

## Mothers Worry When Vision Gets Blurry: A salute to generations of parenting

*Mothers Worry When the Vision Gets Blurry* by artist, Kris Gebhardt, is whimsical and carefree when compared to some of his earlier works. Straying from his usual gritty style, this 58” tall x 49” wide blend of charcoal, pencil, oil and acrylic paints was created in May 2016 as a Mother’s Day present for his wife, fellow artist, Angela. Rife with symbolism, it represents three generations of the artist’s family in a precise and clean manner, with a nod to the concept that motherhood is ever changing and never finished. Quite unintentionally, Gebhardt started with a blank reclaimed canvas when the heel and leg began to appear. As he moved throughout the space the rest of the form took shape. The left shoulder is carved, crude and unfinished — much like motherhood. Part of the painting is sketched and looks incomplete or fading just like part of a woman fades when she becomes a mother and then again as her children venture further on their own.

Gebhardt loads the canvas with a compelling backstory and significant hidden meanings. The balloons represent each of the couple’s four children in varying degrees of floating away — or being on their own. The form’s posture is reflecting a sense of pride in a job well done — as if saying, “Look what I’ve accomplished.” She has extra long arms for hugging more children and elongated legs for chasing after them.

It’s the bird’s representation of previous generations that fully rounds out the painting’s symbolism. After two of their grandparents passed away the children saw cardinals and believe that the bird represents their departed family members. The background is gray because so much of parenting is muddled — neither black nor white; sometimes even choosing to become a mother is not an easy decision and causes feelings of angst. The clown suit is another reference to Gebhardt’s lead playing the fool. Going along to get along. Being the scapegoat and playing the fall guy.

The title is from the notion that children are distracting as they are growing up and then a woman needs to find her way again once they have left the nest. *Mothers Worry* really hones in on the importance of a mother and of learning from previous generations. Parenting is very cyclical and family always returns to help the next generation.