

# Exhibit highlights variety of talents

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By Alyssa Sutherland Staff Writer

July 27, 2025



Collage and mixed media artist Taryn Jackson said she has been cutting things up and piecing them back together since the 1980s.

“It was a very Generation X thing to do,” she said. “We had zines — they were a trend in the late 1880s and early ‘90s where we would cut things up, piece them together, copy them and sell them.

“I didn’t think about it as a fine art from until I came here to the Shoals and connected with an art group.”

Originally from New York, Jackson and her husband moved to the Shoals in 2018 because he has family in Russellville, where he was raised.

When they moved to the area, Jackson, who works remotely as a grant writer, wanted a way to meet likeminded people with creative minds.

She said until then, visual art was something she mostly did while in school, but since she loves art, she used her interest as a primary way to build a new community.

An art group mostly comprised of painters encouraged Jackson to dive deeper into analog collage making, or cutting up paper using hard copies of magazines, objects and more, and putting them back together as interesting and surreal compositions.

She quickly realized that it was not just fine art, but fine art that is easily accessible for everyone.

“I started facilitating workshops and events through the Tennessee Valley Museum of Art and other venues,” she said. “I pretty quickly became known as the collage lady.”

Jackson said that she believes folks are interested in analog collage largely because it is an artistic medium with a lower barrier to entry.

“Even children can cut up pictures and glue them together in an interesting format,” she said. “Unfortunately, people assume that if anyone can do it, it’s not real art. I would argue that is not true.

“I would say that by bringing different types of elements together, they create a whole new meaning, and that’s art.”

Two of Jackson’s works are featured in the Tennessee Valley Museum of Art’s ArtWorks member show, and both revolve around a nature theme.

One, which Jackson named “Mount Olegustus,” features a mountain of cookies where small humans are hiking.

Olegustus, she explained, is a Latin word for flavor.

The other work also features hikers, but these are searching for a hidden treasure.

“My message with both of these is we need to get out and explore nature rather than being on our screens, doomscrolling,” Jackson said. “Nature allows us to look within about how we want to grow as people and what we want to bring to our world.”

## **Rooted in realism**

Still life artist Pam Parker has always been drawn to realistic portrayals of people and objects in art.

“A lot of people paint really loosely, but I’ve always been naturally drawn to realism,” she said. “I like bringing something beautiful to life from something people might overlook.”

A native of Florence, Parker spent years living and working in Atlanta, Georgia, with her husband. There, she worked in graphic and visual design and even had a portrait business.

Through all her work, she said an undercurrent of realism was always present.

The couple returned to the Shoals in 2022, and Parker decided to start painting and drawing fulltime.

Her immediate interest was in creating still life pieces in a realistic style using pastels, which she said are currently her sole medium. Parker considers herself a contemporary realist.

“I like being able to choose different objects — some of them mean something special to me,” she said. “Something about it is peaceful to look at, and it’s a little like creating your own indoor landscape.”

One of the pieces she submitted for the Tennessee Valley Museum of Art’s ArtWorks member exhibit is called “Old Time Coffee,” and it features items that are dear to Parker’s heart.

“It features a coffee grinder that belonged to my grandmother that I’ve always wanted to put in my art,” she said. “It also has a teacup that was my mom and dad’s wedding China pattern.”

The work features mostly muted shades, but the blue teacup and saucer and a purple pansy tucked in a vase behind a carafe of creamer offer stark contrast.

“I like to use colors and pieces of objects to pop out from a muted, darker background,” Parker said.

Her second painting highlights the pansy featured in the first.

Creating a realistic image of the glass vase and water was a challenge that Parker said she enjoyed.

She said becoming involved in the artistic community in the Shoals is her favorite part of exhibiting her artwork. Through art, she said she has made a lot of friends and built camaraderie with countless artists.

“The Shoals has a really thriving artistic community, and there are a lot of artistic opportunities from the community’s arts organizations,” Parker said. “Most people don’t think about visual arts when they think about the Shoals — they think about music — but there’s a really thriving art community filled with people creating art, being friends and sharing like minds.”

WANT TO GO? The Tennessee Valley Museum of Art ArtWorks Member Show exhibition is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesdays through Fridays and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturdays through Aug. 23. Members could submit up to two pieces of art for the show, and the exhibit will feature all forms of artistic media. General admission is \$5, but Tennessee Valley Arts Association members attend free of charge. The Tennessee Valley Museum of Art is located at 511 N. Water St., Tuscumbia. For information, call 256-383-0533. 12c33c14-98b1-4825-8a53-9047f9138d3e