Mili Dunn Weiss
411 Randall Road
Wyncote, PA 19095

Mili Dunn Weiss was educated at the Tyler School of Art, received a B.S. at Boston University, then went on to post graduate work at the Boston Museum School. She was the recipient of the Dean's Award for painting from Tyler and was named a Tyler Fellow. She has exhibited worldwide, including England, France, Holland and China as well as these U.S. museums: The Philadelphia Museum of Art, The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, The Butler Institute of American Art, and the National Academy of Design, New York.

Mili Dunn Weiss has won numerous awards and her work is in the permanent collections of The Philadelphia Museum of Art, Harvard University, the Sichuan Institute of Fine Art in China, the National Museum of American Jewish History in Philadelphia, the Berman Museum at Ursinus College and the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris. Her work is in many private collections.

She has served on the Board of Directors of the Philadelphia Watercolor Club, Artists Equity, and the Cheltenham Center for the Arts.

Mili Dunn Weiss has taught painting and related media for over thirty-five years. She has lectured widely and is known for her course, “Looking at Art” which uses actual works of art in the many museums and collections in the Philadelphia area for study. She was honored by Cheltenham Township, where she resides, as a leading artist/educator. The artist is a founding member of the Cheltenham Printmakers Guild. She was Education Chairman of the Cheltenham Center for the Arts for ten years. She was asked to continue as an honorary member of the education committee. She was also invited to continue as a member of the board of the Cheltenham Center for the Arts. In January 1998, Mili Dunn Weiss was selected for an exhibition, “Pennsylvania treasures” honoring artists over 65 who are still producing and exhibiting. She was also honored by Mayor Edward Rendell as a “Philadelphia Treasure”. 
MILI DUNN WEISS  Wyndotte, PA

Tyler School of Art, B.S. at Boston University, Post-graduate work at the Boston Museum School

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"After Eden '95"
Color Xerograph
22" x 24" $450.
It's late November. Fresh snow covers a sloping lawn edged by fir trees. The faint outlines of garden chairs, a bird bath, several modern sculptures and a frozen lily pond take shape in the whiteness. A solitary red cardinal alights on the ground. This is the scene from the terrace of painter, printmaker, sculptor, poet and teacher Mili Dunn Weiss.

It's the same view captured in her oil painting, "Winter Garden," which hangs over the fireplace of her Wyncote home. "I love the beautiful quietness of the colors compared to the flamboyance of spring and summer," says Weiss of the season and her depiction of it. "My garden in winter is breathtaking with holly trees and berries. All the greens become lavender gray, which can only be seen this time of year. And instead of the sky being blue it becomes a pale yellow like a certain sheen of sunlight coming through clouds. There's some warmth in the snow, which I rendered with overlays of paint."

At 85, Weiss may look like just another white-haired grandmother, but her gentle appearance and soft-spoken manner belie a dynamic personality. Far from being in the winter of her life, she is creatively in her prime. Weiss is currently experimenting with innovative photography and a new method of fabric printing. She recently completed an important oil painting of her garden in spring, which sings with vibrant greens, pinks and purples. "I may call it "Hope Springs Eternal," she jokes, noting that clichés happen to be true. In fact, Weiss wrote a poem called "The Optimist" that begins:
It's November
And I'm planting tulip bulbs
for May blooming
And lilies for June and July.
I dig the holes, tamp down
the earth and water
An act of faith.

Surrounded by nature, Weiss finds the most happiness in her own backyard. In 1950, she and her late husband Manny, an attorney and photographer, fell in love with this tract of secluded land and its 12 black walnut trees. With the help of an architect friend, William Smull, they designed an airy, glass-and-mahogany single-level home that integrated the beauty of the four seasons with the interior space.

Weiss eventually added a large studio off her bedroom so that she had a landscape to paint without leaving home when her two children were growing up. “The same landscape can change in color and mood,” observes Weiss. “It’s an outdoor sanctuary that’s a living inspiration and palette. Manny raised orchids in a green house off the living room, and I became an avid orchidist.” Mili frequently makes flowers the focus of her oils, watercolors and prints.

“My still-lifes are often of things that grow,” she says. “To me, flowers are more than just wonderful shapes, colors and complex forms. They’re expressions of the life force, with its unrelenting goal of procreation and continuity. With brilliant colors to attract pollinators, sensual forms designed for reproduction and multitudinous seeds, they’re frankly sexual. I paint flowers to celebrate life and sometimes as a response to death—both are inextricably part of the life cycle.”

Her home and garden—filled with art and memories, photographs, plants, birds and goldfish (her “Three Musketeers”)—mean more to Weiss than all the tea in China, which she has visited twice. She and her husband were indefatigable travelers and made many trips to Europe, the Far East and Africa. From each country she collected artifacts and indelible impressions, which influenced her art.

Her work has not only been exhibited in museums across this country and around the world, but can be found in the permanent collections of the Phila-
become an artist because of her drawing ability, which was something she always loved to do. Her 6th grade teacher sent her to a special class for gifted children at Moore College of Art. And her junior high art teacher enrolled her at the nearby La France Institute for Life Drawing. At Gratz High, Weiss was taken under the wing of her art teacher, Robert Goldman. "He was amazing," recalls Weiss. "He helped open a lot of artists' eyes by taking us to museums to look at actual paintings. She still remembers when Annabel Turner, the head of the school's art department, told her to prepare a portfolio and arranged for her to meet Boris Blai, the celebrated dean of Tyler School of Fine Art. At 16, Mili was awarded a half-scholarship, "which made it possible for me to go since there was a Depression."

"My great unfinished symphony is a book of children's art. Over the years, I built up a collection from my students. I used to invent lessons to hold their interest. For example, I'd have the children take off their shoes and really look at them. This got them physically involved and contributed to intense observation, which resulted in wonderful drawings. I believe that the more intensely we observe objects, the more we see and feel. I will never draw or paint anything that I feel casually interested in. That's the source of the need to find form."

Weiss herself started out doing watercolors and oils. Her earliest work shows her debt to Cezanne. "His use of space and his fresh way of looking at objects and their interconnectedness—in terms of form and color—was a huge influence on me, not to mention Braque and Picasso. It freed artists' vision from pure realism, which is prevalent today. And then, of course, Matisse came along with his free use of space and color to create his lyrical work."

At Tyler, Weiss studied sculpture and carving with Blai, as well as painting and graphics with Franklin Watkins. She began her professional career in her third year at Tyler when her landscape oil painting was accepted at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts Annual Exhibition, a major national juried show.

During her fourth year, Weiss was married and moved to Boston where she continued her studies at Boston University and the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. Later, after living for a few years in Washington, she and her husband returned to Philadelphia because they both had strong family roots. One of Weiss's biggest honors occurred in 1957 when she won the Dean's Award for Painting at the Tyler Alumni Exhibit and was named a Tyler Fellow. It was also the same year she began to teach.

Recalls Weiss: "When Gladys Wagner, who founded Cheltenham Art Center in 1940, became ill, Tyler recommended me to take her place for a few months. It was my first teaching position and I stayed until 1995." She taught painting and related media and also gave art history lectures. For 10 years, she was director of education.

If Weiss inspired hundreds of students, so they inspired her. "My great unfinished symphony is a book of children's art," she says. "Over the years, I built up a collection from my students. I used to invent lessons to hold their interest. For example, I'd have the children take off their shoes and really look at them. This got them physically involved and contributed to intense observation, which resulted in wonderful drawings. I believe that the more intensely we observe objects, the more we see and feel. I will never draw or paint anything that I feel casually interested in. That's the source of the need to find form."

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One can see the same lyrical quality in Weiss's latest paintings. "Nature, with its infinite variety of colors, forms, patterns and rhythms, is often my original stimulus," says Weiss. "Then begins a long process which evolves into a picture idea. I am intrigued with the concept that negative space can be basically one color, flattened from top to bottom and side to side, and can hold together the positive space."

Weiss developed an interest in printmaking at Cheltenham Art Center where, she notes, leading printmakers continue to give workshops. "Prints and
Collages are ideal media for expressing my longtime concerns about environmental pollution, war and human rights abuses,” she explains. About her award-winning collage “Visions,” Weiss says, “My concern with seeing has been ongoing. In my art, consciously or unconsciously. I have used eyes as part of my imagery in numerous works.”

For years, Weiss and her husband had a time-share apartment in Key West, where Mili not only admired the sea life, but also envisioned its destruction by mankind. “Key West is formed on a coral reef that is central to a healthy ecosystem, which produces all the wonderful fish and things that live there. It’s a haven for many kinds of sea life. If it’s polluted we all lose out.” Her concern led to another award-winning mixed-media collage, “Running Out,” dedicated to Jacques Cousteau, “who first made us aware of our oceans.” After her 1986 trip to China, Weiss was so disturbed by the Tiananmen Square student uprising that she created a collage called “Behind the Bamboo” supporting human rights.

While visual experiences are a constant source of joy to Weiss, they are also the source of her social consciousness. Whatever the season, she sees beauty in the constantly changing landscape before her eyes. But she is also alert to the dangers it faces from man.

Says Weiss: “There are always issues I want to address, says Weiss. “Nothing less than good and evil.”

Perhaps, her philosophy is best summed up in her poem “Rage for Order”:

To rage for order amid the chaos
To seize the moment and hold it fast
To make time stand still for contemplation
To stop the wheel at perfect equilibrium,
Is this what canvas, clay and stone are for
To bring momentary peace to souls at war?

For more information about Mili Dunn Weiss, visit (www.printmakersguild.com).

Jane Biberman is a contributing writer with Montgomery County Town & Country Living and is a freelance writer and artist living in Bucks County.