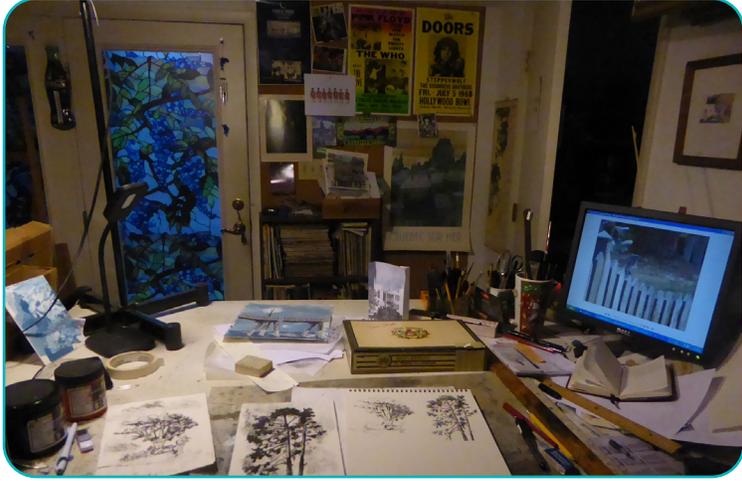


Studio Views began in May of 2020

We got a rare view of the artist at work in their studio and gained insight to their unique creative processes during Covid-19. In May of 2021, we asked them to check back in.



## JUNE 2020

Like a lot of people, I experienced a stunningly quick slide into “lockdown” and working from home as best I could. My studio is a room in our house. Although the art materials and books share space with a shelf of cookbooks and some gardening supplies, the studio is perfectly suited to me.

When first finding myself confined to the house, I got little artwork done at all. I’m a freelance writer, and so I still have some work to do at home. From the earliest days of living in lockdown, it has been important to keep in touch with my family and a large network of friends. So, when I left my writing projects a lot of my studio time went into writing letters and making postcards, not to mention phone calls, texts, and e-mails.

Several days went into reorganizing my studio, and surveying the paper and supplies that were on hand. I found lots of lost or forgotten watercolor and drawing paper, ink, and art implements. There was even a pocket notebook that I’d lost in 2015! It had fallen down into a cardboard carton where I drop in scraps of mat board.

I’m lucky in that being at home to make artwork suits me. While I like making drawings or watercolors in a likely outdoor spot, and miss the freedom of travel, I usually work from photographs in my studio anyway. Always, I have far more photos earmarked for art projects than I can get to. The first new pieces I finished were projects I already had in some stage of progress. Then, I started pieces from other photos or sketches that I’ve had in mind for a long time. Sometimes it takes several years to figure out to start a particular picture, or get around some problem in the composition, or some technical aspect of the work.

Concentrating on the pictures I’ve long planned to do gives me a sense of control, as well as continuity with my former “normal life” and the brighter future we’ll have as we emerge from this pandemic.

Just the same, I have started a new series of works based on sights seen during my morning and afternoon walks around my neighborhood. There is stately pine or oak trees silhouetted against the rising sun. Bluebirds perch on fences or telephone wires gilded with the golden light of dawn. The rabbit who lives in our yard nibbles on the cool dew-moistened grass. If William Blake could see the world in a grain of sand, I certainly can see the world in the space of several city blocks.

# DAVID NORRIS

## STUDIO VIEWS



## JUNE 2021

A year ago, like the rest of us, I was just settling into a way of living with the grim uncertainty of life during a pandemic. Being well along the scale to “introvert”, the prospect of spending more time at home amid by art studio, books, and music was not personally so bad compared with the more difficult circumstances confronting countless other people.

Generally, my work reflects places I have seen, whether on out-of-town vacation trips or jaunts here and there around the Wilmington area. With restrictions on where I could go and what I could do, more of my time went to walks around our neighborhood, at the edge of which is a large pond fed by several small creeks. Being limited most of the time to a handful of city blocks and a few hundred yards of shoreline and creek would have, before 2020, seemed like a sort of confinement.

Instead, it turned out to be the key to magical world with unexpected and enchanting daily surprises. Of course, I’ve seen mist and fog, summer flowers, autumn leaves, and winter frosts. But last fall, the wild flowers along the creek seemed as lavish as an English cottage garden. (If a cottage garden was inhabited by ibises and herons).

One early morning just after New Year’s Day 2021, I noticed a couple of tiny maples. Barely the size of a “Charlie Brown Christmas Tree”, they had held their leaves through chilly days and frosty nights well into winter before at last letting them go. Each leaf was a masterpiece, with expressive splashes of jewel-like color speckling intense backgrounds of gold or red. Their tones reminded me of colorful medieval manuscripts or brightly glowing stained glass, and I took home a handful to scatter on the table in my studio.

On some winter mornings, mists descended upon the neighborhood or arose from the waters of creek and pond, softening the lines and colors of the natural world and temporarily creating an almost dreamlike world.

A plain old frosty morning came to be almost as special as snow was to me when I grew up as a child in the South. Often the frosty mornings were quiet, as if the frosts absorbed and cushioned sounds as would a coating of snow. A silvery-white glaze coated the pale brown and straw colors of the hibernating grasses. Combining frost and mist together made a unique new world that lasted maybe a couple of hours before the sun rose high enough warm the earth.

It was difficult to focus on artwork or anything else in the early months of the pandemic. Eventually, the time spent on getting out of the house and taking walks yielded a good many photographs and sketchbook drawings, and sifting them began to lead to new works. As art (along with books and music) was a refuge for me, I hope that sharing my artwork via Art in Bloom’s online and “analog” gallery, through social media, and with postcards derived from sketchbook drawings has provided diversion or enjoyment to other people. My past year of observing nature through daily walks created so many photo references for new work that I am still catching up on art ideas based on fall colors and winter frosts, even as we’re all wrapped in the heat and humidity of summer. As I have said for years, you should never go out anywhere around Wilmington without a camera. Nature’s stately procession of the seasons can offer inspiration at any moment.