

# Thomas Piekunka Artist Statement

Thirty-five years ago, I wondered if it would be possible to make paintings that had no canvas. Was there a way to liberate paint so it could express its own identity? I developed an archival solution, but the result was clumsy and immature. I eventually abandoned my artistic interests to work in the plastic extrusion industry selling equipment to medical device manufacturers. Little did I know that time would inform my dormant creative soul. About five years ago I began having dreams of plastic extrudate morphing into strands of paint. I had found my answer. Since then, through much trial and error, I have developed processes that result in paintings that I call "Freed" paintings. Each Freed painting is made up of hundreds of individual strands of paint suspended in space. The paintings produced with the Freed painting processes are revolutionary departures from Traditional paintings and are unlike anything seen before.

## *Kaleidoscopic* - About the Painting

In February of 2018 I began making hundreds of strands of acrylic paint and hanging them on bars, creating what I call the first "Freed" paintings. This was paint liberated from an application surface, existing freely in three-dimensional space. What I did not realize was that months later those strands would stretch, and wind up as a pile on the floor. Failed paintings.

In August of 2019 I completed my first successful Freed painting entitled, *Kaleidoscopic*. When I say "successful", I mean "archival". The reason the previous paintings failed was because they lacked an important element, encapsulated strength members. The addition of encapsulated strength members to the paint strands prevents them from stretching and provides mechanical strength and archival stability. I had found the key to producing paintings consisting of suspended strands of acrylic paint that will last hundreds of years. I had made the idea started 35 years earlier of freeing paint from the canvas surface a reality.

*Kaleidoscopic* was an experiment to try as many colors as I could and see how they looked as a composition. I'm pleased to say they work together nicely.