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WONDER*

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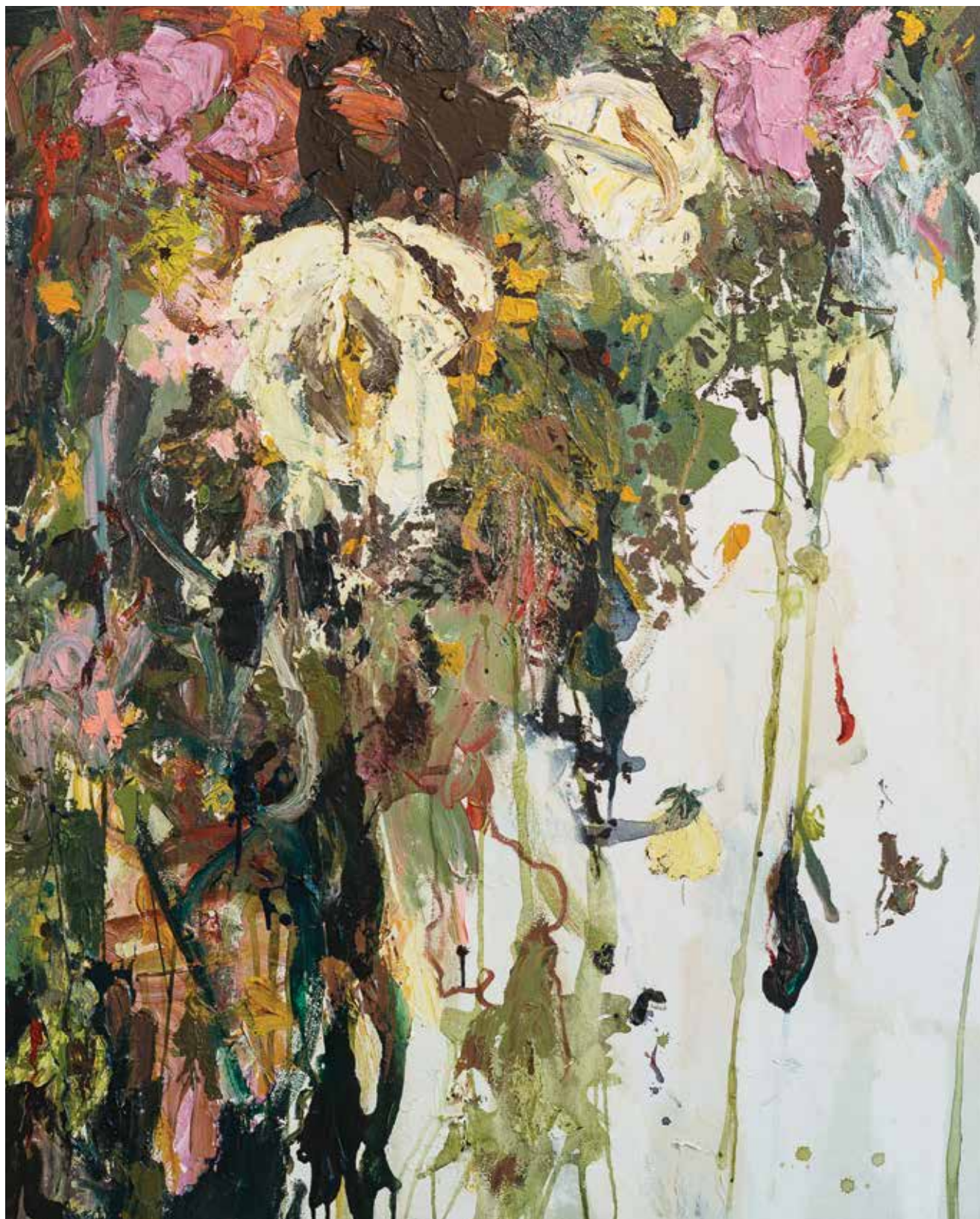
The multitalented Sarah Meyers Brent finds beauty in sorrow and joy, life and death. BY ROBERT KIENER

As she sits in her spacious, light-filled studio in Waltham, Massachusetts, Sarah Meyers Brent points to a recently finished painting, *Beyond the Rainbow*, and confesses, “Like a lot of my work, this piece is partly about contradictions.” At first glance the large (forty-eight and a half inches by sixty-six inches) acrylic-and-charcoal painting looks like a lively, expressionistic floral display. But look closer. Amid the colorful blooms bursting with energy are withered, lifeless flowers. “I wanted to include both growth and decay,” she explains. “Because there is a beauty in both.”



Although trained as a painter with a BFA from Skidmore College, postbaccalaureate studies in studio art at Brandeis University, and an MFA in painting from the University of New Hampshire, the widely exhibited artist also produces mixed-media sculptures, assemblages,

ABOVE: *Floral Collage on Paper II* (2019), 12”H x 9”W, collage and mixed media on paper. **LEFT:** *Rhododendron* (2020), 10”H x 8”W, acrylic on board.



Dripping Plant VI (2018), 50"H x 40"W,
acrylic on canvas.

and installations. Regardless of medium, her work all shares the same intellectual intensity, charm, sense of wonder, and depth. As art critic Katherine French noted, “Meyers Brent invites viewers to a visionary garden but then leads us past its deceptive tranquility to explore primal fear, anxiety, and joy.”

Her paintings, like her other work, also reflect Meyers Brent’s attraction to what she calls “the richness of materials.” To give some of her paintings a three-dimensional quality, she may add a real flower, dirt, or another object to the surface and cover it with paint.



Her mixed-media works are constructed of everything from old, discarded children’s clothes, to broken toys, to bits and pieces of, well, trash. “These help my work feel alive,” she says.

While she often begins a painting by sketching out a rough idea on canvas, Meyers Brent insists, “I am not an artist who maps out the meaning of my work ahead of time.” Rather, she prefers to let whatever she is feeling and whatever is

on her mind at that moment help direct her art. Topics can range from the environment and politics to motherhood. She smiles as she explains, “I suppose I am very lucky to be able to use my artistic process to work through all these concerns and produce something I find beautiful.”

EDITOR’S NOTE: Sarah Meyers Brent is represented by Chase Young Gallery, Boston, chaseyounggallery.com. To see more of her work, visit sarahartist.com.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT: *Beyond the Rainbow* (2021), 48.5”H x 66”W, acrylic and charcoal on canvas. *Strange Flowers* (2020), 18”H x 24”W, acrylic and charcoal on panel. *Plant Monster II* (2013), 60”H x 36”W, acrylic and mixed media on canvas.