

Michael Severin, 74
Contemporary impressionist painting, Sonora, California
Severin worked for the U.S. Postal Service for 36 years and started painting seriously only after retiring. It's a pursuit with real meaning. "I hope my paintings will last forever. For me, my paintings are my footprints—that I was here at some point on Earth."

ARTISTS IN WAITING

These people discovered new creativity after retiring from more traditional careers

BY JENNA GYIMESI

Want more evidence that your professional career need not define you after you move on? These retirees—among them a former lawyer, marketer, teacher and therapist—have become successful artists who have had major gallery showings or won prestigious awards, or both, with their “second act” of self-expression. To them, creativity and the passion to express it were always there; they just lay dormant for the right time to emerge.



← **Karen Shulman, 69**
Photography
Fort Myers, Florida, and Plymouth, Massachusetts
Shulman worked as an occupational therapist and later in pharmaceuticals, eventually becoming an associate director of medical education. But when her company was bought, she left to focus on her photography. She has had no formal art training and often breaks the “rules.” But, she says, “that’s what makes it work.”



TOP: ANNIE TRITT; INSET: SEVERIN. BOTTOM: MARY BETH KOETH; INSET: SHULMAN

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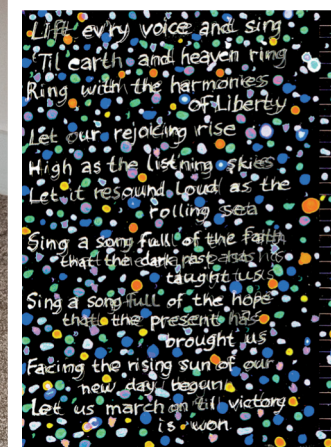
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Psoriasis Care+ is also available at Walgreens stores or at **www.PsoriasisCareGel.com**

Your Life

Chris Maynard, 67, Feather art, Olympia, Washington →

Maynard chose feathers as his medium because he "wants to fly but can't." Before his artistic career, Maynard worked for the state of Washington, managing waterflows on the rivers to protect the salmon stocks. Now he looks to the sky. "Feathers and birds are symbols of achievement, escape and transformation."



↑ Nell Painter, 78

Painting, drawing, printmaking, Essex County, New York, and Newark, New Jersey

Painter was a professor of American history until 2005, when she retired to study art. "There are some really good things about American society, and one of them is that you can continue your education at any age. There is just an amazing array of opportunities to change your life. I think the most important thing is just to start. I work step by step by step and see where the process takes me. And I remember not to let it be easy. You don't stop at the first, second or third piece you make from that initial inspiration. You keep going and you go deeper."



↓ **Mike Flynn, 71**
Watercolors
and oil painting,
mixed media
Manassas,
Virginia

Flynn began taking weekly art classes while still working as a U.S. postal inspector. He retired in 2001. "I was taking workshops and lessons, and I got hooked," he says. "Unfortunately, we didn't have any art classes in the high school I went to, so I kind of missed out on any sort of art, or being interested in an art career. I realized I had missed a lot."



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Your Life



← **Wassef Boutros-Ghali, 96, Abstract painting, Cairo, Egypt**

The brother of former U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali started drawing at a young age but didn't initially pursue that passion because he "belonged to a family that did not consider painting a profession," he says. "Most of my family studied law, with the prospects of involving themselves in the politics of Egypt. I did not see this as my path." Boutros-Ghali worked in architecture and historic building restoration but retired in his early 60s to paint in his studios in Connecticut and Cairo. "My paintings reflect my architectural training," he says. "Geometric precision with a sense of place."

↓ **Chris Motley, 73**

Fiber art,
San Francisco

Motley learned to knit as a child. Now she creates sculpture from hand-knit fibers. "Before I retired [from a law career 14 years ago], I had started seeing knitting in three dimensions other than clothing. And I had started selling neck pieces, which had dimension to them. And it just took off from there. Once I retired, I had time for creativity."



↑ **Mark Witzling, 61, Oil and cold wax painting, St. Louis**

Witzling worked in brand marketing in his original career, but he found himself transfixed by art when viewing masterpieces 20 years ago. "I didn't pick up art until my wife and I went on an anniversary trip to Europe. And I was asking, 'What was Michelangelo thinking?'" It just sparked an interest, and my wife encouraged me to pursue it." He rarely uses brushes but instead works with scrapers, old credit cards and palette knives. "I started painting in a local studio, and then I just kept going." ■

Jenna Gyimesi is an associate editor for the AARP Bulletin, working under a Columbia University fellowship.

Additional reporting by Jennifer E. Mabry

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: COURTESY ALBERTZ BENDA GALLERY AND RHONA HOFFMAN GALLERY (2); KEVIN J. MIYAZAKI; ANNIE TRITT; INSET: MOTLEY