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**John
Andrew
Dixon**

**Kentucky
Crafted
Artist**

One of the most innovative collage artists in America, John Andrew Dixon is known internationally for solving the challenges of creating paper landscapes *en plein air*. Dixon's approach is distinctive because his landscapes are created from discarded paper, ruined publications, tissue, reclaimed tea bags, and even roadside litter.

Influenced by a foundation in design and visual montage, he brings aesthetic complexity and artisanship to his handcrafted use of recycled or trashed materials. His painterly artworks are rich with visual density and typically intimate in scale. This approach is rooted in the history of collage as a modern art developed by innovative painters. "I'm intrigued and inspired by how avant-garde ideas have evolved into contemporary collage," he says, "and I bring that awareness to representational art, which typically has not been associated with the medium."

With a wet-on-wet technique, Dixon saturates ingredients to craft a result not available with dry material. He uses sandpaper to feather edges, blades and probes to create scored textures, and pliers for edges more intricate than fingertips can achieve. He rarely adds pigments, as in traditional mixed media, but will tint paste with walnut ink, burnt coffee, or berry juice. Various adhesives offer contrasting degrees of stickiness and drying time. Printed text often appears to suggest subtle highlights or areas of patterned shadow, "but also to remind viewers that it is, after all, a collage," he says.

"I'm making not only an artifact, but also 'painting in papers.' Decades of design decisions and influences enable my work to be intuitive. Collage is about the creative tension between order and chaos, similar to how an improvisational instrumentalist elaborates on a musical manuscript. I'm interested in a counterbalance of observation, composition, and spontaneity. The natural setting that I see on location serves as the written melody. The qualities of the paper—color, form, value, pattern, texture—can be the notes, rests, and rhythms of the interpretation.

"From the time that I began to exhibit collage, people have responded positively to art made from stuff that would otherwise be recycled or thrown away. Beyond conserving resources, they like the idea that anything cast off can be repurposed and infused with new meaning. Collage is ideally suited to individual response and offers a universal experience. Nearly everyone can understand and relate to cutting and pasting paper. On first impression, people think my landscapes are conventional paintings—until they move closer. At the same intimate distance the works were created, viewers find only paper ingredients, fragments of printing, and layers of torn edges. It's been rewarding for me to watch this sense of discovery, a response similar to what I've experienced by exploring the potential of paper. This connection with others has fueled an enthusiasm for representational collage as my area of concentration."

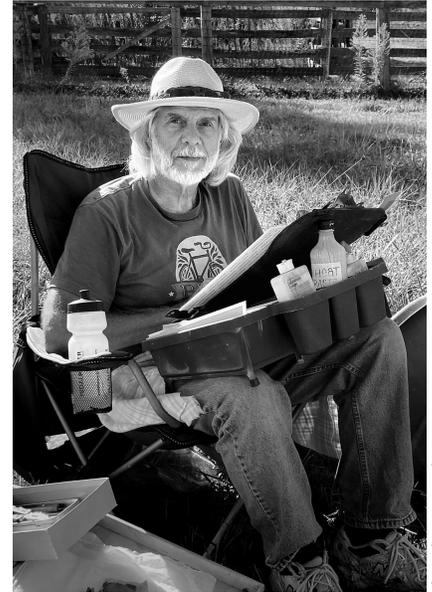


Photo by Kitty Ault

John Andrew Dixon is a full-time fine artist, following an independent career as an award-winning design professional. He earned a degree in Graphic Design from the University of Cincinnati. After working in Brussels and Chicago, he co-founded a design firm with his wife and partner, Dana, and taught visual communication at Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio, before relocating to Kentucky in 1990. Dixon has been an active exhibitor for seventeen years and writes about his approach online at "The Collage Miniaturist". His artwork has been internationally recognized and is held in private collections from Alaska to Central Europe. He is a participant in the Plein Air Artists of Central Kentucky and has a studio with presentation gallery in the heart of historic downtown Danville. In 2017, he was named an adjudicated member of the Kentucky Crafted Program, which is administered by the Kentucky Arts Council. The state arts agency has provided Kentucky Artist Rescue grant funds to Dixon with federal funding from the National Endowment for the Arts.

As a community leader, Dixon has volunteered on many boards and was presented the local Birney Award for outstanding service. An avid bicyclist, he has contributed his talents to statewide efforts on behalf of bicyclist-pedestrian safety and accommodations. He was appointed to the Kentucky Bicycle and Bikeway Commission as an adviser to the Transportation Cabinet and was named to the Honorable Order of Kentucky Colonels.

Dixon brings a deep regard for natural places to his recent creative activity. He and his six siblings grew up in rural Ohio. Inspired by their parents' values, each migrated to Central Kentucky to reside in proximity, having made a mutual pledge to share their lives as members of an extended family with regard for the land. Since 1979, a remote farm retreat in the Knobs of Casey County has been their unifying focus—a legacy of stewardship to new generations.