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BOTANICA

BY MARY KOCOL AS TOLD TO ROBIN GEE



As rose enthusiasts, we have all found ways to express our affection for our beloved roses. Artist and master gardener Mary Kocol explores her relationship with roses in ways that are breathtaking and digitally technical at the same time. Taking roses grown in her own garden, Mary transforms them into images that are reminiscent of the Dutch masters, creating a look that is classic and vintage, but modern due to her subject matter, primarily David Austin Roses.

“ I really love garden roses, because they look and smell better than store bought roses. I choose which roses to grow for their fragrance, along with their beauty”, says Mary. “They really aren’t much work to grow, if you choose carefully for your area, you will have a great plant.”



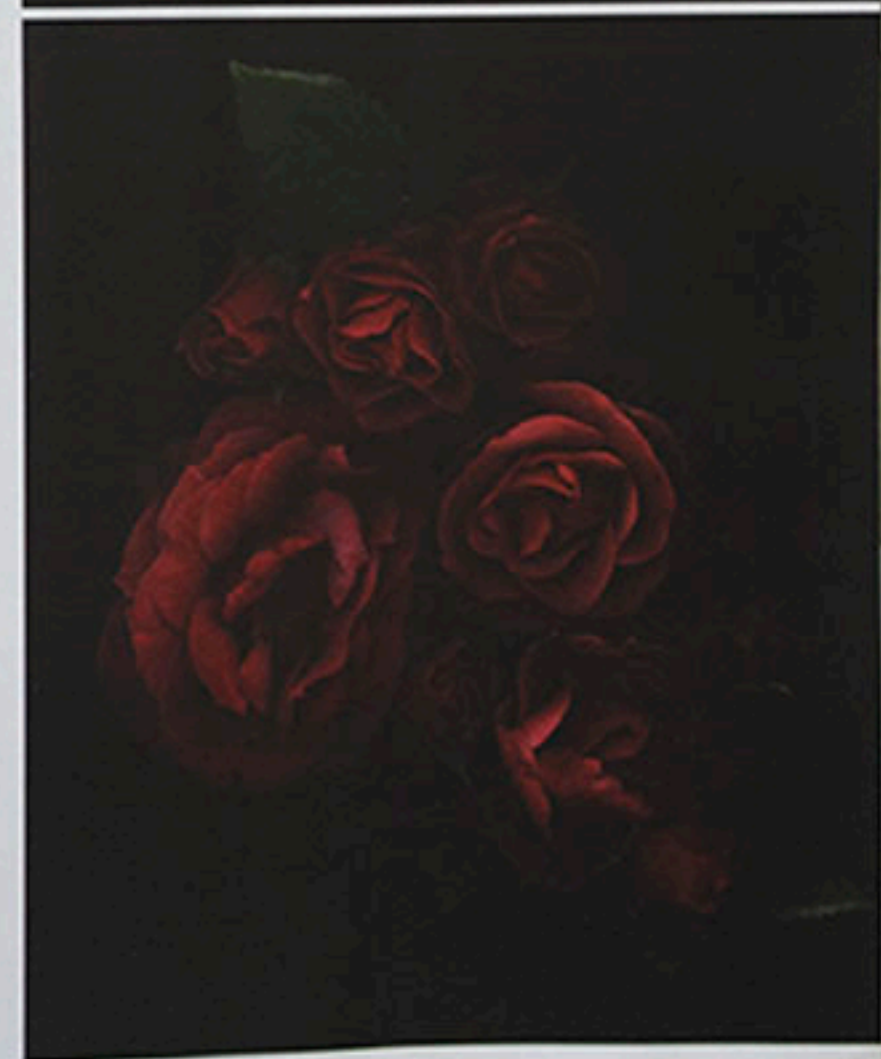


Mary is a Massachusetts Master Gardener and lives in Somerville, Massachusetts. She realized that she could apply the principles she learned through her master gardener coursework to growing roses. She does her research, paying close attention to disease resistance and what will grow well in a container in her zone.

Mary attended an open garden day through the Somerville Garden Club and saw beautiful English roses in the garden. It made her want to have them for herself.

"My dad grew roses in his garden, so I had them around me when I was growing up. I also went to Elizabeth Park often as a kid growing up in Hartford, Connecticut. My parents wedding photos were taken there. Now as a gardener, I go to Elizabeth Park as an adult, taking rose photos that inspire me."

As an urban gardener, Mary grows most of her roses in containers on her 10' by 10' roof garden, along with a few shrubs in the ground around her condo. "Being in containers brings the roses closer to me," shares Mary. "I can watch them more closely and monitor them for pests."



Mary has a background in art, photography and design. (Learn more about Mary and her art at marykocol.com) Her work has been published, exhibited, and is in several permanent collections of prominent museums.

Her latest series, which is still in progress and is previewed here exclusively for *American Rose* readers is called *Botanica*. Her inspiration includes the Victorian era book, *Language of Flowers* by Kate Greenaway; Dutch Master Floral paintings; the Japanese concept of wabi-sabi, the imperfect; and Ikebana flower design.

The artwork uses cameraless, digital imagery. Roses are scanned and then digitally modified. The results are rose portraits that are a way to remember and preserve the perfection of the rose forever.

Mary continues to work on her *Botanica* series, which will have additions from this year's rose season. She is a new American Rose Society member who is showing us new ways to appreciate the roses we grow in our garden. We can't wait to see what she comes up with next!

MARY'S ROSE GARDEN ZONE 6B

'Munstead Wood'
'Golden Celebration'
'Lady Shallot'
'Windmere'
'Hot Cocoa'
'Heritage'
'Tamara'
'Charles Rennie Mackintosh'
'Benjamin Britton'

All photos © Mary Kocol

