

Nathaniel Mary Quinn & Gregory Huebner

The Hand That Guides

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“The artist has absolutely no choice in the matter. You create and you make art. It is who you are and what you must do.”

— Gregory Huebner

The renowned Chicago-born, New York-based artist Nathaniel Mary Quinn, celebrated for his emotionally charged, collage-like portraits that grapple with identity, memory, and the fragmentation of self, very nearly did not become an artist at all. Surmounting childhood poverty, loss, and abandonment, Quinn poured his energy and talent into academics and art, earning scholarships to the prestigious Culver Academies and later Wabash College, where he studied both art and psychology, ran track and field, and found a pivotal mentor in Gregory Huebner.

A beloved artist and professor, Gregory Huebner founded the art department at Wabash College in 1974 and served as its chair for decades. At a moment when Quinn considered detouring from the arts to pursue a PhD in psychology, it was Huebner who, in Quinn’s words, placed a “guiding hand” on his shoulder and encouraged him to pursue the precarious yet vital path of being an artist. Now, twenty years later, Quinn—who was awarded an honorary doctorate from Wabash College in 2023 in recognition of his artistic achievements—returns to exhibit alongside his former mentor for the first time.

For this exhibition, Quinn presents new paintings on linen, created specifically for the occasion. These works reflect on the guiding hands that shaped his journey—mentors, loved ones, and inner voices alike—while extending that experience outward to the universal role of mentorship.

Alongside Quinn’s new works, the exhibition features paintings from Huebner’s Ritual series (2015–ongoing), a body of abstract work that embodies his lifelong philosophical and spiritual explorations. Since the early 1970s, Huebner has pursued what he describes as the effort to “make visible the unseen.” His practice bridges gestural abstraction and color field painting, layering visual nuance and energy in search of balance amid chaos.

Reflecting on his Ritual paintings, Huebner states: “I have been pursuing the theme of ritual in my paintings. During my years as a professor of art at Wabash College, I became a student of ritual while preparing a class I taught for twenty years entitled *The Spirit Visualized: Ritual Objects and Native American Culture*. Along with the study of ritual is the fact that I have always been more interested in the unseen than that which we see in the natural world. For this reason, abstraction has been my main means of visual expression for all my adult life.”

Together, Quinn and Huebner’s works resonate across generations, united by a deep commitment to art as a vehicle for transformation, reflection, and human connection.