

# Don't (Not) Touch the Art!

By Miranda Wiley



Photo by Jennifer Boxley Photography

Tamara Deane McElhannon has a passion for connecting people with creativity. She finds that the most rewarding aspect of being creative is "the exploration of imagination."

Tamara moved to Canton from Atlanta in 2022 to be closer to family. She has enjoyed a long career in graphic design, commercial illustration, and fine arts. Currently, she is an instructor at Reinardt College teaching classes such as Intro to Drawing, Art History, and Acrylic Painting while continuing freelance work in graphic design.

Drawing and painting as a child, she became obsessed with figuring out how and why things looked different when the light changed or with distance, and then how to draw them. As a result, her focus was on representational art and the technique behind making it come to life. After years of painting realistically, she wanted to explore abstraction. Figuring out where to start, she painted a few unsuccessful pieces and would always revert to her comfort zone.

Tamara's breakthrough in abstraction came last year after attending an airbrush painting workshop which she found to be "fun and freeing."

She was gifted a few wooden circles and encouraged to paint on them, quickly finding herself in a state of "flow" - mixing and layering shapes and colors. From there, she was inspired to create her latest work which takes on an interactive flair. By moving a series of wooden disks that are magnetized to be movable on a glass backboard covered with paper, she invites the viewer to become part of the creative process and "take over as the artist, creating something that they can call their own." Tamara typically provides a few curated designs so that the owner can re-create them. But compositions can change daily - or as often as desired - as the imagery applied to the movable pieces is abstract. Tamara utilizes spray paint, acrylic paint, and airbrush paint with a layering technique of organic and geometric shapes in a free-form design creating something energetic and exciting.

Although interactive fine art is not new, Tamara's goal is to make beautiful, easy, and accessible paintings. Her desire is to break the myth of "don't touch the art," and instead encourage the viewer to walk up, touch and engage with the artwork while re-imagining it into unique creations that they can call their own. And with the advancement of artificial intelligence, not everyone wants to consume art digitally. Tamara shares, "Tactile pieces that can be touched and held give us a physical experience that connects the viewer more intimately with the artwork." She continues, "There is plenty of room for this idea to evolve, and I look forward to lots of co-creating on future projects."

For more information or to contact Tamara, please visit [tamaradeane.com](http://tamaradeane.com).

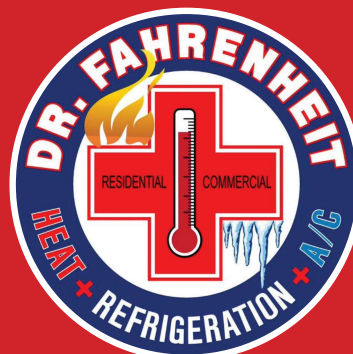


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