



## ***ERIN BRADY WORSHAM...ARTIST ALWAYS!***

Nashville artist and writer, **Erin Brady Worsham**, did not study art until she was 34.

A 1980 graduate of Western Kentucky University with majors in Theater and German, Worsham spent some years on the road as a professional actress. She married fellow actor Curry Worsham in 1987 and they settled in Nashville, TN. She enrolled in Watkins Art Institute in 1991 and found her calling. Having grown up in Louisville, KY, with a mother who was an artist, she was no stranger to art, but had never formally studied. At Watkins she received a classical education in theory, technique and history.

Life changed dramatically for Worsham and her husband on Sept. 7, 1994, when she received a diagnosis of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS or Lou Gehrig's Disease) and was given three years to live. She was just 36. All art stopped, but not all creating. Nine months after the diagnosis, Worsham gave birth to the couple's first and only child.

In the summer of 1999, Curry installed the software that would allow her communication device to interface with their computer and move the mouse. Worsham began to reclaim her art! She operates the computer and composes her pictures with a switch taped between her eyebrows. Each picture can take anywhere from 60 to 300 hours. Her first piece, "Big Wheels Keep on Turnin'," was completed in May of 2000.

Since that time her work has been seen in exhibits around the United States, as well as in Canada and Australia. Worsham's first one-woman show, "Artist Always," sponsored by Vanderbilt University Hospital and the Society for the Arts in Healthcare, began touring the country in 2003. In April of 2004, the show was on display in the Russell Rotunda in Washington, D.C.

Worsham's second one-woman show, "Artist's Proof," opened in March of 2007 at the Tennessee Arts Commission and received favorable reviews. Her third one-woman show, "Framed," opened at Studio East in East Nashville in November of 2010, in response to the incredible community support following the foreclosure and subsequent reinstatement of her family's home.

Worsham has participated in disability arts festivals and exhibits around the world, including kickstART! and kickstART2 in Vancouver, B.C., the High Beam Festival in South Australia, the VSA International Arts Festival in Washington, D.C., the Chicago Disability Arts and Culture Festival, the Survivor Art Foundation's "Breaking the Walls of Bias" Exhibit at the Hofstra Museum in New York and "The Artist's Voice" Exhibit at the Frist Center for the Visual Arts in Nashville, Tennessee.

Worsham was chosen to create the art for the 2015 poster and fine art giclee for the National Center for Farmworker Health in Texas. An artist is chosen annually and the posters and giclees are sold to raise money for scholarships. That same year, Worsham's piece, "I am the One," was selected to be the program and t-shirt design for the 2015 Tennessee Disability Megaconference. Subsequently, her piece, "Put Your Heads Together, People!," was chosen to be the program and t-shirt design for the 2017 Tennessee Disability Megaconference.

Worsham's work has garnered her several awards, including the 1999 MDA Personal Achievement Award, the 2001 Jo Andrews Award (Metropolitan Nashville Government), the 2003 Alumnae of the Year (Sacred Heart Academy, Louisville, KY), the 2004 Spirit of da Vinci Award (Engineering Society of Detroit/National Multiple Sclerosis Society, Michigan Chapter) and the 2005 Truth in Media Award (Tennessee Right to Life).

Using her communication device, Worsham has given talks on art and advocacy. She was a featured speaker at the 2006 National Right to Life Convention and the 2007 Megaconference, both in Nashville. Over the years, Worsham has given many talks about her art to the Partners in Policymaking classes, the most recent being to the Class of 2019. Partners in Policymaking is a state advocacy program for people with disabilities and their families.

Worsham and her family have lived in East Nashville for 30 years and love it, and especially love the iconic Tomato Art Fest held in August. She has participated in the Tomato Art Show since 2012 and was delighted to have her piece "Revelation" win the 2019 Heirloom Award.

**Challenges are not over for Worsham and her family. In September of 2018, Stage 3 cancer was discovered in her colon and removed. In February of 2020, it was confirmed that cancer had returned and appears to have metastasized in her liver. With God's help, the fight goes on!**