

# Joanne Grossmann: the Larger Narrative

October 6 – December 30, 2017

## 20 NORTH

GALLERY

18 N. St. Clair Street, Toledo, Ohio 43604 419-241-2400

20northgallery.com — info@20northgallery.com

*A revival of emotionally evocative, large-scale oil paintings from the 1970s through the year 2000, created by late Toledo-area artist Joanne Grossmann.*

Strong in visual storytelling, the paintings feature compelling scenes rich with emotion and nostalgia while hinting at a quality of suspense. Utilizing settings with figures seemingly isolated within their own landscapes, Grossmann's works in oil invite viewers to explore the many layers of their stories.

Many of the exhibited paintings formerly appeared in distinguished, national, museum exhibitions. These legacy paintings are powerful emissaries of Grossmann's career as a professional artist—the canvases both engaging and disquieting in their unspoken narrative.

## Joanne Grossmann: the Larger Narrative

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*Emotionally evocative, large-scale oil paintings from the 1970s through the year 2000, created by the late Toledo-area artist, Joanne Grossmann. Grossmann's paintings capture locations and images personal to the artist, but a closer look reveals an ambiguity in these images that explores poignant themes of suspense, isolation and mystery.*

Gallery Hours:  
Wed. - Sat.  
Noon - 4 p.m.  
Or By Appointment

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*Bus Stop*, oil on canvas; by Joanne Grossmann.  
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# Joanne Grossmann

## Toledo, Ohio

### Artist Biography

**Joanne Grossmann** (b. 1930- d. 2017, Toledo, Ohio) graduated from Perrysburg High School (Ohio) in 1948 and went on to attend Bowling Green University (Ohio) before studying art at Ohio University (Athens, Ohio). In 1952, Grossmann settled in West Toledo, where she continued to study art at The Toledo Museum of Art. In 1972, the Grossmann family moved to a home in Toledo's Westmoreland neighborhood where she converted the historic ballroom into a grand studio, giving her the freedom to create scores of large-scale paintings, on seven-foot canvases.

Grossmann drew inspiration for her paintings from many parts of her life, including her love for horse racing. She began painting equine themes after seeing the horse Glory Samsonet run at the Toledo Raceway Park in 1975. Twice yearly, she and her husband, Fred Grossmann, would travel to Keeneland, Kentucky to view the horses and landscape that often inspired her annual contributions to the former *Derby Days* exhibition at 20 North Gallery. In 2008, she stated, "Horses in motion are of interest to me. The scene is fictional."

In keeping with the fictional motif, other themes captured in Grossmann's expressive and personal imagery create ambiguous spaces with figures isolated in time and context. Her paintings display a sense of familiarity through the representations of rural and urban settings, but also reveal subtle themes of emotional distance.

During her period of professional activity as an artist, Grossmann's paintings were accepted into numerous national, museum-sponsored, juried exhibitions. Her most recent exhibition was a tribute show at Way Public Library (Perrysburg) in 2015. This exhibit also celebrated her book, *Letters From Camp*, a memoir of World War I letters written by her father, Floyd Thornton, edited and illustrated by Grossmann. In her final years, Grossmann returned to her native city of Perrysburg before passing away in May of 2017.



*Joanne Grossmann*

20 North Gallery Art Director Condessa Croninger remarks, "Joanne Grossmann was modest and unassuming in her role as an artist—a delightful lady who never took herself too seriously. Her art, however, demonstrates the depth and conviction that is inherent to great talent."

20 North Gallery is proud to reintroduce Joanne Grossmann's work to the contemporary market.

## Artistic Narrative

Joanne Grossmann first started painting in 1960, exploring scenes and a style self-described as “Hopperesque” and “Ash Can School.” In addition to Edward Hopper, Grossmann cited Charles Burchfield as an influence, yet showed she was also highly-attuned to the emerging artistic trends of her time. Viewers can see in her work the then-cutting-edge combination of realism and pop art as demonstrated by a contemporary, David Hockney. This genre is shown in Grossmann’s realistically depicted scenarios of individuals placed within deliberately fictional and remote, yet nostalgic, settings.

As an individual, Joanne Grossmann was personally diminutive in stature but she reveled in the expressive power of large-scale paintings, her canvases often exceeding seven feet in height or length. Unaffected and quiet in regards to her artistic identity, Grossmann never sought gallery representation. Nevertheless, as a creator, she took her artwork very seriously—honing her craft and actively pursuing museum-sponsored juried exhibitions.

Shortly after commencing her artistic career, her work was being accepted into exhibitions at nationally recognized museums such as The Toledo Museum of Art (Ohio) and The Butler Institute of American Art (Youngstown, Ohio). Between the years of 1964 and 2000, Grossmann’s paintings were exhibited in twenty-one of the *Toledo Area Artists Annual Exhibitions*. In 1984, Grossmann was awarded two honors for her painting, *The Duplex*, earning the First Award and the Purchase Award, with the work entering the permanent collection of the Toledo Federation of Art Societies. In her 2002 review of the *84<sup>th</sup> Annual Exhibition*, art writer Rebekah Scott remarked that Joanne “painted *Sunlit Rooms with Wild Fire*, capturing a feeling of depth as an autumn landscape unfolds beyond a series of open doors. Look a little closer, and those golden treetops are, my goodness ... flames!” (“[Art show cloaked in darkness, realism](#)” *The Toledo Blade*, July 21, 2002)

Grossmann’s work was also accepted seven times into the Butler Institute of American Art’s *Annual Midyear*, a national exhibition which combines juried work and invitational artists. In these shows, Grossmann’s paintings were displayed amongst the works of distinguished artists such as Romare Bearden, Adam Grant and Jacob Lawrence.

In addition to Toledo Federation of Art Societies, Grossmann’s work is in the permanent collection of the City of Perrysburg (Ohio). Her oil painting, *Ambassador Bridge*, was acquired in the early 1980s by Owens-Illinois, Inc. as part of their corporate collection.

### *Phone Booth*

Oil on canvas, 81"H x 68"W, 1976

Collection of George & Susan Grossmann  
Exhibited in the *58<sup>th</sup> Toledo Area Artists Annual Exhibition*, The Toledo Museum of Art, 1976



**Artwork** (All work available for purchase. Measurements reflect canvas size.)



***Bus Stop***  
Oil on canvas  
68"H x 81"W, 1980

Exhibited in the  
*44<sup>th</sup> Annual Mid-  
Year Show,*  
Butler Institute of  
American Art, 1980



***Fourth of July***  
Oil on canvas  
68"H x 88"W, 1976

Exhibited in the  
*40<sup>th</sup> Annual Mid-  
Year Show,*  
Butler Institute of  
American Art, 1976

Exhibited in the  
*59<sup>th</sup> Toledo Area  
Artists Annual  
Exhibition,*  
The Toledo  
Museum of Art,  
1977



***Payphone***

Oil on canvas; 36"H x 54"W, 1988  
Exhibited in the 70<sup>th</sup> Toledo Area Artists Annual  
Exhibition, The Toledo Museum of Art, 1988



***The Caller***

Oil on canvas; 42"H x 48"W, 1984  
Exhibited in the 66<sup>th</sup> Toledo Area Artists Annual  
Exhibition, The Toledo Museum of Art, 1984



***Two Windows***

Oil on canvas; 36"H x 48"W, 2000  
Exhibited in the 82<sup>nd</sup> Toledo Area Artists Annual  
Exhibition, The Toledo Museum of Art, 2000



***Florida Condo***

Oil on canvas; 36"H x 40"W, ca. 1985



***Watertower/Moon***  
Oil on canvas; 30"H x 36"W, ca. 1980



***Watertower***  
Oil on canvas; 30"H x 36"W, ca. 1980



***Fast Food***  
Oil on canvas; 42"H x 45"W, ca. 1975



***Merry-Go-Round***  
Oil on canvas; 60"H x 70"W  
ca. 1980



***The Winner's Circle***  
Oil on canvas; 48"H x 75"W  
ca. 1980



***Cincinnati Houses***  
Oil on canvas; 36"H x 66"W  
ca. 1992

*Joanne Grossmann: the Larger Narrative*  
Catalogue editor, Anastasia Wagner  
Gallery Associate, 20 North Gallery

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For purchase inquiries, please contact 20 North Gallery.

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