

Artist Biography

Mackenna Morse

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Mackenna is an artist from Grand Rapids, Michigan. While she did attend Kendall College of Art and Design, her primary source of education was growing up with a mother who was a painter and an Art Restoration Specialist. She grew up creating artwork, with her mother always available to coach her. As an only child, Mackenna spent summer vacations mostly as an “indoor kid,” crafting cardboard box dioramas, collages, and hand-sewing dolls. Shows like Ren & Stimpy and Pee Wee’s Playhouse would influence her aesthetic for years to come.

Mackenna left college early to focus on working, and later became a mother. In the following years Mackenna confronted a duality many women face - gratitude for motherhood, and longing for her independence as a creator. At age 30 both of Mackenna’s parents were diagnosed with dementia - the rapid loss of her mother would soon follow.

Mackenna longed to feel close to her mom, so she began painting. Well into adulthood, it was grief that catapulted her back into creating artwork. Since then Mackenna has created a body of bold, vibrant pieces which aim to expose her own difficult internal struggles. Grief, unsurprisingly, but also gratitude, family, and home. She reaches to her inner child for inspiration which is reflected in her eccentric style.

Now Mackenna spends time in her small home studio, painting while the kids are at school. Mackenna’s favorite artists are Miró, Kandinski, and Chagall, but she also has a deep love for folk artists, particularly related to womens crafts. You can see her homage to patchwork quilts in paintings like Family Portrait and Front Yard. She has had the opportunity to display her artwork in group gallery settings, and her first ArtPrize entrance will be on display in 2024. She lives with her husband of 19 years, who is her best friend. Together they have two children.