



by Jane Maclean

Magic - The Charmed Life

In the July/August 2012 issue readers were introduced to the first three of five panels of MAGIC. This is the rest of the story!



The final brush stroke of MAGIC was bringing the crown rope from the top of panel five into the hands of the crewman in panel three. The two-year process of dreaming, planning, designing, drawing and painting MAGIC was finished. As the deadline drew near, fifteen-hour work days had become the norm, with an intense focus on bringing each element to life. It was now time to celebrate and savor the satisfying memories of creating this monumental narrative. It was also time to acknowledge that during this process, MAGIC had claimed a life of its own. Jane was literally along for the ride! For evidence, look in the upper right corner of panel 4!

Signs of MAGIC's charmed life began early. It was obvious from the immediate interest and enthusiasm from the ballooning community that this project, like ballooning,

would be fun. Although none of the participants knew what the ultimate painting would look like, everyone who was contacted wanted to be involved. Eventually, even friends and neighbors joined in. Images and stories were shared. The internet made it easy. Out of all this information, the full composition that began in Jane's imagination made its way to the canvas. Throughout this time, Jane never saw all five panels displayed as designed. The full size of the oil painting is 6 feet tall and 20 feet wide, with the top of the canvas installed at 8 feet from the floor. Her studio was too small. Strategies were developed to compensate for this liability. When the painting was unveiled September 1, 2012, at The Anderson - Abruzzo Albuquerque International Balloon Museum, Jane saw the complete MAGIC for the first time. Her plans had worked. It was thrilling!

A few days later, MAGIC traveled to Grand Rapids, Michigan and its Art Prize venue, The Huntington Bank. There, it was strikingly displayed on the ground level in the glass atrium entrance with a ceiling that vaulted to the third floor. A helpful index identifying specific balloons and people was included. From September 19th through October 7th there were hundreds of thousands of enthusiastic Art Prize visitors. It didn't matter if it were rain or shine; the people were there to experience the art—as much as they could see! They were on treasure hunts, looking for the works of 1,517 artists from fifty-six countries and forty-five states. It was like the Balloon Fiesta, with art not balloons, as the attraction. Streets were closed, and police directed pedestrian traffic. MAGIC was featured in the newspapers, and Jane was interviewed on the radio. Visitors were animated, happy, polite, and very responsive to MAGIC. The following are samples of guest book entries:

"You did it! You captured the heart of ballooning!"
Cathy Mack;
"I can walk right in." Glen Dale McCallister;
"It really is Magic!" Cara, Brian, Lindsay Oosterhouse;
"So vibrant and alive! The children and adults love identifying Jane, and the different types of balloons. This is a joyful tribute to man's love of being above to gain a new perspective on the world." Maggie Coleman;
"This makes me happy!" Blake Fransens.

Art Prize has now finished its fourth year. The popularity of the event is staggering in scope and content. Although MAGIC did not win a prize, it is clear that without the challenge of Art Prize, MAGIC would not have been conceived or completed. Art Prize, with its liberating, no-rules concept, opens all doors to creativity. It was out of this spirit and intensity that MAGIC was born.

The next chapter in the life of MAGIC is yet to be written. All indications are that it will be enjoyed in a public space. Wherever it ultimately goes, its charm will surely follow.



By popular request, reproductions of MAGIC are now available. There are various sizes on canvas or on paper.

Five-panel images range in size from 10½" x 32" to 19¾" x 60".
Single panel sizes ranges from 12" x 8" to 54" x 36".
There are Limited Editions and Open Editions.
Custom cropping will be available.

Please visit www.JaneMaclean.com for more information