



MARCH 30, 2020 MICHELE HUGGINS UNCATEGORIZED



Photo by Katrina Williams/Fifty Two Hundred Photo

## **‘I feel an impulse to be bolder, more direct,’ says artist Damian Stamer**

Damian Stamer is a North Carolina native whose art is influenced by his Southern roots and rural landscapes. Though he’s painting the same subject matter, Stamer says he’s finding a different energy and urgency to work during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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# BRIDGETTE MAYER GALLERY

**Studio location: Nestled in the woods of northern Durham County, North Carolina**

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## *Describe the artwork you create and medium your use*

I paint architectural remnants that dot the rural landscape of the Carolinas. These are mostly oil paintings on panel, but I also love printmaking.

## *Who are artists that inspire you and your work?*

Anselm Kiefer, Beverly McIver, Neo Rauch, Matthias Weischer, Cecily Brown, Willem de Kooning, Jean-Michel Basquiat, Cy Twombly, Dana Schutz, Adrian Ghenie, Kerry James Marshall, Vincent van Gogh, Enrique Martinez Celaya, Gerhard Richter, and Robert Rauschenberg.

## *What is your favorite piece or artwork that you created and why?*

I appreciate different pieces for different reasons, but if I had to pick one at this moment, I'd say *St. Marys Rd. 8*. It depicts an abandoned house on St. Marys Road just a few miles from the studio. In addition to enjoying how it turned out visually, it's one of my favorites because I wrestled with it for over two years before laying down the final brushstroke.

# BRIDGETTE MAYER GALLERY



St. Marys Rd 8

## *How does your environment influence your art?*

In a way, my environment is my art. I paint my everyday surroundings. These are the places of my childhood. They allow me to explore memory, with all its faults and fictions, and investigate the tension between personal and historical truth.

## *Tell us about your new morning routine, including when you start your day and how you spend the early hours.*

Before this all started, I was waking up between 4 a.m. and 5 a.m. to paint, but then I decided it would be a good idea to sleep in to make sure I get enough rest for a healthy immune system. So now I'm waking up around 8 a.m. and beginning the day with meditation and exercise.

## *Are you finding new inspiration for your art during this shift of perspective in the world?*

Although I continue to paint the same subject matter, I'm finding a different energy and urgency to the work. It's hard to describe, but I feel an impulse to be bolder, more direct. To quote my favorite musical, "no other road, no other way, no day but today."

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# BRIDGETTE **MAYER** GALLERY

*Tell us about your afternoon. Are you working from home, going to your studio?*

My studio is a short walk or very short drive from home, so I'm back and forth between the two quite a bit. In addition to painting, I have better wifi at the studio, so I'm usually on that computer if I have a Zoom meeting. I've also been taking a walk with my parents every afternoon. We stay on opposite sides of the road. We talk about our fears and what makes us anxious. We talk about the latest news and our plans for the day. We walk by the farm and say hello to the steers or take a moment to appreciate the redbuds' blossoms or songbirds' calls. We say what we are thankful for. These walks have been an incredible gift.

*What positive perspective changes in society would you like to see come from the pandemic?*

This pandemic definitely has a way of putting things in perspective. Although it can bring up a lot of fears, it may also help us realize the many things in life that we are grateful for, the precious nature of every present moment.

*How are you winding down your day? Have any recommendations for stress relievers to settle after another day done?*

We started watching movies every night, which seemed like a bit of an indulgence compared to the normal schedule, but it has been a fun way to relieve stress and relax.

*What are you cooking? What's your comfort food of choice?*

First off, I feel very privileged to have ready access to food during this time. I'm fortunate to live with a partner who is an amazing cook, so I've been washing a lot of dishes to do my part in the kitchen. Red lentil dal is a favorite, but I'm pretty spoiled because everything is delicious. It's like a gourmet quarantine.

*What are you currently reading?*

*Interviews with Artists: 1966-2012* by Michael Peppiatt and a lot of digital *NYTimes*.

*What is your favorite music choice?*

The Avett Brothers

*What is your favorite podcast(s)?*

The Daily (*NYTimes*)