

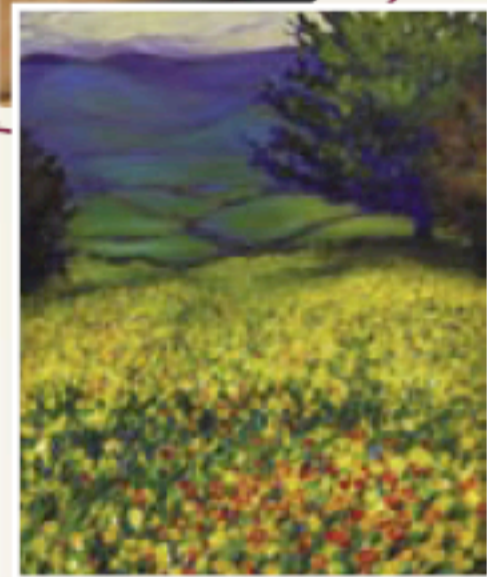
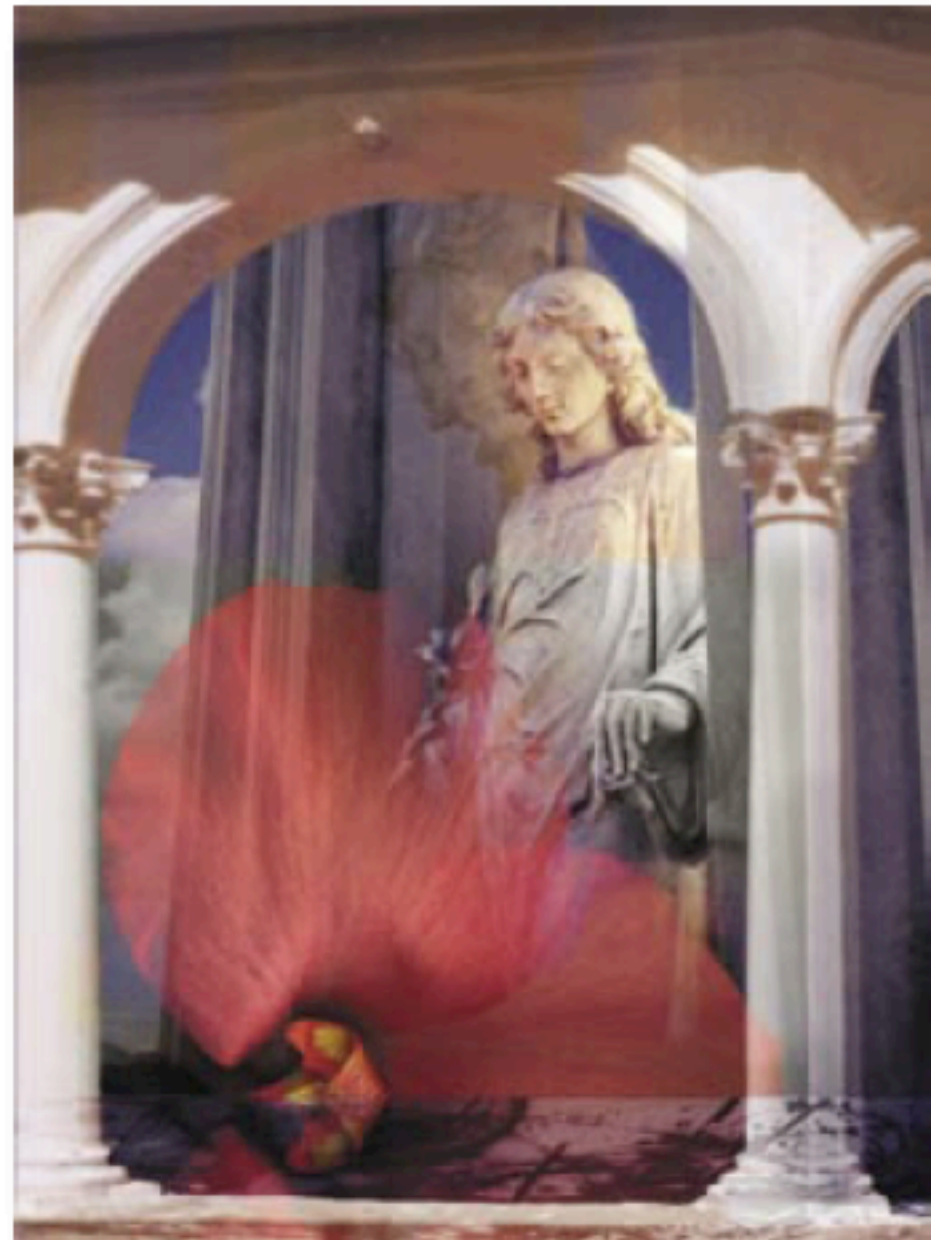
A Journey of Faith:

# Gaylen Brainard

For Gaylen Brainard, art has always been a refuge. "Art has brought me great joy. I always feel comfortable there," she says. "I have loved making art since the day my mother put the first crayon in my chubby little hand. Later, I could come home from a rough day at school and find solace drawing and painting."

Brainard earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts and Bachelor of Commercial Art from Valdosta State University. It was during college that she embraced the Christian faith, and her life—and art—took a different turn. "I realized I could continue with my life, self-serving as it was, or embrace the new life that I had found in Jesus Christ. I chose the latter, and my life took on a whole new meaning. As I look back, it seems that when I started using the gifts that God gave me to make a difference, life became a pretty amazing adventure."

This adventure has included working as an illustrator for a large department store in Florida, illustrating several books,



completing commissions for public and private murals, founding the Master's Academy of Arts for local children, and winning the honor of creating the Peachtree Road Race poster and T-shirt artwork from 1994-1997.

One of her greatest loves, however, is creating art for individuals. "I love to paint landscapes and people. Landscapes speak to me of God's beautiful artistry. With people, every face is just a little different; it is fascinating." Her other specialty is a technique called photo montage, which involves layering colors, images from nature and photography to create a symbolic work of art. "When I put all of the images together, they take on a deeper meaning together than they would separately," explains Brainard, who has been awed by how this technique has touched people who view her work.

When away from her studio, Brainard derives joy from her students at North Cobb Christian School, where she teaches visual arts, photography and computer graphics. "Watching my students grow as artists and people inspires me," says Brainard. "The beauty in our world definitely inspires me, as well. I think God must really love us to have created such an awesome universe for us to live in. And he must really like the color blue."

*Gaylen Brainard can be reached at [gbrainard@ncchristian.org](mailto:gbrainard@ncchristian.org). Her work is displayed at the Wright's Gallery in Jasper, and at the gallery at Hair Artisans in Kennesaw.*

*Elizabeth Cossick is a local freelance writer and editor. Photography by Gaylen Brainard (self portrait) and Chris Hornaday.*