

Art of Brian Rance

designer painter sculptor fabricator

Brian Rance was born in Hertsfordshire, England, and educated at Cornerhall School. He studied at Yorkshire and Watford Colleges before going to work as visualizer with a London newspaper.



One day while driving by a site in Portman Square, he noticed that they were building The Churchill London's finest hotel. Brian mustered his courage and approached the projects manager about producing some paintings for this august establishment. He was invited to submit

specimens of his work and prices for consideration. Brian's work was accepted. He received the commission at only 23 years old and promptly gave up his secure job to become a full time artist.

Mr. Rance confesses that he knew little or nothing about the sport of Falconry (which was the subject chosen for the commission) so he studied feverishly at a London Museum. The thoroughness of his research is very apparent, in his paintings which still grace the main dining room of the Churchill and have been admired by multitudes. Commissions from other hotels



followed in rapid succession- The London International houses a huge wall and ceiling mural; The Cambridgeshire, The London Metropol and New Berkley decorated in the French style of Louis XIV, were but a few of the many who sought the services of this young and brilliant artist who by this time occupied a studio in Redbourn.

In 1974, he made his first trip to the United States to do a series of paintings for the Lowes hotels of New York. Enchanted with the vastness and beauty of the new world, he traveled every state by bus, painting as he went, and talking to people in every walk of life.

Not satisfied with this, he traveled the "States" by foot, painting the landscapes and people as he went.

In 1978, he traveled through Central and South American countries by bus and foot. Rance says "You can only appreciate how people live and work if you are on foot and mingling with them, doing as they do, enjoying their surroundings and their music. He traveled the Amazon from its source Peru and met individuals that had never seen white men. Later in 1978 he made his studio in Missouri Ozarks where he worked largely on decorative art. He is in demand country and nation wide.

Mr. Rance is currently working out of his new studio **TOWER HOUSE STUDIO** located in Galena, Missouri just thirty miles outside of Branson, where he has made countless of beautiful backdrops, scenery pieces, and props for over twenty national and international touring shows. The Promise, Beauty and The Beast, and Celebrate America are just a few of the shows that carry Mr. Rances masterpieces.

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Brian Rance's TOWER HOUSE STUDIO is located in the heart of Missouri's Ozark Mountains, Galena. Its beautiful surroundings have been an inspiration to Brian Rance.

Tower House Studio was built in 1890 and has been restored and remodeled by Brian Rance.



It's 1890s landmark now Tower House Studio looks more like a visionary work of art and now is a major attraction in Galena.



Its most impressive feature is 70' by 30' working wall space that allows Brian Rance to create some of his most impressive work-theatrical drops.



Brian Rance's latest masterpiece.

Dragon's Breath, featuring a dragon breathing fire.



Brian Rance

Selected Clients

Hobby Lobby: Passages traveling museum, Saint Jerome's Cave
Southwest Airlines Fort Lauderdale Airport: 2 murals
Silver Dollar City Theme Park: Three dimensional signage and props, themed murals
Dolly Wood Theme Park: Three dimensional signage and props, themed murals
Andy Williams Christmas Show: Painted backdrop
Cruzan Rum Distillery: Trade show booth and marketing aids
Kirby Van Burch: Drops and props
Mississippi Love Theatrical Production: Set design and drops and props
The Promise: Set design and props
Todd Oliver: Talking dog prosthetics
Yakof: Christmas drop
Lost in the 50's: Set design and props
Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat: Set design and props
Celebrate America: Drops and props

Volunteer Work

Mansfield University, PA: Beauty and The Beast, My Favorite Year, Into the Woods
Kennet High School, MO: Shrek the musical
Crane High School, MO: Shakespearian plays
Willard High School; MO: Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat
Stuttgart High School, Germany: Mozart's The Magic Flute

Tower House Studio



by [rose](#) | Feb 18, 2020 and by Heather Berry | hberry@ruralmissouri.coop

A robed form stands in one front window holding a large electronic star while an 8-foot-4-inch-tall red dragon blows fog upward. A kite-shaped window placed in a wall boasts 3D dogwood flowers in its pattern and a 7-foot-tall dog barks at all who pass him. All that exists under the watchful eye of a large flying pig hanging from the tall ceiling. It's a place sure to mesmerize children and adults alike.

"I look at art as creating the world I love," says artist Brian Rance, owner of Tower House Studio in Galena.

Many Branson travelers have seen his work without knowing it. Elaborate backdrops at the popular Sight & Sound Theatre, Silver Dollar City, Branson Belle as well as entertainment theaters in the area were created by Brian. National clients include Hobby Lobby, Dollywood Theme Park and Southwest Airlines.

His British accent tells you right away he's not from the area, yet Brian's been a resident of rural Missouri for 35 years.

Born north of London in Hertfordshire, England, Brian worked as a London advertising artist for a local newspaper in the late '60s after graduating from college. One day while heading to work, he noticed a new high-end hotel going up named The Churchill. On a whim, he stopped to ask the project supervisor about submitting artwork for the hotel and was invited to offer pieces for consideration.

"Amazingly, they accepted my work samples. I was just a hard-working bloke who liked creating art," recalls Brian, 73. "I was only 23 and overnight my world changed completely. The press took a big interest in me because I found success so young."

Knowing nothing about the theme the hotel desired — falconry — Brian studied the bird family extensively at a local museum and completed eight pictures in six months to complement the opulent gilded decor of the hotel. The life and work of artist Brian Rance Brian Rance stands beside a sculpture which has a sensor to alert the dog to bark when someone walks by.

"Soon I was being interviewed about my work and getting commissions from other hotels and businesses for large framed pieces, ceiling, and wall murals," he says. "It was quite a rush."

In 1974, Brian made his first trip across the pond to the United States to do another series of paintings for the Lowes hotels of New York. Enamored by the new world he found himself in, he set out to see every state, painting whatever caught his artistic eye.

"I've seen the Andes, traveled the Amazon and worked for circuses," he recalls. "I've met people who'd never seen other humans besides their own tribe before. The world is an amazing place, full of visions to paint and create."

"I played harmonica and sketched to make money as I traveled," Brian says. "That's not everyone's ideal life, but I would do it over again, if I could."

Eventually his travels led him through the Ozarks, where he fell in love with the beauty of Missouri. He eventually purchased a condemned 1890s two-story general store and began restoring it himself. Brian named the building Tower House Studio.

The large open downstairs area allows him to paint, work on sculptures and backdrops when commissioned while the upstairs is an open loft apartment where he lives. The large space, with an expansive wall area, has allowed him to work on dozens of touring shows such as "Beauty and The Beast," "Into The Woods," "Little Mermaid" and "The Promise".

He says when he works on back-drops he usually doesn't read the script first, just listens to what the director wants so he can interpret that and make a functional, good-looking piece. "I just let my imagination run with the idea," says Brian. "That method has always worked for me."

Most days now find Brian working in his Galena studio, usually on large sculptures, but you can see art from throughout his life framed and hanging on one large wall. The small entry room showcases some of his unique sculpture work. His most recent piece is ready to head to a foundry to be cast upon purchase.

"I call her Lady Justice," he says of the 9-foot-7-inch figure standing in the studio. "I created her on speculation in hopes someone like The American Bar Association or a state capitol, courthouse or law school might purchase her."

The giant dog sculpture and red dragon currently greet guests in the front entrance of the studio. "The dragon is also a rocking chair. There's usually a line down the street at Halloween when the dragon is really spewing smoke. Everybody wants a photo taken with it."

His sculpture, Angel at Patmos, stands in the front window and usually puzzles people, according to the artist. "It can seem a bit ominous or odd until I explain what it represents to me. It's a little deep."

Brian says the figure is based on the angel in the Bible who comes down to visit John as he wrote the book of Revelation while on the Island of Patmos. "In my interpretation, he's offering mankind technology for better or worse. It's a symbolic piece. Some people like it and some don't, and that's OK," Brian says.

Sometimes he's asked to speak to a college art class or visit with students about creating set designs and he's glad to do so when he's available.

"I don't have children, so talking to young adults who want to learn about what I do is great fun for me," the artist says.

Since Brian lives above the studio, he's happy to have visitors but asks that they call first for an appointment. Occasionally he will even sell a piece or a print for framing, if the right price can be agreed upon.

"I must say it's been great to have a career that hasn't ever felt like a job to me," Brian says.

Check out Brian Rance's artwork at www.brianrance.com. To visit the studio, please call for an appointment at 417-357-6168 or email him at towerhousestudio@gmail.com.