



# Dorothea Bilder

## *Brazilian Experience*

painting

THE MERWIN GALLERY

September 4–October 25

*Galleries will close for fall break on October 19*

**PUBLIC RECEPTION AND ARTIST TALK:**

Monday, October 22 at 11 AM in the galleries



Bilder’s art features abstract, fragmented, pastel landscapes intended to convey her ideas about how changing aspects of human civilization relate to the changing environment.

“Dorothea’s artwork creates an experience for the viewer that draws on a connection to place,” said Julie Johnson, associate professor and interim director of the Ames School of Art. “Using a variety of materials and processes, her ethereal images speak to the power of our environment.”

Born into a family of artists, art was a constant presence in Bilder’s childhood. She graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in painting from IWU before continuing to hone her talents at La Romita School of Art in Terni, Italy; the Art Institute of Chicago; and Southern Illinois University, where she received a Master of Fine Arts degree in Painting.

A Professor Emeritus from the School of Art at Northern Illinois University, Bilder’s work has been displayed in exhibits around the world and has been added to permanent collections at institutions such as the Art Institute of Chicago, the Central University of Queensland, Australia, and Northwestern University. Several major invitational exhibits have also featured her art, such as the Illinois Arts Council’s Congressional Exhibition in Washington, D.C.

The basis for much of Bilder’s artwork comes from the vibrant and diverse landscapes in Sao Paulo, Brazil, where she produced a series of lithographs at Ymagos Atelier de Gravuras de Arta Ltda as an artist-in-residence, though mythological tales and Bilder’s own life have also served as sources of inspiration.

Throughout her career, she has experimented with various artistic mediums, such as watercolor, lithography, serigraphy, monotyping, black rag and collage work. In a 1990 article by the *Pioneer Press*, Bilder asserted that varying her methods of producing art is an integral process of maturing as an artist.

“I will always have the same vision, but I want to search and experiment with different methods to express that vision,” she said. “Otherwise, I’m nothing but an assembly line, and no one becomes an artist for that.”

Throughout the evolution of her landscapes—from the realistic to the abstract—Bilder’s work has aimed to connect with its audience on a fundamental level.

“My art often challenges the viewer and may not easily be visually understood or accepted, but its narrative is universal,” Bilder said while offering her insights into *Sight, Sound & Scent*, her most widely-known body of work. “My art is about the landscape, the Earth and the energies of the Earth.”

By Rachel McCarthy ’21

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