

A Bonus Section for Our Tennessee Readers

# Tennessee

**LIVING**

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places

Twin artists liven up the Memphis art scene with their dual works.  
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**Southern Living**

# Twin Aspirations

Jerry and Terry Lynn gain attention in the art world with their dual works.



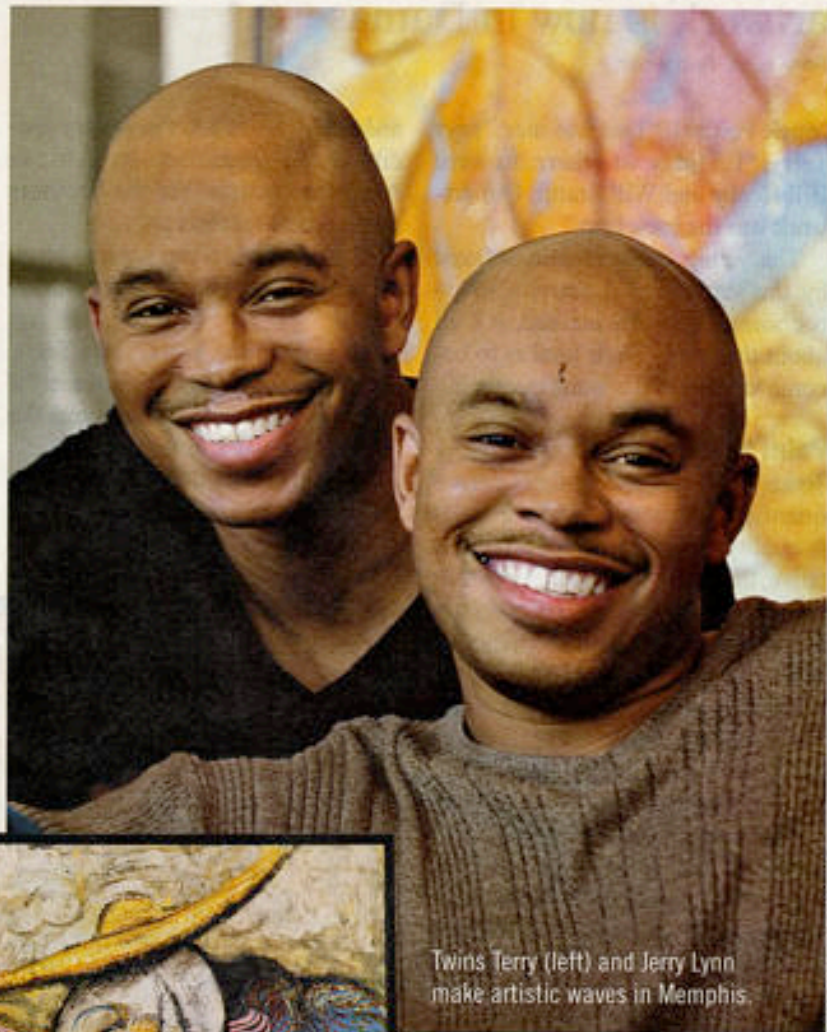
As children, Jerry and Terry Lynn spoke a language only they understood. Growing up in Arlington on the outskirts of Memphis, the Lynn kids eventually outgrew “twin speak.” But today the 29-year-old identical twins still share a special form of communication—collaborative art.

Side by side, one brother begins a painting on a canvas, while the other adds to—or obliterates—his brother’s strokes. They don’t recall exactly when their co-painting began. “We’ve always created works together,” Jerry says as he settles into a sofa at his downtown Memphis apartment. Terry sits beside his brother after making the short drive from his Midtown apartment.

Little or no conversation passes between them when they create. “If we’re talking, we’re talking about sports or something like that,” says Jerry. “We’re not talking about the painting.” Neither recalls ever second-guessing their shared creative judgement. Intuitively, they realize their artistic duality enhances the results.

## Two for One

The work they create as professional artists bears the singular signature



Twins Terry (left) and Jerry Lynn make artistic waves in Memphis.



“Memphis serves as an inspiration for our work.”

Terry Lynn, Twin artist

“Twin.” Their paintings range from abstract to realism, and both artists work well with a variety of media.

Twin works are found in major museums, galleries, art shows, and residences. Most recently, a painting by Jerry and Terry became part of the Art in Embassies Program. “Artists from the United States are selected, and their works are put in embassies across the world,” Terry explains. “Our artwork is now in Damascus.”

The Tennessee natives have also provided paintings for prestigious events, including the National Black Fine Art Show, the National Black Arts Festival, the Philadelphia International Art Expo, and the Essence

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Music Festival. "That was nice," says Terry. "P. Diddy was there, as were Bill Cosby and Will Smith. Our artwork was the backdrop."

The young artists remain unfazed by the star-studded activities surrounding their art. Instead, it's all about the work. Their goal is to become artisans of the grand master ilk.

### Paint by Numbers

Toward that end, the brothers pursue quantity, which they believe leads to quality. Twin's Memphis representative, the David Lusk Gallery ([www.davidluskgallery.com](http://www.davidluskgallery.com)), recently exhibited the artists' latest herculean efforts. For more than two months, the brothers created five paintings a day. "In basketball, you have to practice to get better," says Jerry with a shrug. "It's the same with art."

For many of their subjects, Jerry and Terry call on their rural upbringing among a tight-knit extended family. The faith taught to them by their parents, James and Dorothy, remains a strong part of their outlook today.

Twin paintings reflect such scenes as a young girl wading into a body of water for baptism, a man witnessing a burning church, and a quilt-draped woman comforting a child. Jazz and blues performers often come to life on canvases as well. Though the artists depict the rich musical heritage of the city, their works also display other cultural influences.

**Black, White, and Sold All Over**  
E & S Gallery in Louisville is another Twin representative. The gallery's Web site ([www.eandsgallery.com](http://www.eandsgallery.com)) touts enticing images of Jerry and Terry's versatile works, with titles such as *Honey Colored Harmony*, *From Whence We Came*, *The Witness*, and *Two Weary*. Owned by Walter

and Cathy Shannon, the gallery specializes in paintings by African American artists. Yet the brothers abhor labels for their art.

"I don't think of our work as black or white," explains Jerry. "Our work..."

"...is from the heart," says Terry, completing his brother's sentence. "If anything, it's truly American. We think of our work as universal."

He adds, "We don't think about money while we work. We create." Jerry agrees: "When we go into the

Jerry (left) and Terry work on a 4- x 5-foot canvas. They usually paint in silence, letting brushstrokes determine the creative outcome.



The role of cotton in Memphis defines this piece by Jerry and Terry.

## A Portrait Of the Artists as Young Men

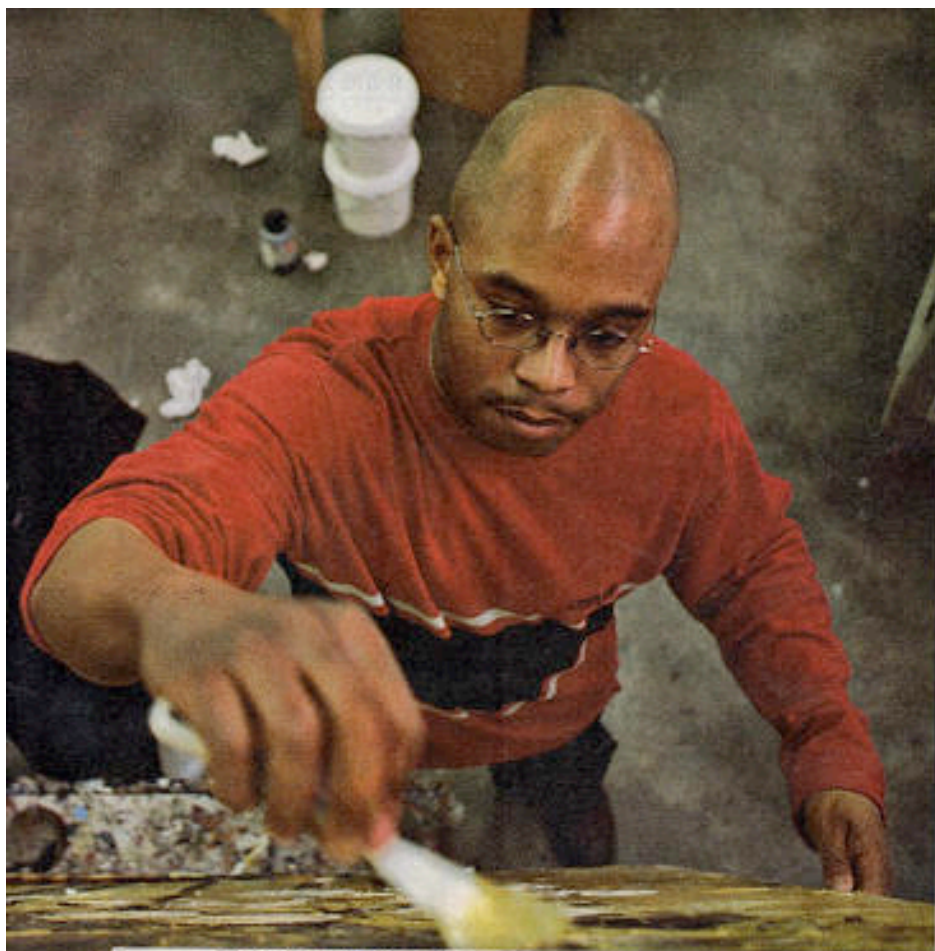
While their friends were obsessed with video games, the Lynn twins plopped down their allowances at art-supply stores “buying different types of charcoals, pastels, papers, and so forth,” says Terry. “We would go to the library and spend hours in the art section.”

Only basketball vied for the youngsters’ attention. But their coach—a science teacher—discouraged the Lynn boys. “You guys are straight-A students,” he said. “Go into academics.” Reluctantly, they agreed.

Jerry and Terry entered The University of Memphis with academic scholarships and a misguided choice of study in architecture technology. Art seemed too out-there as a career path. Then came the wake-up call when they received their first-ever poor grades.

“It’s not like we were party animals or anything,” says Jerry. Lack of interest was the problem. So the twins decided to follow their hearts. “We took our art portfolio to the art department, and it was like, ‘This is great. Where have you guys been?’” recalls Terry.

With renewed purpose, they retook the earlier classes and aced them. Eventually Jerry changed his major again, this time to business. Even before they graduated, the Lynns were well on their way to professional careers, selling their art in a (now-closed) art gallery on Beale Street, making Twin a familiar name to tourists from around the world.



David Lusk (center) represents the artists in Memphis. The talented duo uses the signature “Twin” to credit work such as *Dadgum Blues*.

studio, we usually don’t even know how much time has gone by.”

That’s not to say the Lynn brothers don’t aim high when it comes to financial success. “The goal,” says Jerry, “is to become *the* top-selling artists.”

### Start Spreading the Muse

To take their art to the next level, the brothers plan a move to New York City. “But I’m not canceling my lease here,” says Terry.

Jerry laughs and adds, “We travel so much, it’s not like we ‘live’ in Memphis anyway.” When here, he admits, “I just sleep on the floor.”

Dual homes for the dual artists makes perfect sense, yet the Bluff City will always remain the heart of their art. “Memphis serves as an inspiration for our work,” says Terry.

“Yeah, we *can’t* leave Memphis,” Jerry says. “It would take the soul out of the paintings.”

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