

1 ***Balloon Ride***
Artist: Tom Wilkinson
wilkiearts.com



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Being installed



At the reception

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“Balloon Ride” is part of my *Portal Series* and is intended as a fun visual experience. A portal is an entryway to something else and nothing represents that better than a door. With “Balloon Ride” I want the viewer to feel like they are in the presence of a magical portal that could take them anywhere they wanted to go. The door is a metal front door with nine window panes. I painted large different colored connecting circles floating upward on a solid background: warm colored circles on a cool colored background are on one side, and cool colored circles on a warm background are on the other side. The windows in the door provide the viewer with an opportunity to see through the piece of art and changes the background view depending on where the viewer is standing, or the direction they are looking. The door is complete with hinges, door handles, and a lock and key. These items are purposefully there to add to the portal theme. For instance, to enter through a door (portal) one may need to unlock it and turn the handle to get it to open. One may also become unhinged as they enter into a place they’ve never been. I designed a steel frame and mechanism to hold the door and make it spin freely in the wind and worked with a steel fabricator/precision machine company in Radford to build it. The door can be spun manually or by the wind. The location of “Balloon Ride” on the hill allows the wind to gently turn the structure providing the viewer with a constantly changing perspective of what they are seeing, and where they are.

Artist Information:

I have always been drawn to the creative realm. I began my career with a degree in art from Virginia Tech and worked as a graphic artist, illustrator and photographer for an international manufacturing company for several years before taking a different career path in higher education and corporate training where I obtained my masters and doctorate degrees, taught at several colleges and universities, created award winning educational videos and online programs, led media centers and corporate training programs and ultimately ended up back at Virginia Tech where I retired as an associate vice-president five years ago. Since then I have come full circle back to art as a painter, photographer and art installation creator where I regularly participate in art exhibitions. My works are in several private collections and on loan to healing organizations. I live with his wife, Connie, at Claytor Lake.

For me art should be an experience for both the artist and the viewer. As an abstract expressionist I look at the world around me and the emotions and feelings within me for inspiration. I seek to create art that speaks to the essence of a subject, relying more on my emotive feelings of the subject matter than on the technical details typically associated with it. I believe a blank canvas, an open space, or an object to be photographed is an invitation to engage in a creative process that will be a unique experience for me and the viewer.

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