

CLARE

GALLERY

at the Franciscan Center for Urban Ministry

For Immediate Release

January 2025

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New exhibit: *Colorful Silence*, January 14–March 9, 2025

Hartford, CT — The Clare Gallery's 2025 exhibition season will highlight artists centered on the conceptual framework of "Mystery, Mystical, and Meaning." *Colorful Silence* begins the Gallery's season with an exhibition by New Jersey artist, Brother Mickey O'Neill McGrath, Oblate of St. Francis de Sales. Br. Mickey is a writer, painter, and storyteller. Previously, his Clare Gallery 2010 exhibition, *A Fresh Look at Some of Our Best Loved Traditions, Holy Saints, and Timeless Mysteries*, focused on the stories of the Virgin Mary and the Saints. This year's exhibition, *Colorful Silence*, features quotes from modern "mystics" such as Richard Rohr, Dorothy Day, St. Therese, as well as others. Br. Mickey skillfully paints their social justice—or intimate spiritual reflections—in high saturation color, as well as with a light, fanciful touch. As he states, his intention is "finding beauty in the margins."

The Gallery will be hosting a **virtual artist's talk on Thursday, January 23, 7–8 p.m.**, during which Br. Mickey will share insight into his artistic processes and reflect on the mystical nature of the powerful words in his work. The virtual artist talk is free, but [registration is required](#). Additionally, an **artist's reception will occur on Sunday, March 2, 1–3 p.m.** The public is welcome to attend.

In Br. Mickey's creations, color, shapes, and active rhythms work together to create a kaleidoscope of design that dances across his compositions. Many of the pieces contain quotes that ask the viewer to reflect on the mystical nature of life, love, grace, creativity, dreams, being ready and open, and God's presence. The quotes are "written" in various fonts laid out in architectural, artful ways, creating "text as image" within the landscape of the whole composition. Both image and text interact beautifully to deliver messages about the power of spirituality—however it may come to you.

Br. Mickey credits his first art-making experiences to his Saturday morning art lessons in his hometown of Philadelphia, PA, at the Moore College of Art. There, he experimented with different media. More importantly, he learned in communion with a diverse population of children. He shares: "The real blessings and life lessons I received there were not just about learning how to make art in a variety of techniques and styles, but discovering beauty in and with other kids who did not look like the kids in my white, Catholic, Monday-through-Friday world. In the beginning, Black, Jewish, Puerto Rican, and Asian teens were as new to me as ink, paint, charcoal, and clay. And I grew to love it all."

Education has been part of Br. Mickey's life as Associate Professor of Studio Art and Art History at De Sales University, and as an author and illustrator of books, as well as an inspirational speaker. Moreover, since 1987, he has led an annual retreat at the Grūnewald Guild, an interfaith art community in the Cascade Mountains of Leavenworth, WA. Br. Mickey received his B.A. at Moravian College and his M.F.A. in painting from American University in Washington, DC. He currently works in his studio in Camden, NJ, creating new works highlighting social justice. Visit bromickeymcgrath.com for more information.

The Clare Gallery primarily features exhibitions that emphasize world religions or interfaith themes, as well as social justice themes, on either a global or local level. The Gallery is housed in the Franciscan Center for Urban Ministry at 285 Church Street, Hartford, CT. The Center is part of St. Patrick – St. Anthony Church, a vibrant and active downtown faith community. The Clare Gallery's hours are from 9 a.m.– 4 p.m. Mondays through Saturdays, and Sundays from 9 –11:30 a.m. The Gallery is open to the public. Free parking is available directly across from the church, and the facility is accessible to all. Masks are optional.