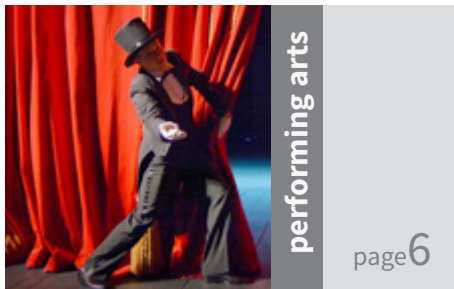


State of the ARTS

Winter 2021
January • February
• March

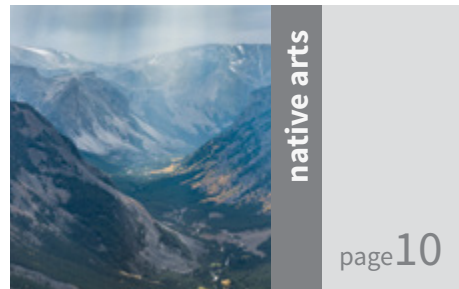
MONTANA ARTS COUNCIL

Providing information to all Montanans through funding by the National Endowment for the Arts and the State of Montana



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LITERARY ARTS

Photo courtesy of Brian D'Ambrosio

Montana Poet Laureate M.L. Smoker

Carefully, she twines language, fuses vocabulary. In the process of enlightenment, words are threaded, deleted, stacked and rotated. Bit by bit, a full, rich poem of understanding, love and freedom prevails. Her poems are universally relatable and punctuated by profound moments of personal transformation.

Read more, page 12



VISUAL ARTS

Photo courtesy of Christina Rothe

Tapestry of Art and Love

Multi-media artist Christina Rothe's *OneHeart Call Project* began with creative collaborations with everyday people in socially and culturally diverse communities. As her path unfolded and connected with the lives of different people, it grew into an artistic humanitarian project, reminding her that "we all have one thing in common which is our beautiful heart."

Read more, page 18

Statewide Art News



PERFORMING ARTS

Photo courtesy of Megan Karls

Decommissioned

When COVID hit last March, Megan Karls had "no idea what to do and suddenly, playing at decommissioned sites became the only option." She saw an opportunity to bring together her community and her musical passions in a new, unconventional way.

Read more, page 8



ARTS LEARNING

Photo courtesy of Art Mobile of Montana

Art Mobile of Montana: Experience Art at Home

A nonprofit, traveling arts outreach and inclusion organization serves schools and diverse groups across the state. And now it offers virtual exhibitions for adults too. While there's no substitute for experiencing art in person, Art Mobile allows visitors to view public sculptures, murals and performances from the safety of home.

Read more, page 20

See the Governor's Arts Awards Special Section Inside



Tatiana Gant
Executive Director
tatiana.gant@mt.gov

“I have carried the idea that people value living with ready access to culture”

In this issue of State of the Arts, we explore the idea of the arts at home. Frankly, I’m tired of being at home. When the pandemic hit, there was a novelty in working, learning and living in the same place. Summer let me expand my range and gave me long days to take in the beauty of our surroundings. Now, as we transition into another indoor season, I’m feeling a bit stifled.

My pandemic experience has not been one of having time on my hands or slowing down. No bread has been baked; no hobbies explored. As a government agency, the Montana Arts Council has continued essential functions and has been nearly consumed with relief and recovery efforts. The MAC staff has been doing the exhausting work of thinking differently, working within our system and designing for the largest impact.

Our new Communication Director, Eric Heidle, whom you’ll meet in this issue, shared a tweet that resonated with me:



As MAC designed its pandemic response, we were acutely aware that creators were largely ignored in the relief funding efforts. We knew that if we didn’t support the individuals along with the partners that perform, present and publish their work, we would have nothing to fill those hours in our days. In this issue, I hope you find inspiration in the ways that artists, and culture, are staying active.

Early in my government career, I had the chance to hear Richard Florida speak on his 2002 book, *The Rise of the Creative Class*. From that talk, I have carried the idea that people value living with ready access to culture, even when they don’t participate with high frequency. They want to know that it’s there, a possibility should they choose it. In a sense, technology has kept us connected to culture.

Technology isn’t the answer for everyone. In Montana, we have so many regions that don’t have reliable connections. I have hit a wall trying to do everything online, which has led me to appreciate what I have access to in my community.

This issue includes the announcement of the Governors Arts Award recipients. As we prepared our recognition, I had the chance to see the work of one of the honorees, Gordon McConnell, in an exhibit currently touring Montana. It was a special moment to have learned about the artists and then had the chance to see the artwork up close and personal. The tour is made possible with the Montana Art Gallery Directors Association’s coordination and support, which is expertly run by another honoree, Patty Bergquist. After the exhibit leaves Helena and goes on to Sydney and Great Falls, I hope many will take the opportunity to enjoy this art in person.

As we enter the dark days of winter, I write this with a sense of hope. On December 21—the solstice—we’ll see a conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter, two of the brightest lights in the sky meeting on the darkest day of the year. After that, we’ll have more sunlight each day, and the pandemic that’s kept us indoors and out of touch will hopefully be chased into the shadows by the light of modern medicine. By the time you’re reading this, we’ll be well on our way. As for celebrating the arts at home, well, all of Montana’s our home. And until we’re once again free to ramble at will, we’ll keep working to make sure there’s art in every room.

Meet MAC’s Communication Director, Eric Heidle

Following a brief three-decade detour into the worlds of advertising and publishing, Eric Heidle is finally putting his fine art degree to work as the Montana Arts Council’s new communication director. A Helena native, Eric has previously worked as a graphic designer, art director, photographer, copywriter and video editor—all skills he’ll use at MAC to share our mission of nurturing the arts for Montanans in every walk of life.

“I’ve worked on lots of communications efforts to support Montana’s tourism and agriculture industries, its public health and safety, and many businesses, but advocating directly for the arts is essentially my dream job,” Eric says. “Art was always the thing I loved most when growing up, and pursuing a career in graphic design led me to many other creative opportunities. I’ve been really fortunate to work with creative people across a range of disciplines, and I’m excited to have the chance to help advance the arts in my home state.”

At MAC, Eric will oversee the agency’s social media presence, website, print and digital publications, public relations and other communications efforts. He’s also hoping to expand our use of audio

and video to share more of the ways creative Montanans are working successfully in the Big Sky.

Eric’s past experience includes tenure at two prominent Montana ad agencies and a pair of the state’s publishing firms. An MSU graduate, he’s also taught design classes there and at the University of Providence in Great Falls. In recent years, his personal creative interests have included his pursuit of landscape and portrait photography, as well as fiction and nonfiction writing, which he’s written for several anthologies and periodicals. As an enthusiastic outdoorsman, when he’s not on the job it’s usually possible to find Eric kayaking Montana’s rivers and lakes, hiking its trails and peaks, or failing to catch any fish.



Ask him all about it at [eric.heidle@mt.gov](mailto:heidle@mt.gov) or 406-444-6133.

State of the Arts Welcomes Submissions

State of the Arts welcomes submissions of photographs, press releases and newsworthy information from individual artists and arts organizations.

Next deadline: The deadline for submissions is February 25 for the spring issue (April-June).

Please check with the Montana Arts Council for reprint permission.

Send items to:

Montana Arts Council, PO Box 202201, Helena, MT 59620-2201

phone 406-444-6430

fax 406-444-6548

email mac@mt.gov

Sign up for MAC’s eNews

art.mt.gov/enews or send us an email at: mac@mt.gov

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Montana State Historic Preservation Office Awards Grants



Photo courtesy of Montana Historical Society

The Montana Historical Society's State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) is awarding eight grants totaling over \$430,000 through its Revitalizing Montana's Rural Heritage (RMRH) grant program. Projects include: Basin Creek Caretaker's House, Silver Bow County (\$100,000); Broadway Apartments, Lewistown (\$40,000); Roundup Central School (\$60,000); Dion Block, Glendive (\$65,000); F.M. Mack Mercantile, Augusta (\$24,500); I.G. Baker House, Fort Benton (\$66,480); Montana Hotel, Anaconda (\$54,061); and Waterworks Museum, Miles City (\$20,306).

RMRH is supported in part by a grant from the Historic Revitalization Subgrant Program (HRSP) from the Historic Preservation Fund administered by the National Park Service, Department of the Interior. SHPO is among nine entities nationwide to obtain HRSP funds in the program's inaugural cycle. Grants are for physical repairs and improvements to properties listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

According to SHPO's Community Preservation Coordinator, Kate Hampton,

"RMRH's goal is to renew community anchors—properties that will in turn serve as catalysts for economic stability

and growth in their communities. These projects preserve the fabric and history of the rural experience, celebrate and educate people about the past, and facilitate a sustainable future for the generations that follow."

SHPO's idea for the RMRH program came from seeing homegrown preservation projects in rural communities across the state. Ekalaka established its town hall and library in an empty bank the town preserved; one by one, Philipsburg's commercial building owners reinvented the town by repainting their Victorian-era building facades; and Deer Lodge's Rialto Theatre rose from the ashes of a devastating fire to maintain its status as the community's gathering place on Main Street.

Said State Historic Preservation Officer, Pete Brown:

"With these pioneering projects, we saw the seeds planted by one or two property owners grow into a cultural, economic and social ecosystem. We see that same desire and potential in the projects we're funding."

SHPO will broadly spread its one-time RMRH funds geographically and thematically across the state, in places with populations under 50,000, supporting museums and historic residential and commercial projects.

For more information, contact Pete Brown at Montana SHPO at 406-444-7718 or pebrown@mt.gov.

The TourWest Cycle Will Begin in January 2021



TourWest is a competitive grant program (funded by the National Endowment for the Arts) that provides subsidies to arts and community organizations in the 13-state WESTAF region for the presentation of out-of-state-touring performing and literary artists. The WESTAF region includes the states of Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington and Wyoming.

Visit www.tourwest.gosmart.org to learn more.

Montana Performing Arts Consortium, January 2021 Goes Virtual

Artist pitches, a presenter summit, and state of the organization and grantor meetings will be held. Workshops for artists and presenters will be offered. Put Jan. 30 on your calendar!

Visit www.mtperformingarts.rocks to learn more.



MONTANA ARTS COUNCIL
an agency of state government

The Announcement of the Governor's Arts Awards

See Our Special Section Inside

Congratulations to...

Cowboy Hall of Fame



Congratulations to John L. Moore on his 2021 induction into the Montana Pro Rodeo Hall and Wall of Fame.

Montana born, Moore grew up ranching and still runs his own place north of Miles City today, but it's as a writer that he's made his biggest contribution to the Western lifestyle. Working for newspapers such as the Miles City Star and Great Falls Tribune, he changed rodeo coverage state-wide with his in-depth reporting on all aspects of the sport. The PRCA and the Montana Summer Circuit both honored him for his coverage. As a novelist, journalist, poet, nonfiction author and photographer, he has earned national recognition and numerous awards.

This latest honor, the Lifetime Achievement Award, represents a life spent leading the way, preserving history, giving honor to others, and always emphasizing honesty and authenticity.

New Music Director



Missoula Symphony Association Announces New Music Director

Jim Valeo, board president, introduced Julia Tai as the new Music Director for the Missoula Symphony Orchestra and Chorale. He said Tai's hiring is the culmination of a search process begun over 2½ years ago, which was lengthened by the pandemic.

Tai has training and performance experience in conducting, vocal, choral and violin performance. Most recently, she was the music director of two ensembles in the Seattle area and served as a guest conductor nationally and internationally. Valeo said Tai is the ideal person for the position due to her broad experience in all aspects of the job.

Tai is in Missoula as need and COVID-19 constraints permit. Her first concert with the orchestra is scheduled in early 2021.

The Wrangler Award



Montana The Magazine of Western History has garnered several awards recently.

David Beyreis, author of "If you had fought bravely I would have sung for you: The Changing Roles of Cheyenne Women during Nineteenth-Century Plains Warfare" (Spring 2019) won a prestigious Wrangler Award for Best Short Nonfiction from the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Center in Oklahoma City. Beyreis's article was also a finalist for the Best Western Short Nonfiction award.

The Spur Award



The winner of the Spur Award for Best Western Short Nonfiction was Flannery Burke for her article titled "Worry, U.S.A.: Dude Ranch Advertising Looks East, 1915-1945," which appeared in the Summer 2019 issue. Published by the Montana Historical Society since 1951, the magazine and its authors have received numerous honors.

MSU Grads Win Emmy



MSU Film Grads Win National Emmy

Dawson Dunning, Jeff Reed, Rick Smith and Thomas Winston, all affiliated with Bozeman-based Grizzly Creek Films, won the national Emmy for their work on *Epic Yellowstone*, a four-part series about Yellowstone National Park and its impact on the region that aired in 2019 on the Smithsonian Channel. All four are graduates of Montana State University's Science and Natural History Filmmaking program.

Still image from Grizzly Creek Films documentary. Photo courtesy Grizzly Creek Films

Development Director



Arts Missoula Welcomes Magda Chaney as Development Director

Magda brings her passion for music, desire to help children and love for connecting people across cultures, borders and languages to the role as development director. As the board president of the String Orchestra of the Rockies, Magda led the fundraising, donor relations and stewardship effort. During her 14-year tenure at the University of Montana Foundation, she held many roles, ranging from advancement services to security awareness education and project management. She is an accredited foreign language translator/interpreter and has taught foreign languages at all academic levels. In her new role, she says the door to her office is always open and the tea kettle always on.

Dean of the College



Dr. Laurie Baefsky Named Dean of the College of the Arts and Media at UM

Starting her new role in January, Baefsky says, "I'm excited to immerse myself in the vibrant arts scene that defines UM and Missoula. I am inspired by Missoula as a thriving arts and cultural hub, and even more so by the people I've met that make UM such a special destination." Reed Humphrey, acting provost and vice president for academic affairs, says "Dr. Baefsky comes to UM with a successful track record in traditional and interdisciplinary program development—both inside and outside of academia. She presented a compelling vision for the future of arts and media throughout the recruitment process, and I am confident her experience in the arts and academia will help her succeed in leading the College of the Arts and Media."



Brian Kahn

Excerpt from the Helena Independent Record powered by Legacy

January 22, 1947 – October 29, 2020

Brian Jackson Kahn was an insatiably curious citizen of the world. He worked to uplift the human condition. Brian died from a heart attack on Oct. 29, while on a hunting trip with his wife, Sandra Dal Poggetto, in their adopted state of Montana. He was 73.

Kahn's passion for the natural world and his urge to bring people of varying viewpoints together around national and global issues fueled his many wide-ranging successes in a variety of public positions: boxing coach, environmental conservationist, candidate for Congress, mediation attorney, documentary filmmaker, author and journalist, radio broadcaster and youth advocate.

Upon graduating from law school and serving as a legislative aide, he returned to Sonoma County and served two terms on the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors. He was later appointed to the California Fish and Game Commission where he was elected president. He played a significant role in restoring the almost extinct California Condor. He also produced an acclaimed documentary, *Return of the Desert Big Horn*. Then he traveled several times to the Soviet Union to research and film *A Thousand Cranes*, an award-winning documentary on international efforts to save the Siberian Crane. During this period, Kahn was appointed to the California Board of Corrections by Governor Jerry Brown.

In 1982, Kahn married his beloved Sandra. They moved to Helena, Montana in 1989, where Kahn became director of the Montana Nature Conservancy for six years, and Sandra continued her career as a fine arts painter. They lived in Helena for the rest of his life, often visiting their small cabin near West Yellowstone. Kahn founded his nonprofit organization, Artemis Wildlife Foundation. Artemis became the umbrella organization for the public radio show, *Home Ground Radio*, a half-hour public affairs program with topics ranging from the environment to the politics of Montana and the rural West. Launched in 1996, it aired on more than 30 public and private radio stations in the Rocky Mountain West. The Montana Broadcasters Association named it as the state's Outstanding Non-commercial Radio Program in 2002. The archive contains over 1,000 hours of interviews in the course of 24 years.

Two other nonprofits he created are: Friends of Francis (Pope Francis), a global initiative focusing on creating a better world; and American Jobs for America's Youth, striving to foster life and work skills in young people

through collaboration with community members and organizations.

Kahn also helped initiate a program designed to bring together ranching families and environmentalists. He was a key facilitator with the Madison Valley Ranchland Group, working to protect the ranching way of life while recognizing the need for biologically healthy open spaces. In 2006, Kahn was instrumental in creating the Montana Forest Network and served on its advisory committee. And in 2009, he received the Montana Governor's Award for the Humanities.

www.legacy.com



Chip Jasmin

Published in Woonsocket Call from Nov. 2 to Nov. 10, 2020.

December 12, 1949 – October 27, 2020

George "Chip" Albert Jasmin III passed away peacefully on Tuesday, Oct. 27, in Montana.

Chip was born Dec. 12, 1949, in Woonsocket, RI, to Cecile and George Jasmin Jr. He graduated from Slippery Rock University in Pennsylvania, earning bachelor's and master's degrees in education, while making a name for himself on the football field as a formidable defensive end.

In 1990, Amy gave birth to their son, Cove. For eight years, Chip, Amy and Cove traveled throughout Montana and the Northwest, sharing music with schools and communities. Chip and Amy were loving, attentive parents. During these unique adventures, they taught Cove the importance of sharing happiness and giving to others, whether it be through music, dance, communing with nature or spending quality time with dear friends, old and new. Amy passed away on Aug. 5, 2001.

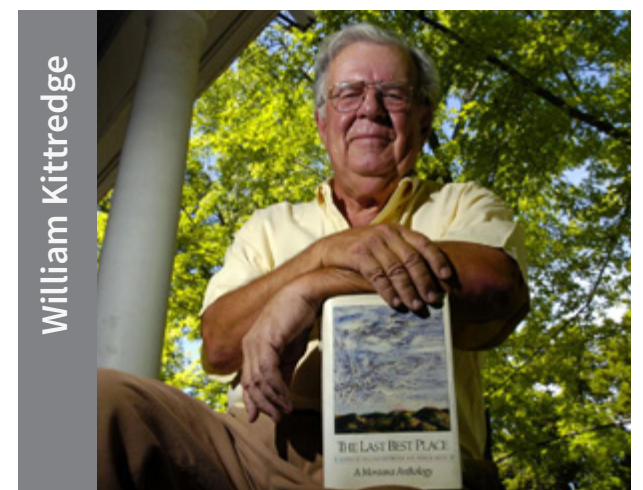
Chip and Cove then boarded a camper and spent the next year teaching and playing music in classrooms, dance halls and living rooms across the country. Returning to the Bitterroot Valley, Chip maintained an active schedule as a musician, singer, storyteller, dance caller and teacher for the next 30+ years. He created musical programs for people of all ages that integrated song, dance, movement and story to teach about culture, history, geography, respect for humanity, global awareness, wildlife and the natural environment.

Chip was the life of the party, the first one to burst out singing in an audience, and the happiest person in the room. He loved people unconditionally and had a knack for making everyone around him feel accepted and special. Even as he experienced the inevitable decline associated with his Alzheimer's diagnosis, his passion for music endured, his guitar providing

peace to him through some of the darkest periods of the disease.

In the spring of 2020, Cove and his fiancée, Amy Darling, put together a fundraiser to provide more professional care for Chip. The resounding generosity in response to their call was a beautiful testament to the positive effect Chip had on the people and communities he served. We hope those same people might sing a song, do a jig and share a laugh in tribute to Chip's legacy of connection through music, humor and good company.

Further details and opportunities to contribute your own memories are at the following website: chip-jasmin.forevermissed.com.



William Kittredge

From Montana Public Radio

August 14, 1932 – December 4, 2020

Author, educator and essayist William Kittredge died Dec. 4 in Missoula at the age of 88. Kittredge was raised in Oregon but ended his life as a Montana icon.

William Kittredge was a towering presence—and not just in the literary realm. "They called him 'The Buffalo,' you know, because he had that kind of forward-leaning energy and that big head, with a big shock of hair on it," says Kittredge's friend and colleague Lois Welch.

Welch is a University of Montana professor emeritus who for years directed UM's creative writing program. She remembers Kittredge as a truly macho Western man who was raised on a southeastern Oregon ranch. "Early he did all of those things you see in Westerns: the horse riding, the herding, the camaraderie of guys riding horses." But Kittredge eventually grew disillusioned with, and wrote about, what he viewed as irresponsible ranching and farming practices, and his writing challenged prevailing myths of the American West.

Among his many accomplishments, Kittredge co-edited *The Last Best Place: A Montana Anthology* and created the anthology's name which is loved by Montanans. "Many of his students remember terrific advice," Welch says. "He certainly launched—with a good kick to the back end—a raft of really good writers." His work was published in magazines ranging from *The Atlantic*, to *Harpers* and *Esquire*. He co-produced the movie *A River Runs Through It* and received a Lifetime Achievement Award at the Montana Book Festival in 2017.

Kittredge's family is planning a memorial service for sometime after the pandemic when people can safely gather and celebrate.

www.mtpr.org/post/author-william-kittredge

Performing Arts

Film

STAY-IN CINEMA GUIDE



Rancho Deluxe

Released: 1975

Starring Jeff Bridges and Jimmy Buffett

Rancho Deluxe, a contemporary Western film, was directed by Frank Perry. Jeff Bridges and Sam Waterston star as two cattle rustlers in modern-day Livingston, Montana

Discover more:
www.imdb.com

The Far Horizons

Released: 1955

Starring Charlton Heston and Donna Reed

This American Western film directed by Rudolph Maté and starring Fred MacMurray, Charlton Heston, Donna Reed and Barbara Hale is about an expedition led by Lewis and Clark.

Discover more:
www.imdb.com



Montana

Released: 1950

Starring Errol Flynn

An Australian sheepman comes to Montana looking for grazing space and is opposed by local ranchers and a wealthy cattlegwoman.

Discover more:
www.imdb.com

Evel Knievel

Released: 1971

Starring George Hamilton

The story is a biography, with fictionalized events, of the famed motorcycle daredevil who grew up in Butte, Montana.

Discover more:
www.imdb.com



The 2021 Big Sky Documentary Film Festival Is Going Virtual: February 19 through February 28
Festival passes will grant you access to 75 different films, all watched at home. Get passes at bigskyfilmfest.org

Finding Adventure Close to Home

How the Kootenai River Became a Starring Actor

By Allison Whitmer

Covid-19 has certainly made for an interesting year for filmmakers, as it has for nearly every person and industry across the globe.

Instead of holding grip frames against the wind and eating salad in a breezy meadow, filmmakers have been attempting to work safely, stay physically distanced and keep healthy. There are now production zones in place to keep only the minimum number of crew members and actors on the set at one time. Actors on the job are being tested three times a week, and there are new PPE, cleaning and food safety requirements.

For the rest of us, restrictions on travel mean looking closer to home for socially distanced adventures. Luckily, the U.S. offers countless outdoor vacation opportunities that can be accessed with relative safety and still satisfy our taste for exciting getaways.

One such place is right here in Montana and has played a starring role in more than one top-rated action adventure.



The Kootenai River, Montana

The River Wild, filmed in 1994, takes an action-packed look at a family vacation gone very, very wrong. Meryl Streep, Kevin Bacon and David Strathairn, along with John C. Reilly, portray a family dealing with a marital crisis that encounters a group of violent criminals in the wilderness. And it's not just any wilderness. The production team scouted and filmed the Rogue River in Oregon and the Colorado River in Colorado, and finally moved on to Montana. The middle fork of the Flathead River was just a warmup for the major whitewater rafting scenes to come.

The mighty Kootenai River in northwestern Montana is a spectacular river, and also one of the major tributaries of the Columbia River that empties into the Pacific Ocean. It pulls glacial waters and snowmelt between Montana and Canada and runs 485 miles from the headwaters in the Canadian Rockies. The area was originally home to Indigenous peoples the Ktunaxa, or Kootenai, who were isolated from many other tribes in the region by the surrounding steep mountains and difficult passes.

Today, much of the area is protected wilderness or limited use.

In the film, there is a dreaded whitewater feature called "The Gauntlet." This part of the river forces all of the characters to work together, or they will all surely perish. The filmmakers chose the incredible Kootenai Falls for this sequence. It is the largest undammed waterfalls in Montana.

Because the area is considered sacred, detailed conversations between the studio and the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes took place before permission was granted to allow filming there. It's also in a protected area of the national forest and on a river with hydroelectric

dams. Numerous permits were written, and eventually a team of whitewater safety experts began preparing the site for filming. Every hole made by an anchor put in the river had to be refilled after filming so that no trace was left.

Even with safety precautions, the cast was tossed about into the water, with Meryl Streep nearly drowning at the end of one day of filming. Flotation devices and expert handling kept her safe. During one scene, an oar slammed into a stunt double and threw him from the raft. Thinking quickly, the crew reworked a scene to include it, and was able to make several other creative changes to incorporate these "happy accidents."

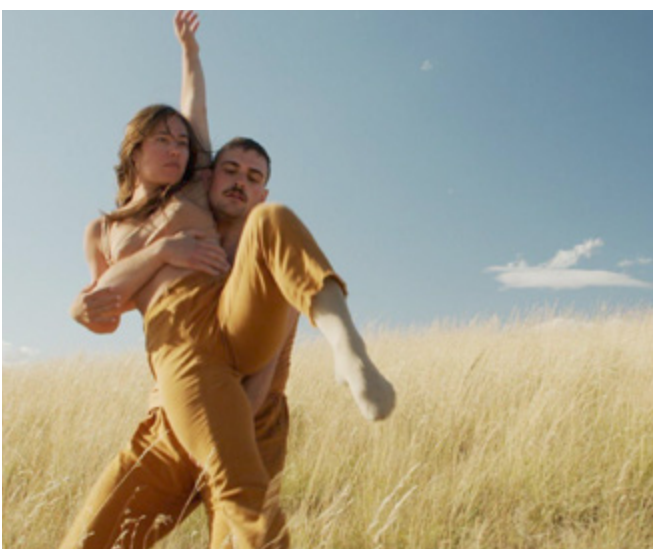
Streep as an action hero became the focus of the film, and her work earned her a Golden Globe and SAG nomination for Best Actress. Kevin Bacon also received a Golden Globe nomination. Released in September 1994, the *The River Wild* grossed more than \$94 million worldwide.

When another adventure film needed a harrowing whitewater sequence, *The Revenant* returned to Montana in 2015, sending Leonardo DiCaprio's character, Hugh Glass, over the freezing waterfalls of the Kootenai River.

Luckily, you can visit this stunning part of Montana with much less hassle, and I encourage you to walk the swinging bridge a half mile downstream to get the full effect.

Both *The River Wild* and *The Revenant* are available on major video rental and streaming sites. **Learn more about films made in Montana at montanafilm.com and follow us on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.** Read more about COVID-19 requirements on film sets, "The Safe Way Forward," at <https://www.sagaftra.org/news-events/news/covid-19/safety-first>

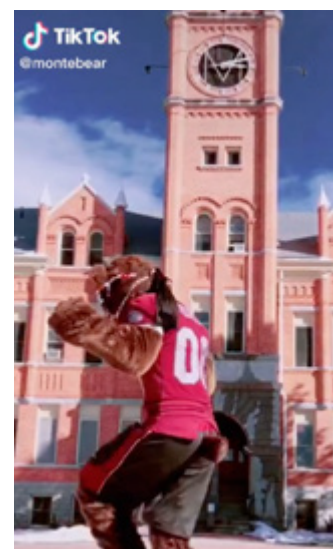
Dance



ensō | mountain divide

Directed by Faith Morrison & Robert Uehlin

Featured at Kinetoscope: International Screendance Film Festival, Montana's premiere dance film festival, this screendance conveys a "kinesthetic experience of place" in the Anaconda-Pintler Wilderness.



Check out Monte's TikTok success at [@montebear!](https://www.tiktok.com/@montebear)

To learn more about the story behind his success, visit:

www.montanakaimin.com



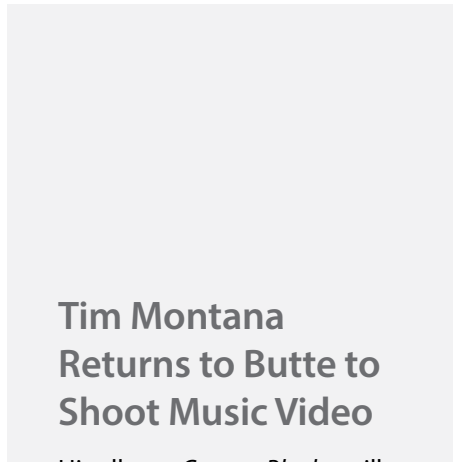
N

Pieces of Road

At once traditional and original, Stuart Weber's new album is a heartfelt, profound homage to the spirit of the American West. The classical guitarist captures the essence of his native Rocky Mountains, crediting long Montana winters as his inspiration.

Learn More at:

www.stuartweber.com/works
or listen on Spotify, Apple
and Amazon



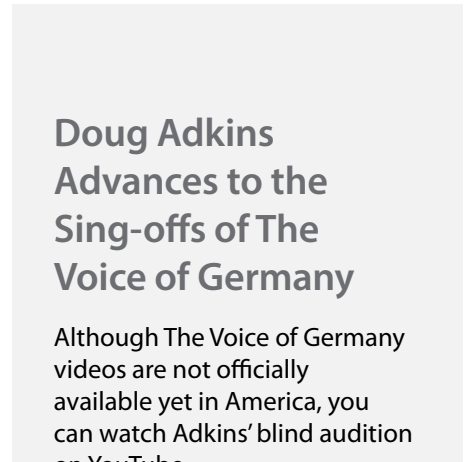
Tim Montana Returns to Butte to Shoot Music Video

His album, *Cars on Blocks*, will be released sometime in 2021, and it will be available for streaming and purchase.



John Luther Adams and the JACK Quartet Release *Lines Made By Walking*

The title piece was created looking out over the beautiful but daunting silhouette of the Beartooth Mountains at the 12,000-acre Tippet Rise Art Center north of Red Lodge.



Doug Adkins Advances to the Sing-offs of The Voice of Germany

Although *The Voice of Germany* videos are not officially available yet in America, you can watch Adkins' blind audition on YouTube

Learn More at:

[www.youtube.com/
watch?v=9zjdDN_ut4Y](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9zjdDN_ut4Y).



Photo courtesy of Megan Karls

Continued from page 1

Megan Karls Plays *Decommissioned*

By Dana Waganer

From the moment she took her first violin out of the case and played a string, Megan Karls felt like she'd been "struck by lightning and life had changed forever. It was love at first sight." Weeks earlier, the middle school orchestra had performed *The Phantom of the Opera* at her elementary school. "It blew my mind," Megan said. "I grew up in Wisconsin to a working-class family. Thankfully, I was in a public-school system that supported a music program."

Fast forward some 20 years to an active career in chamber music, orchestral and recital engagements across the United States. Which begs the question: How does a co-concertmaster of the Great Falls Symphony come to play at decommissioned military installations in Montana? "On our honeymoon, my husband and I went to St. Marie, Montana.

"We've been enamored with the decaying prairie for years." Considered a Cold War, semi-ghost town, St. Marie is a mix of abandoned and saved housing from the former Glasgow Air Force Base, which closed for the second time in 1976. Life in northern Montana is remote. Vast miles of forbidding prairie separate small, isolated towns. It is a beautiful and inspiring landscape to live in for an artist. During the Cold War era, a number of Air Force installations developed along the Montana-Canada border. Megan's home in Great Falls, MT is surrounded by nuclear missile silos still in operation today, and the region is dotted with abandoned installations for hundreds of miles.

When COVID hit last March, Megan had "no idea what to do and suddenly, playing at decommissioned sites became the only option." She saw an opportunity to bring together her community and her musical passions in a new, unconventional way. "These socially

distanced times gave me the perfect opportunity to travel and record in these historic structures. Extreme temperatures, varied acoustics and the fierce prairie wind all made this project a special challenge—adversity training for the artist in quarantine.”

Then, in October 2020, Megan announced, “Today, from a deep well of gratitude and humility, I share that the Montana Arts Council has deemed *Decommissioned* worthy of their support. I am so humbled by their generosity and belief in this project. Recording is finished, and soon the visual album will be out!”

Every space she’d recorded from for *Decommissioned* was considered prohibited. In a St. Marie nondenominational church, the structure was crumbling—all except for the sanctuary, which was undecayed, white and glistening. “I took it as a sign,” she said. There she played “Chaconne,” a 15-minute masterwork by J.S. Bach. Also recorded for the album is Grant Harville’s (music director of the Great Falls Symphony) “Flare,” commissioned specifically for the Havre Air Force Station racquetball court and its unique eight-second-delay acoustic.

Megan draws inspiration from composers like Pauline Oliveros, an American composer and pioneer who writes deep listening music, written for the space you’re listening in and giving back to that environment. Also, John Luther Adams, an Alaskan composer who writes music that has a profound sense of place.

Decommissioned is available in January 2021, when it will be distributed on USB drives that mimic the vintage cassette tape. Available at Cassiopeia Books and the Great Falls Symphony gift shop, the album includes all video tracks, as well as photos and the coordinates where each recording took place.

“Before the pandemic, I found myself getting caught up in the rat race, preoccupied, going from gig to gig. The pandemic has given me the opportunity to see how grateful I am to be an artist. It’s only renewed my commitment to playing the violin. It’s all I’ve ever wanted to do. The pandemic has made me see how valuable it is.”

Songs about Montana to ADD TO YOUR PLAYLIST

- Meet Me in Montana** – Marie Osmond 1985
- Montana Song** – Hank William Jr. 1975
- Montana Rodeo** – Chris LeDoux 1983
- Wild Montana Skies** – John Denver 1983
- Rox in the Box** – The Decemberists 2011
- Livingston Saturday Night** – Jimmy Buffet 1978
- Ringling, Ringling** – Jimmy Buffet 1974

- Helena Won’t Get Stoned** – Tarkio 1998
- Invisible Men** – Joseph Running Crane 2019
- Dreamy Montana Moon** – Rex Allen 1965
- Big City** – Merle Haggard 1981
- Cut Bank, Montana** – Hank Williams Jr. 1992
- Montana** – Sons of the Pioneers 1993
- Dirty Valley Low** – Tom Catmull 1998

Theatre



Midquarantine Night Stream

Actors from all over the world with ties to Montana Actors’ Theatre read or perform excerpts from all 37 of Shakespeare’s plays and two sonnets. Recorded April 23, 2020 during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Enjoy it from home at: mtactors.com

Live Performance:
The Pink Unicorn

Mark your calendar:
January 28 through
February 14, 2021

Learn more:
Grandstreettheatre.com

New Hybrid Programming

at Warren Miller Performing Arts Center

See what’s coming in 2021 at:
warrenmillerpac.org

Young Frankenstein The Musical

High school kids film the full musical entirely from home in isolation.

Watch it at:
Atpwhitefish.org

Native Arts



Photo credit: Christian Collins

Director Tsanavi Spoonhunter

Best Documentary Short by the American Indian Film Festival

Director Tsanavi Spoonhunter was recently awarded Best Documentary Short by the American Indian Film Festival for her documentary *Crow Country: Our Right to Food Sovereignty*.

Discover more:

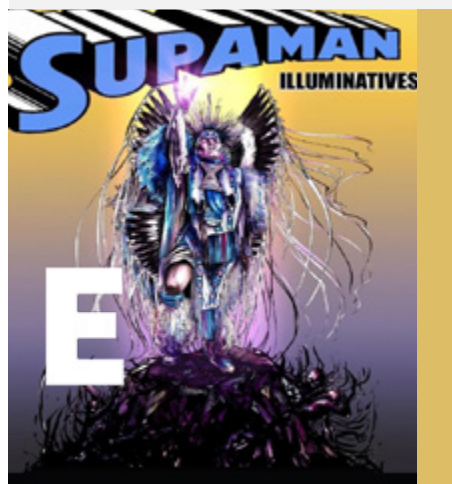
www.aifsf.com
www.crowcountrydoc.com

The art of Supaman goes viral!

Supaman's one-of-a-kind presentation combines Native culture, comedy and urban hip-hop culture which dazzles audiences and captivates listeners. To learn more or follow his social channels,

Visit :

supamanhiphop.net



We Are Still Here and This is Our Story

A group exhibit co-curated and featuring work by Indigenous women artists to honor and advocate for Missing and Murdered Indigenous People.

Contemporary art, beadwork and fashion design

Visit:

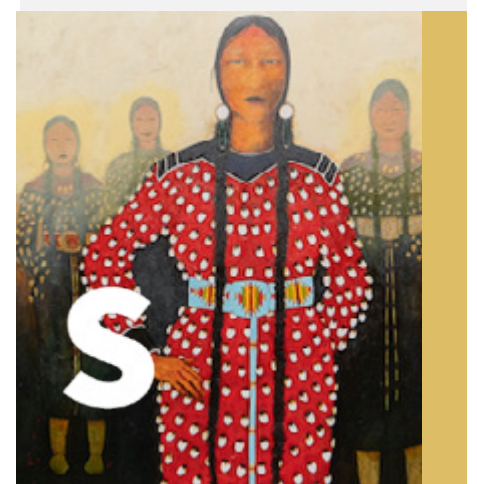
The Emerson in Bozeman
 Jessie Wilber, Lobby and Weaver Room Galleries
 January 8–February 28, 2021

Apsáalooke Women and Warriors Exhibit

Apsáalooke scholar and curator Nina Sanders transforms gallery space by incorporating historical objects, paintings, fashion designs and beadwork by contemporary Apsáalooke artists.

Discover more:

<https://youtu.be/zAnwRhn1o3M>
https://neubauercollegium.uchicago.edu/exhibitions/current_exhibition/



Grant Bulltail: Healing Messages in Story

Tribute by Dana Waganer, compiled with excerpts from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Billings Gazette



Photo courtesy of The National Endowment for the Arts and the Billings Gazette

Stories are powerful. They transport us to different places. They help us interpret complex concepts, provide an escape from the stress and negativity we experience in our daily lives. They inspire and anchor us. Which is why Crow historian and traditional storyteller John Grant Bulltail's passing in October was such a loss. Bulltail came from one of the last of the traditional storytelling families of the Apsáalooke or Crow people.

He was a National Endowment for the Arts 2019 National Heritage Fellowship recipient, the nation's highest honor in the folk and traditional arts. He was a member of the Úuwuutasshe (Greasy

Mouth) clan, and a child of his father's clan, the Ashíiooshe (Sore Lip) clan. His Crow name was Bishéessawaache (The One Who Sits Among the Buffalo), a name given him by his grandfather. He was a member of the Crow Culture Commission at Crow Agency, Montana, a Lodge Erector and Pipe Carrier in the tribe's Sacred Tobacco Society, and a Vietnam War veteran in the Marines.

Bulltail worked as a ranch hand in Montana and Wyoming and competed professionally in local rodeos. His original home in Montana stood close to what is now the Chief Plenty Coups Museum, home of the renowned Crow leader who was close to Bulltail's family and related directly to them. Bulltail also claimed as his lineage Chief Wolf Bow (Treaty of 1868), Chief Blinky (Treaty of 1868), Chief White Horse (Treaty of 1855), Chief Long Hair (Treaty of 1825), Chief Little Black Dog (Treaty of 1825), Chief Double Face (Treaty of 1825), and Chief Plays With His Face (Treaty of 1825). Bulltail's second name implies this proud lineage—an individual earned the right to place the tail from a buffalo bull on their tipi to designate the chiefs of their lineage.

He learned most of his stories from his grandfather Comes Up Red (1847-1947)—a well-known warrior and respected storyteller—and also from his grandmother's cousin Yellow Brow. He listened far into the night to his grandfather's stories, later going into a trance-like state to recite them. Comes Up Red actively encouraged his young grandson to carry on the family's oral traditions: storytelling, memorizing the histories of battles, the use of edible and medicinal plants, and other cultural narratives. In a video tribute to Grant Bulltail (www.arts.gov),

he describes the importance of stories to his culture: “Stories have always been a part of the Crow Tribe. It’s a way of making people realize how we should live. Stories were really important in the old days. After the buffalo were gone, we had to live another way of life. And when we did that, all the old stories were left behind. They didn’t tell those stories anymore. But a few people still believed. Like the chief here—Chief Plenty Coups, and my grandfather Comes Up Red, and my grandmother’s cousin Yellow Brow, they still told those stories.”

After serving with the Marines, Grant spent a year at Utah State University studying with folklorist Austin Fife, where he confirmed his commitment to carrying on the cultural heritage of his people. He shared his stories with classes at Little Big Horn College, at state and national parks (including Yellowstone and Grand Teton), and at places of importance to the Crow people, including Heart Mountain, Wyoming and Rainy Buttes, South Dakota. He also taught classes at Utah State University, home of the Fife Folklore Archives, which is building a collection of Bulltail’s work. Two of these tales Bulltail told when he represented the Crow on Ken Burns’ *Before There Were Parks: Yellowstone and Glacier Through Native Eyes* and for the BBC’s *Unnatural Histories: Yellowstone*. In 1992, he was a key consultant for the Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area’s Ethnographic Resource Overview. From 1994 to 1998, he worked on Yellowstone National Park’s Ethnographic Resource Overview, a project that drew consultants from a half-dozen tribes historically connected to the landscape of what became the nation’s first national park. Bulltail was a founding member of the Native Memory Project and served on its board of directors.

He was loved by many, including Timothy McCleary, department head of general studies and a professor at Little Big Horn College. McCleary met Bulltail when he was researching religious practices of the Apsáalooke people and the Native American Church in Montana. McCleary said Bulltail had an outgoing personality and would “reach out beyond his community and his family.” He was a “deep thinker with a sense of humor.”

“The one thing about Grant, he was always accessible,” said McCleary. “Even if I had some kind of dumb question that I knew that no other person would tolerate, he would very patiently answer.”

Bulltail inspired many people to take up the role of “culture keeper,” said Nina Sanders, curator of historic and contemporary Native American art. “We were enlightened by his knowledge and his presence,” she said. “He was so incredibly kind and patient.” Sanders connected with Bulltail as an adult, despite Bulltail and Sander’s grandmother Margo Real Bird growing up together.

Sooyii Film of 1700’s Native American Smallpox Pandemic

By Blackfeet Reservation

Sooyii, the story of the one of the first pandemics that swept North America and decimated Native American tribes across the Western American territories, has wrapped principal filming and is currently in post-production. *Sooyii* features an entirely Blackfeet cast and is filmed in the original language (with subtitles), making it one of the few movies to truly celebrate authentic Native American history.

Sooyii is developed in cooperation with the Blackfeet Tribe of Montana, supported by several Blackfeet producers and crew members. The story is narrated through the eyes of a young Blackfeet warrior who struggles with the disease, brought by Europeans, as it ravages the villages where he grew up, forever changing his world. Like the current pandemic, the outbreak served as both a unifying and polarizing force. The protagonist struggles with tribal identity and embraces those he perceives as enemies in a battle with a bigger, invisible antagonist.

“*Sooyii* is a story lost in time, presented as a representation of a forgotten pandemic, and one that reminds us that what we are dealing with truly is ancient history,” says Pat “Judge” Hall, producer and locations wrangler for creatures.

Sanders worked closely with Bulltail for *Apsáalooke Women and Warriors*, an exhibition of contemporary and historical Crow art, ephemera and sacred items that opened earlier this year at The Field Museum in Chicago. Sanders had asked her grandmother about people she could trust to speak with, and Bulltail was the first person she named. “She told me he was always really helpful and friendly, and that he grew up with his grandparents. She said to me, ‘Talk to Grant. He’s kind and he will share information with you.’”

When Sanders met with Bulltail she was amazed. “He gave us so much information. I filled pages and pages of notebooks. He answered questions that I didn’t even know I needed to ask.”

“Grant will live with me for the rest of my life, and my stories and my children will carry on that legacy and what he gave to us,” said Sanders. “We will talk about him for generations to come. Hopefully all of us do our due diligence in sharing that and giving it back to the people in the way he hoped we would.”

Fortunately, well over a hundred recordings of Bulltail will be archived at the Fife Folklore Archives at Utah State University, where he studied after he was discharged from the Marines, as well as with Little Big Horn College.

Such stories teach listeners that the Great Creator made everything in the world with his tears. That we are to use the energy that comes from the land and do things for good. Make a drum and beat the drum and dance and sing and the Great Creator will be with us. The Great Creator likened the people to a huge tree that has many roots and many limbs but it is only one tree as we are one people.

We may be living another way of life than we did a year ago, but the messages in the Crow Creation story, and in others passed down from generation to generation to Grant Bulltail, still resonate today. Despite the current need to socially distance, we need each other to get through these trying and difficult times. We are that huge tree with many roots and many limbs. Reaching out to our families and friends over the phone to share stories and how they are loved is how we can stay connected and get through this. So is sharing stories with our immediate families at dinner or bedtime. And when we work together and make it past this challenging time, only then can we beat the drum and dance and sing at safe social gatherings again. Until then, we can draw inspiration from the recorded stories told by Grant Bulltail, while also taking time to share our own stories at home.

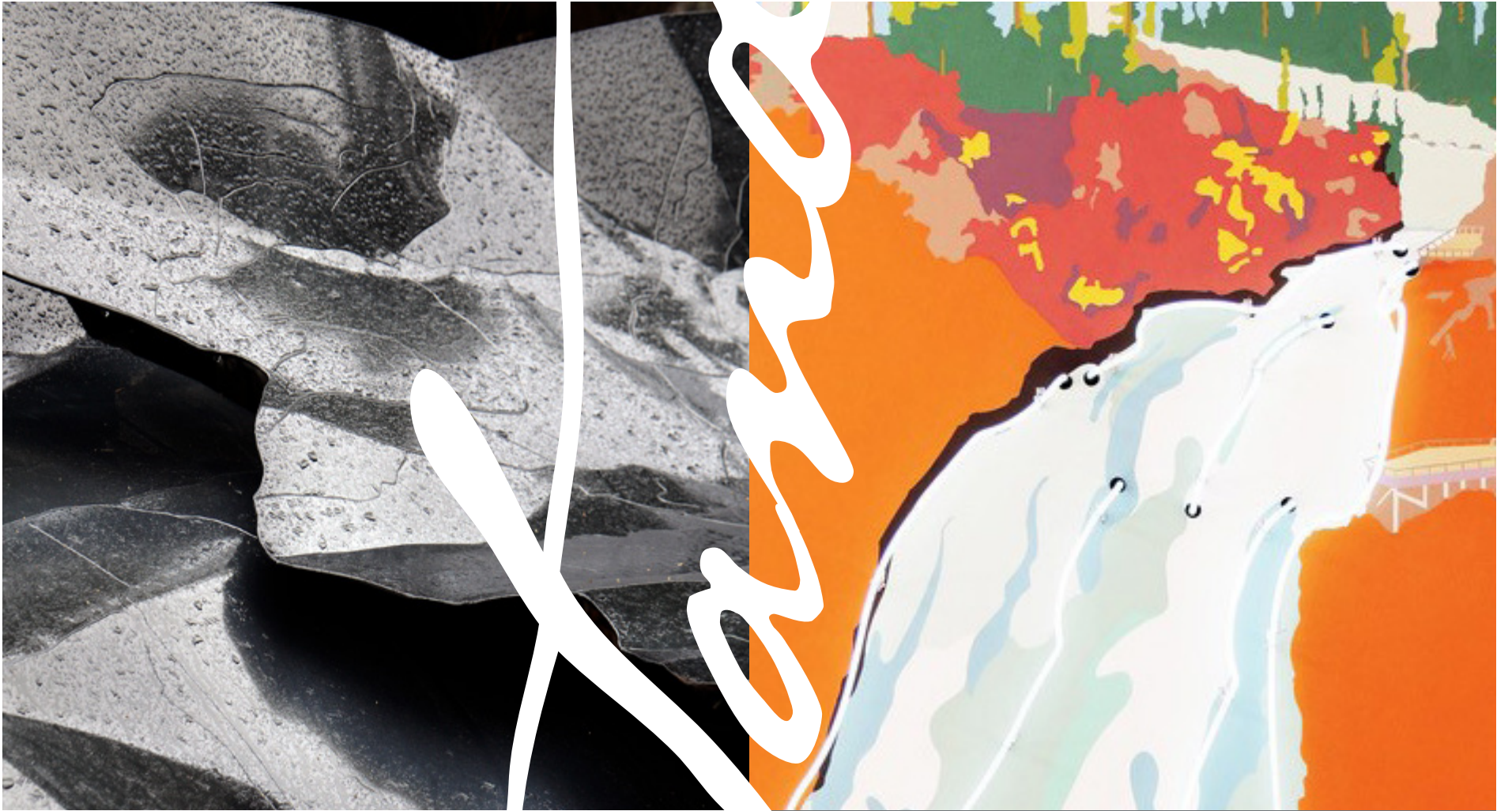
Read more from the NEA



Photo courtesy of Blackfeet Reservation

“We were incredibly fortunate to receive the cooperation of the Blackfeet Nation, enabling the shooting of a movie about a pandemic during an actual pandemic. The people of the Blackfeet Nation wanted this story to be shared with the world as a way of understanding how the first group of Americans coped with their pandemic,” says Hungarian-born director and writer Kristian Kery.

For more information: www.facebook.com/sooyiimovie/



Arts

2020
Governor's
Arts
Awards



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Montana

2020 Governor's **Arts** Awards Honorees

The 2020 Governors Arts Awards honorees are in alphabetical order.



Courtesy of Jerry Rankin, *Golden Sunlight*, 2016, collograph



Patty Bergquist

Patty Bergquist has served as director of the Montana Art Gallery Directors Association (MAGDA) since 1989, serving the Montana arts community for more than 30 years to date. Under her remarkable direction, MAGDA has overseen hundreds of traveling exhibitions throughout our state, benefitting hundreds of Montana artists.

Over the course of Bergquist's tenure, the business of touring exhibitions has changed radically. Whereas national nonprofit organizations previously subsidized art exhibit tours to MAGDA, national funding for the endeavor has since decreased significantly. Amid this shifting dynamic and more, MAGDA's very existence has been threatened. Through Bergquist's loyal commitment to the organization, MAGDA has adapted and continued to serve its members well. Her nimble management has resulted in sponsorships of reasonably priced exhibits, to the benefit of its membership, during these leanest of years.

Bergquist single-handedly organizes the annual conference that has become one of the most important in the area for artists, art galleries, art museums, arts organizations, art educators and patrons. Described as an opportunity to come together and network, communicate, formulate ideas and be exposed to some of the great art being made in our area, it is a model for art-centered collaboration.

A proud born-and-raised Montanan, Bergquist is known for having a real love for MAGDA and "her people." MAGDA has brought together museums and galleries from every corner of the state—and North Dakota and Wyoming—and currently boasts 29 member institutions.

In the words of Bergquist's nominator, "Great leaders are hardly noticed because they allow all those around them the liberty to shine at what they do best. You may not know Patty Bergquist, or have ever even heard of her, because—in a world full of those hoping to be art stars—she provided the sky."



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Photograph by Kevin O'Dwyer

Blackfoot Pathways: Sculpture in the Wild

A nationally regarded sculpture park, **Blackfoot Pathways: Sculpture in the Wild (BPSW)** was founded after a successful international sculpture symposium just seven years ago and has since provided its visitors 365 days of opportunity to experience place-based environmental sculpture in the rarest of settings: 26 acres of wooded land in Lincoln.

Lincoln has been the center of rich, social, cultural and environmental values. Mining, logging and ranching industries have been the key economic factors that have sustained the community throughout its history. The establishment of the sculpture park has provided ample opportunities for community members and visitors of all ages to enjoy the landscape, artwork and education. Through summer educational programs, students learn local history and build sculptures—modeling the methods of artists featured in the park—out of natural resources found on site.

Now entering its 7th year, BPSW continues to deliver to Montana a world-class international artist-in-residence program. The sculpture park boasts 18 permanent sculpture installations (20 after their next residency), summer and autumn education programs and a variety of community events. Annual residencies have welcomed artists from Denmark, Finland, Germany, Norway, Ireland and the United Kingdom, creating an incredible impact on Lincoln's community. The interaction and camaraderie generated by artists' presence have been nothing short of a breath of fresh air.

The volume of visitors both nationally and internationally has continued to expand, with BPSW's Eco-counter registering 30,000 visitors during 2019. Thanks to its central location in Montana, at the base of the Continental Divide Trail, BPSW allows for hiking in the summer and cross-country skiing in the winter. For hundreds of cyclists and hikers, BPSW is a much-welcomed highlight to their Montana adventure.

As the logging and mining industries have subsided, Lincoln finds itself at a crossroads of economic and cultural development. Reflecting on its history while looking toward the future, the community has chosen contemporary art practice to act as a catalyst. While offering—free of charge—a rich and compelling experience for visitors, Blackfoot Pathways: Sculpture in the Wild has brought a significant boost to the economy and tourism of Lincoln, at once celebrating the rich environment, industry and cultural heritage of the Blackfoot Valley.



Arlynn (Arni) Fishbaugh

From 1992-2015, Arni served as executive director of the Montana Arts Council. In that capacity, she was a leader in bringing the arts and art education to every county in Montana.

During her long tenure with MAC, Fishbaugh became a prominent figure nationally, serving on the board of the Association of Performing Arts Presenters (APAP), the Western States Arts Federation (WESTAF), and as a board member for Grantmakers in the Arts. Most notably, she was elected president of the board of directors for the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA). In 2010, her NASAA colleagues recognized her many contributions to the field with the Gary Young Award for Outstanding Service to State Arts Agencies.

A native Montanan raised on a wheat farm near Fort Benton, Arni Fishbaugh graduated from the University of Montana in 1974 with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in drama. From there, she went on to the University of California, Los Angeles, where she earned a master's degree in theatre management. For many years after that, Fishbaugh worked in arts marketing at the Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis, as touring director for the Texas Opera Theatre (an affiliate of the Houston Grand Opera) and as associate director of marketing for New York City's Metropolitan Opera.

All of these positions point to a successful career in business and the arts. It is through the work Fishbaugh accomplished for her home state that she made her most significant impact. Arni Fishbaugh is known as an advocate for the necessity of arts education, the positive economic impact of the arts on tourism, and for the enrichment that the arts bring to the lives of all Montanans and their communities.

Of Fishbaugh's leadership, Mark Kuipers, current member of the Montana Arts Council, says this: "Arni marshalled the talents of her staff, the council, artists, arts organizations (local, state and national) to achieve more than they thought possible. She created an environment that makes people want to do more."



Courtesy of Gordon McConnell



Gordon McConnell

Since arriving in Billings in 1982 to assume the assistant directorship of the Yellowstone Art Museum, Gordon McConnell has contributed in myriad ways to the arts community of his adopted state, becoming an enduring key figure in Montana.

A visual artist and art historian with connections to national artists, scholars, critics and writers, McConnell has a record of ongoing projects celebrating local artists and exposing Montana to preoccupations of the global contemporary art world. He has long been an active participant in the cultural fabric of Montana and of the American West, fostering and promoting contemporary arts while maintaining his own significant and evolving studio practice for more than 30 years. Touring exhibitions throughout the West—as well as across the nation and abroad—have included Gordon McConnell's work.

McConnell's educational background includes a Baylor University, Waco, Texas Bachelor of Arts in studio art, (1972), post-graduate study through the California Institute of the Arts, Valencia MFA program (1973) and a Master of Arts in art history from the University of Colorado, Boulder (1979).

As a young curator in the early 1980s, McConnell quickly became right-hand man to Donna Forbes, Yellowstone Art Museum's longtime director. To her remarkable energy, vision and administrative skills he added—to the evolving Yellowstone Arts Museum—a sense of renewed vision, vital purpose and intellectual distinction. Gordon was the museum's warm human link to working artists around the state, many of whom felt isolated; he consistently encouraged and inspired artists by organizing numerous thoughtful exhibitions that connected them to one another.

McConnell's curatorial realization of visionary museum exhibitions from 1985 onward, combined with critical writing, and the creation and dissemination of his own artwork, have raised international awareness of the visual arts being produced in Montana and, simultaneously, have exposed Montana audiences to critical contemporary questions and a diversity of artists. His work has paved lasting paths through which subsequent and innumerable creators, critics, curators and arts professionals have passed.

A courageous artist who has schooled himself in both the past and the present, Gordon McConnell has not shied away from the difficult issues that often face an ambitious artist in Montana. He is intimately aware of the rich inheritance of history, myth and dream that is suggested by the simple phrase "the American West." He loves the romantic Western version of the American dream, and he regularly expresses that love in his work.



Courtesy of Willem Volkersz



Willem Volkersz

Willem Volkersz emigrated from his native Holland in 1953, attended high school and college in Seattle, and received his MFA at Mills College in Oakland. He spent time working as a photographer, exploring the coastline, and documenting elements of the popular culture that eventually formed the basis of his artistic vocabulary.

In the years since his 1986 arrival in Montana, Volkersz has become a significant figure in the art environment. His work has been exhibited in every corner of Montana and in all of its major museums, including the Yellowstone Art Museum where he was named Artist of the Year (2016) and the Missoula Art Museum where his work is now included in the permanent collection. His unconventional mixed media works have been shown in 50 solo exhibitions and included in more than 200 group shows across the United States and Canada, as well as in England, Scotland, China and Taiwan.

Volkersz is also a seasoned educator who has shared his gift with countless students and has inspired two generations of artists—many of whom continue to highly value their university experience with him. From 1968 to 1986, Volkersz taught at the Kansas City Art Institute and then joined the Art Department at Montana State University where he taught from 1986 to 2001, serving as Director of the School of Art for six of those years.

Volkersz's own art is both human and humane—stemming from empathy, a graceful joy in human complexity and a resolute abhorrence of injustice. Willem Volkersz lives a life rooted in gratitude, which is abundantly clear to his many students and all who have heard him speak. He has been a collegial and generous partner to the museum professionals who have worked with him, up to and including donations of his work to those institutions that could not afford to make purchases.

While Volkersz's work is unapologetically autobiographical, he knows that the specific experience of one person is rooted in the universal experience of all. His work is a bridge between past and present and between western Europe and the United States; it has expanded the scope of Montana's cultural landscape, resists its stereotyping, and opens the door to young artists to continue to reexamine their relationship to a particular place.



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Literary Arts



Take a virtual tour...

Bookish: Selections from the Dan Weinberg Collection at the Montana Museum of Art and Culture's Meloy Gallery, where each book is opened page by page.

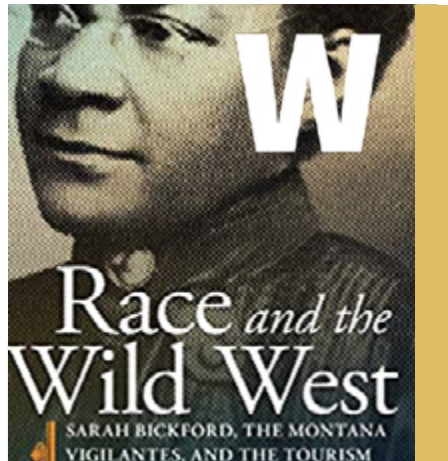
Visit : www.umt.edu/montanamuseum/

Did you miss the 2020 Montana Book Festival?

No worries. You can replay most of the events from the comfort of your home.

Visit : www.montanabookfestival.com

Image: this year's festival poster, designed by Max Mahn of Twin Home Prints

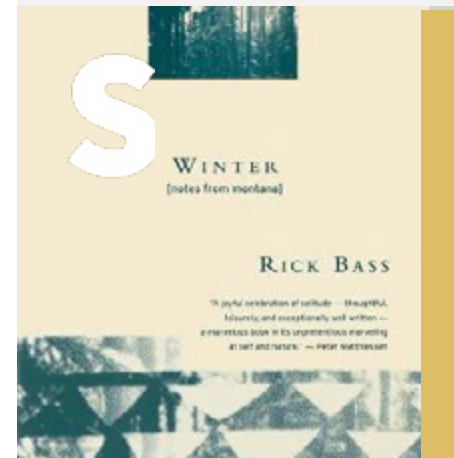


Looking for a great Black History Month read?

Check out Laura J. Arata's *Race and the Wild West: Sarah Bickford, the Montana Vigilantes, and the Tourism of Decline, 1870–1930*

Rick Bass' *Winter* celebrates 30-year anniversary!

This winter, it's not hard to imagine being stuck indoors with minimal social contact. But imagine doing it without TV, internet or even electricity. Rick Bass' *Winter: Notes from Montana* turns 30 this year, and describes an extreme experiment in social distancing: moving west to the remote Yaak Valley. A great read that details the hardships and rewards of living an isolated life in a place of beauty.



Continued from page 1

Montana Poet Laureate M.L. Smoker

By Brian D'Ambrosio

Rigorous juggling is how Montana Poet Laureate M.L. Smoker describes the transmission of a poem.

Carefully, she twines language, fuses vocabulary. In the process of enlightenment, words are threaded, deleted, stacked and rotated. Bit by bit, a full, rich poem of understanding, love and freedom prevails.

"I'm hard on my poems and I'm a pretty vigorous reviser," says Smoker. "I'll begin to write a poem, and after it emerges, I'll go through it line by line. I don't feel as if I'm constructing a poem. At first, it's more like the words are coming out. During the revision process, I will go back and wear a different hat and a different set of eyes and see it all through a different lens."

Poetry, she says, is like a spring, the watering of seeds of joy, an escalating connection that is alive at the moment in the world with her, a wonderful pattern of life that radiates out in all directions.

"I never really know when the feeling will come to put a new idea out in the world. There's never been any expectation, and it could be sporadic. There are times when I will write poetry because I'm feeling stable and grounded, and other times where there has been heartache and difficulty in my life."

Writing as Expression, Empowerment

A member of the Sioux and Assiniboine tribes, M.L. Smoker was born in 1975 on the Fort Peck Indian Reservation and moved to California when she was in elementary school, graduating from high school in the San Joaquin Valley. Her earliest memories of writing she describes as analogous to the sound of a bell penetrating deeply into her cosmos.

"Since I was young, I've kept a journal...I'd write stories and create plays in elementary school. I loved writing as an expression of myself. It's always felt like the right thing to do and has made me feel empowered.

In fourth grade I wrote a play and had my best girlfriends come over and we set up a stage and had props, and we rehearsed our lines, and we won the school talent show. I felt strong and capable—and it was fun."

One of her earliest primary writing influences was California-born, Nobel Prize winning author John Steinbeck (1902-1968).

"I was introduced to John Steinbeck in middle school, and I made such a surprising connection to him and his voice. His style was unique to me. As I got older, I realized that my father's side of the family was from Oklahoma, and my grandparents left town and came to California during the Dust Bowl. *The Grapes of Wrath* became personal to me, a connection to my grandparents' migration and their transition, and it gave me a window into my relationship with my grandmother that was unexpected."

Another seminal influence was Native American novelist and poet James Welch, who was born in Browning in 1940, but for almost entirely different reasons. Welch, who died in 2003, is considered a leading author of the Native American Renaissance of literature.

"My dad started giving me Welch's books," says Smoker. "I went to high school in California and his novels were a way to connect back to Montana. My dad used Welch as an example to prove that Native people could write, too, and he would say, here is one of the best examples of that. He was from Montana and described the places that I knew, and that was transformative for me. As I got older, I began to get more interested in poetry. James Welch's *Riding the Earthboy 40* became my bible, and I read it a thousand times. He was a huge factor in my development as a writer."

M.L. earned a BA at Pepperdine University and an MFA at the University of Montana, where she received the Richard Hugo Memorial Scholarship. She also studied at UCLA, where she received the Arianna and Hannah Yellowthunder Scholarship, and the University of Colorado, where she was awarded the Battrick Fellowship for excellence in poetry writing.

“In high school, I was drawn to journalism and in college, I steered to literature. When my mom passed when I was 23 years old, I began communicating with her through writing, and some of that writing later became poems that are part of my collection. Then, I thought that I should study poetry and dive in there.”



Montana Poet Laureate M.L. Smoker

Free Verse of Identity

M.L. composes free verse poems in which she opens her heart and accepts all her Native American blood ancestors with their good qualities, their talents and also their weaknesses. Her spiritual relatives and blood relations are all part of her. She is them, and they are her. She does not have a separate self.

“Identity is a big part of my work,” says Smoker. “Being a Native woman and knowing my history and knowing so much about the place where I come from and my ancestry, my family and my home, I can’t separate it from anything that I do...My poetry is fully present, and it’s who I am, an Assiniboine woman at the core, and it’s where I create and function from, and a really strong orientation and source. Poetry is a vulnerable time and place and act, and I’ve done it in the hopes to reclaim part of my own story and family history. I’m making something possible that was not possible for my ancestors or even my own mother.”

M.L. is the author of the poetry collection *Another Attempt at Rescue* (2005). With co-Montana Poet Laureate Melissa Kwasny, of Basin, she co-edited *I Go to the Ruined Place: Contemporary Poems in Defense of Global Human Rights* (2009). She lives in Helena, where she works in the Indian Education Division of the Office of Public Instruction.

Smoker says that juxtaposing family, work and poetry has been a particularly sensitive task this year, and that lately, when she has set aside a time to write, what has come out has mostly felt stilted. Still, she is shrewd enough not to force it. Seemingly workable phrases will drift into her mind at the most awkward times, like when she is sitting in the car or entering a business meeting. Patiently, she accepts each and every snippet as a signal of fortuity.

“I wish that I were more disciplined, or that I could make it a regular process. For me it’s never been the expectation that I could write poetry daily or do it a few times a week, but it is something always more sporadic. I can’t predict the conditions for inspiration.”

What makes M.L.’s work so engaging is that she so eloquently transfers into words the grace and ease and openness of her heart.

“Poetry is definitely vulnerability,” says Smoker. “Poet Greg Pape once said to me before a reading (as encouragement) that I should go back to the moment that I wrote the poem, and when it emerged, and said that that would allow me to feel that poem again. I still cry over a poem, even ones that I’ve read a thousand times. Poetry is the essence and spirit of being opened up and raw.”

Self-Perspective of Poetry

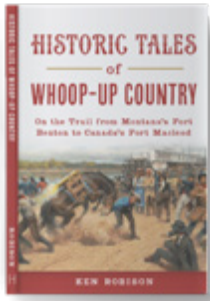
While Smoker’s poems are universally relatable, punctuated by profound moments of personal transformation, she says that certain audiences handle and respond to her work with a unique respect.

“Maybe 15 years ago, I gave a reading at the Blackfeet Community College in Browning. It was probably the first time that I had read to an all-Native audience, college students in the library. There were maybe 20 students, from ages 18 to 50 years old. People found connections, much like what James Welch did for me—provide a light at the end of the tunnel.”

Indeed, M.L. is keenly aware of the responsibility of the Poet Laureate to bring new associations into the world, verbally, intellectually and even socially.

“I want young people, especially, to find that connection to different voices, different styles, different writers, different places. To find something that speaks for them. A voice that might resonate. A place that might be familiar. That’s the most special thing that I’ve learned about poetry, that you could tell it from whatever perspective and vantage point that you want.”

Books



Historic Tales of Whoop-Up Country

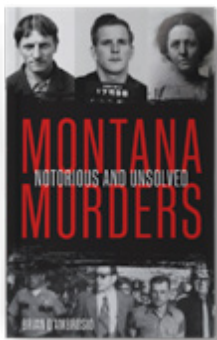
by Ken Robison

Likened by the author to a wagon wheel hub, tiny Fort Benton, Montana Territory became the world's innermost port. The Missouri River "highway" and numerous trails made it a surprising commercial center as well. But the best-known in its day, and then the least well-known for decades, was the notorious Whoop-Up Trail, heavily used from 1870-1885, then largely abandoned.

This spoke ran from Fort Benton north to the Medicine Line and into the yet-to-be-formed Canadian prairie provinces. Fort Hamilton was first in a chain of "whiskey forts" where Fort Benton free traders brought desired goods to trade with the Blackfeet and other Indian nations. Always, whiskey lubricated the exchanges. John D. Higginbotham related the tale of a trader who described the situation at Fort Hamilton as, "O, they're still a-whoopin' of'er up." The name stuck.

The history of the Whoop-Up Trail is entwined with the arrival of the Canadian North West Mounted Police, sometimes seen as peacekeepers, sometimes as encroachers on American freedoms—especially when they arrested Montana free traders or drove them back over the border. In the end, law and order prevailed.

Montana native Robison is a well-known chronicler of forgotten/neglected history who has earned the honor of being named a Montana Heritage Keeper by the Montana Historical Society. His exhaustive research yielded fascinating, funny, tragic and perhaps cautionary facets of Montana's history. Many historic photos, maps and drawings pull the reader into these fascinating, unusual stories of our past.



Montana Murders, Notorious and Unsolved

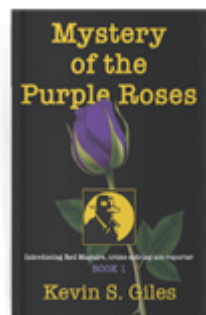
by Brian D'Ambrosio

Deeply researched and vividly written, *Montana Murders* describes 30 of the state's most shocking killings from the Vigilantes to today.

Award-winning Montana author Brian D'Ambrosio examines the most notorious murders in the state's history. Some are historical accounts from Montana's early Wild West days, but most are contemporary cases that shocked communities, investigators and families. Many remain bafflingly unsolved. Some cases have been featured in national media, such as the famous and inexplicable murders of the parents of television's Patrick Duffy (Dallas) and the serial murders by the hermitic Unabomber. But D'Ambrosio also unearths gruesome, little-known cold cases that haunt surviving families and friends to this day.

Drawing on official investigative reports and numerous personal interviews with law enforcement officials, witnesses and survivors, D'Ambrosio describes each murder like a good detective story, including actual photos as well. Readers will find riveting details about the murderers, their motives and methods, and their unfortunate victims.

Brian D'Ambrosio is a prolific writer of nonfiction books and articles. He specializes in histories, biographies, and profiles of actors and musicians. One of his previous books, *Warrior in the Ring*, a biography of Native American world champion boxer Marvin Camel, was a finalist for the High Plains Book Award. He has written for The History Press and contributes to several newspapers and magazines. He lives in Helena, Montana.



Mystery of the Purple Roses

by Kevin S. Giles

All through the summer of 1954 in Butte, Montana, a series of curious murders haunt veteran crime reporter Kieran "Red" Maguire. They appear to have nothing in common with one another except for a single purple rose placed on each victim. Red and his hard-nosed crime-fighting accomplice, police captain Harold "Duke" Ferndale, struggle to find clues that will solve the chilling mystery terrifying residents of the Mining City. Red encounters adoring women, bare-knuckle criminals, outrageous characters who roam the streets, and a relentless editor who spares no murderous details so newsboys can bark lurid headlines in uptown bars.

The novel's author, Kevin S. Giles, said, "Butte is a city of a million stories, a storm of hoarse working-class voices, all begging us to listen to what they have to say. I wrote *Mystery of the Purple Roses* with the old magazine-style pulp fiction genre in mind, taking the story to the dark streets where hard men

and loose women ply their trade. I'm introducing Red Maguire, a humble newswriting hero, as a character who can live through several novels set in Butte."

Giles, a native of Deer Lodge, Montana, and once a Butte resident, has published three other books related to western Montana. He has worked at six newspapers, most recently the Star Tribune metro morning paper in Minneapolis-St. Paul, as editor, reporter and photographer. He lives and writes in Minnesota.



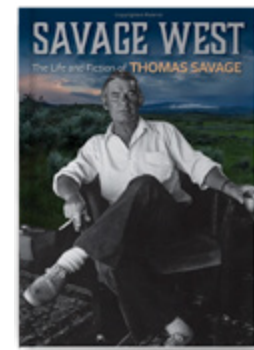
Soon Comes the Sweet Grass

by Carol Woster

"It's the grass that never dies," pronounced the aging farm woman of the plains. Sweetgrass means a lot to these cultures. In the late 1960s, medicine woman Cecile Last Star dug in her worn trunk and gave me a plait of it, and it's still here intact.

"Great cowboy artist C.M. Russell knew well the serrated mountains of Glacier National Park, wide stretches of undulating prairies and colossal fame. A young Ace Powell helped blast for Going-to-the-Sun highway in the early 1930s. His mother had said, 'Ace, you are always painting a picture.' Charley Russell died in 1926. Earlier they wove in and out of Apgar; later Ace babysat for Charley's son. Ace also spent his sophomore year at high school in Browning. Another great Montana artistic genius, Bob Sriver, became a fast friend from those high school sophomore days. Ace would give some of his stretched window shades to young artists in the tribe. Rich genius poured out from these parts. Sweetgrass was a backdrop to daily and sacred activities. Fragrances intermingled with lives. Outsiders called this life vanishing. Not to be believed as artists' lives dominated the scene. By 1967, Ace made possible for me to stand in the presence of Last Star and witness the beautiful event where she gave me the sweetgrass."

Carol Woster is a graduate of St. Olaf College in Minnesota. Her writing career began with a New York Times piece on Glacier National Park and from there spanned the globe. She now resides in Cut Bank, Montana and is also the author of *Nearing Hungry Horse*. Photographs are by the late Mel Ruder, Pulitzer Prize-winning founder of The Hungry Horse News in Columbia Falls.



Savage West: The Life and Fiction of Thomas Savage

by Dr. Alan Weltzien

Thomas Savage is a novelist from Montana who published 13 books over a 44-year period. He is most well-known for his Westerns but is often overlooked as one of the best authors to come from Montana. "This is a literary biography of one of the best and most neglected writers from Montana. Savage never had the audience he should have, and I hope this book will help return him to the reputation he deserves," said Weltzien.

Dr. Weltzien first became familiar with Savage about 20 years ago. Since then, he has published multiple articles about Savage's work and oversaw the republication of his first two books, *The Pass* and *Lona Hanson*. Weltzien taught Savage's writing in his English courses and has led many groups on tours of what he calls "Thomas Savage country," which stretches from Dillon to Horse Prairie and Bannock Pass, to Leadore, Lemhi and Salmon, ID.

"I've spent the past three years steadily working on the book, which is my homage to Savage and southwest Montana. He's easily the best writer from our remote corner of the United States, and his best novels, which I've taught for years, are compelling reads," Weltzien said. "He should occupy a big place on Montana's crowded literary map." Savage's most famous book, *The Power of the Dog*, has been optioned as a drama film to be aired on Netflix in 2021.

Dr. Alan Weltzien is a professor emeritus of English at the University of Montana Western. He incorporated hands-on experiences and practical contact with literature in his classes. He has published several books and hopes to publish his fourth poetry collection soon. He will continue his writing in retirement, as well as his passion for traveling and backpacking with his wife, Lyn.



Ruthie Fear: A Novel
by Maxim Loskutoff

Ruthie Fear lives in Montana’s Bitterroot Valley; after her mother abandoned her, Ruthie was raised by her father, Rutherford. When she is 6 years old, Ruthie and her friend Pip see a terrifying headless creature. Its presence haunts her. Raised by her angry, anti-government father, Ruthie develops a powerful connection with the natural world but struggles to find her place in a society shaped by men. Development, gun violence and her father’s vendettas threaten her mountain home. The West is changing, mill jobs no longer exist, developments and mansions are constructed as the divides between rich and poor begin. The local Indigenous peoples and scientists at the local lab add to the small-community tension. As Ruthie becomes a teenager, the creature she saw long ago reappears as a portent of the valley’s final reckoning.

The action takes place in the valleys, mountains and towns we all know. The concept of the American West is under a microscope, as Loskutoff examines manifest destiny, mass shootings and environmental destruction. Ruthie Fear gives a new view of her woods, her urgent need to find answers. The ending is as haunting as it is inspiring.

Ruthie Fear is Loskutoff’s debut novel. He is the author of *Come West and See*, a short story collection, and his stories and essays have appeared in numerous periodicals. He lives in western Montana.



Can’t Even: How Millennials Became the Burnout Generation
by Anne Helen Petersen

National correspondent and Missoula resident Anne Helen Petersen gives an examination of burnout in millennials—the cultural shifts that got us here, the pressures that sustain it and the need for drastic change.

Petersen said: “Writing this from the middle of the pandemic, it’s become apparent that COVID-19 is the great clarifier. It clarifies what and who in your life matters, what things are needs and what are

wants, who is thinking of others and who is thinking only of themselves. It has clarified that the workers dubbed ‘essential’ are, in truth, treated as expendable, and it has made decades of systemic racism—and resultant vulnerability to the disease—indelible. It has highlighted the ineptitude of our current federal leadership, the dangers of long-term, cultivated mistrust of science, and the ramifications of allowing the production of medical equipment to be run like a business where profits matter above all else. Our medical system is broken. Our relief program is broken. Our testing capability is broken. America is broken, and we too, along with it.”

I would contend that it is not only millennials who are facing burnout.

Petersen received her PhD in media studies from the University of Texas, where she studied the history of the gossip industry. A former senior culture writer for BuzzFeed, she now writes her newsletter, Culture Study, as a full-time venture on Substack.

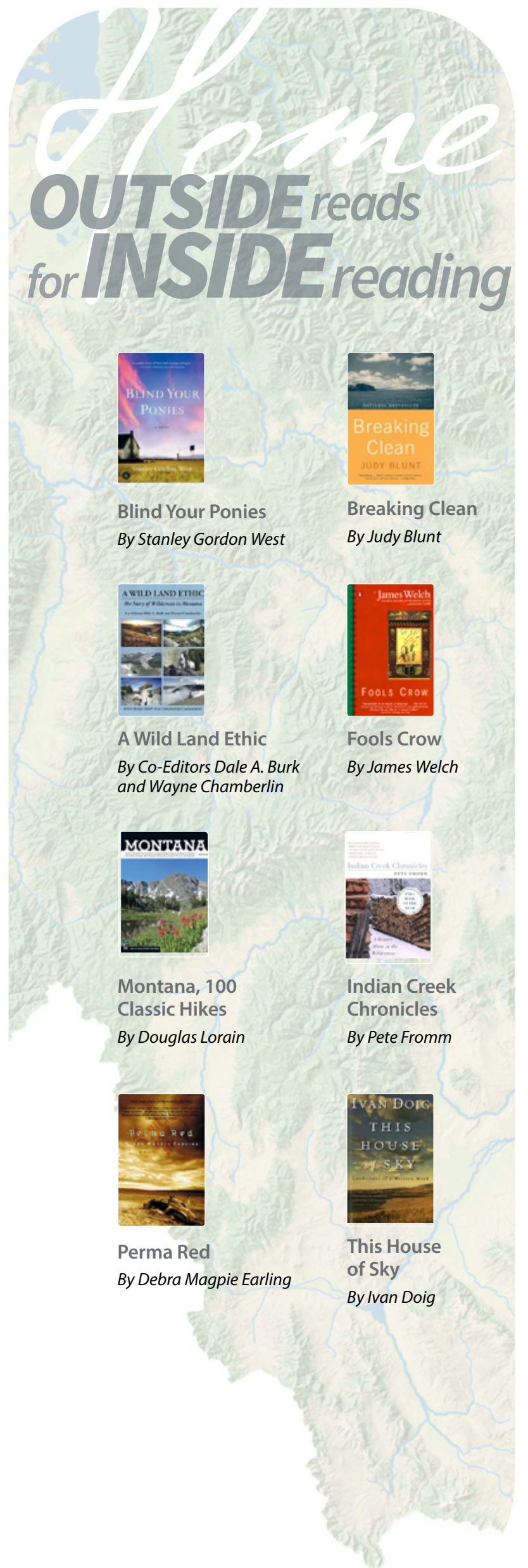


Make Them Cry: A Novel
by Smith Henderson and Jon Marc Smith

Diane Harbaugh is one tough woman; she is a DEA agent who interrogates witnesses so effectively, she has them confessing in tears. But when she hears from Gustavo, a high-ranking cartel member with an invaluable secret about the international black market, she’s thrown for a loop. She heads to Mexico, alone and off the record, to meet him. What she discovers throws her understanding of justice and duty into question.

Gustavo sends her down a rabbit hole that leads to a criminal conspiracy and international manhunt. Add a disillusioned CIA agent named Ian Carver, and the many layers of deceptions, grifts and schemes begin to unravel. Mexican cartels, drug raids during the Afghanistan War, cartel assassins, embittered spies and three-lettered government agencies seem to be appearing everywhere. As enemies become co-workers, and horrific physical acts—even torture—leave the reader drained, you keep rooting for Harbaugh. Hats off to co-authors, Henderson and Smith, for delivering an action-packed thriller—the perfect distraction.

Author Smith Henderson was born and raised in Montana. He is an award-winning novelist as well as an accomplished screenwriter. Jon Marc Smith teaches English at Texas State University and lives in San Marcos, Texas.



Blind Your Ponies
By Stanley Gordon West



Breaking Clean
By Judy Blunt



A Wild Land Ethic
By Co-Editors Dale A. Burk and Wayne Chamberlin



Fools Crow
By James Welch



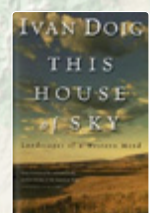
Montana, 100 Classic Hikes
By Douglas Lorain



Indian Creek Chronicles
By Pete Fromm



Perma Red
By Debra Magpie Earling



This House of Sky
By Ivan Doig

Visual Arts



Vitual Museum: 3D Tours of C.M. Russell's House and Studio

Explore the Russell home and studio thanks to the latest in 3D-mapping technology. Watch for the content circles that will link you to videos and additional information regarding details within these National Historic Landmarks. **Visit:** <http://cmrussell.org/experience/virtual-museum/>



CALL FOR ENTRIES for Our Town

A regional juried Exhibition in Downtown Missoula.

The Dana Gallery is accepting artist submissions of paintings or photographs that reflect the spirit of communities across Montana.

www.art.mt.gov/sig

For an application please email tiffany@danagallery.com

Meta Newhouse Receives MUS Teaching Scholar Award for Project to Diversify MSU Curriculum

A Montana State University graphic design professor will use her experiences to help fellow faculty diversify their existing courses at MSU as part of her selection as a Montana University System 2020 Teaching Scholar.



Gnu Snowboard Featuring one of Whitefish Painter Jordan Porter's Pieces

Read more at: www.flatheadbeacon.com/2020/10/07/fall-arts-2020/

Virtual Exhibit: Prints from the New Deal

The exhibition features American prints from the period of the Great Depression. Franklin D. Roosevelt ushered in the Works Progress Administration, which eventually employed over 8 million Americans and funded government construction of roads, bridges, airports and schools, as well as public art that left an indelible imprint on the nation's memory.

Visit the virtual exhibit now through January 16, 2021 www.umt.edu/montanamuseum/



COLORS

WORKS BY KELLY BOURGEOIS
On view in the Bair Gallery January 2021

Learn more at: www.holtermuseum.org

Photo courtesy of the Holter Museum

Monarch Depot Area Nominated for Historic District Designation

By Montana Historical Society

Monarch's wine-red Great Northern Railway Depot and two additional nearby structures are being recommended for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places as a historic district.

Constructed in 1901, the Craftsman-style building is the second depot built on the property. Fire engulfed the original 1891 version in 1900, and the Central Montana Railroad Company constructed the current

depot in 1901. The four-room, 24-by-48-foot facility, which includes living quarters for the station master, was built using the same plans as the original depot, slightly to its east. "The Monarch Depot, like the National Register-listed Kevin Depot in Toole County, is a rare example of a frame Craftsman-style train depot in Montana," said John Boughton with the State Historic Preservation Office.



Before

Photos courtesy of Montana Historical Society

Also included in the proposed historic district are a duplex-style privy and a bay window caboose. The construction date of the double outhouse is unknown, but its 6-by-6-foot design includes a porch with wood lattice screen for a privacy wall. The 42-foot drover car caboose is the same wine red as the depot and privy. Originally built in 1902 as a boxcar for the Northern Pacific Railway, the bay windows were added later to give conductors better vantage points. It was refurbished in 1969 and used in the Flathead and Mission valleys until the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway sold the car to the town of Belt, where it was used as a concession stand until it arrived in Monarch in 2014.

Alterations made when the Department of Transportation acquired the depot caused a major loss of design integrity, Boughton said, but the Monarch-Neihart Historical Group restored it to its original design.

"In fact, enough historic elements remain to easily evoke the feeling of when the Monarch Depot Historic District operated in its intended purpose," he added.



After

The Great Northern depot privy is one of only two remaining from that era that are still standing in Montana. The Great Northern Railway ceased operations of its Little Belt Mountain spur lines in 1945. "The depot was the hub from which goods and services entered and left Monarch," Boughton said. "The depot served the important mining industry of the area, the local populace and people from neighboring towns. This district was essential to the lives of the town's citizenry."

The National Park Service will make the final decision on the historic district designation; qualified properties can receive preservation benefits and incentives. The Monarch-Neihart Historical Group plans to make the depot into a visitor center. "The local restoration committee really did do a magnificent job," said Kate Hampton, who also is with the State Historic Preservation Office and worked on the nomination. "This is a truly important story of commitment, expertise and local community pride."

For more information contact John Boughton at 406-444-3647 or jboughton@mt.gov

Visit Bozeman's Pavilion in the Park

The Town Enclosure Pavilion has found a new home in Bozeman Montana, at the Story Mill Community Park.



Photo courtesy of JH Public Art



Awakening and the OneHeart Call Project on exhibit

Continued from page 1

Christina Rothe's *OneHeart Call Project* Weaves Tapestry of Art and Love

By Dana Waganer

Multi-media artist Christina Rothe believes, "Together we weave life's complex tapestry by building community through the voices of our hearts through the arts." This belief is the foundation of Rothe's *Awakening and the OneHeart Call Project*, building community with the voices of our hearts through the arts which is on exhibit Oct. 2, 2020 through Feb. 12, 2021 at the Paris Gibson Square Museum of Art (The Square) in Great Falls, MT.



Titled: FindingHeart

The exhibit highlights universally shared values of hope, love and respect with intent to create unity through art. To achieve this, Rothe invited diverse communities from Spokane, WA to partake in creative collaborations that included art making, oral histories, choral performances, music and dance. The work presented is a result of her commitment to working with everyday people who represent socially and culturally diverse sectors of the Spokane area, including students, musicians, artists, refugees, the elderly or a mixture of all the above. The project grew into an artistic humanitarian project as her path unfolded and connected with the lives of different people.

While her work is on exhibit at The Square, Rothe plans to engage the community in Great Falls through collaborative opportunities, as a means to link the collective efforts of the people in Spokane with the creative work of the people in this region. She will establish a "call and response" component where visitors will be invited to create something

in any artistic medium they choose and submit it to the museum so that it can be integrated by Rothe into this exhibition and further presentations of the *OneHeart Call Project*.



Titled: The Spaces Inbetween

Rothe was born in Germany and raised in Lagos, Nigeria, where she says her life's journey was "imprinted in deep and profound ways." Ever since Rothe was a child, she has found art to be her way of responding to the world. "Words do not come easy," she says. "I prefer to communicate my innermost thoughts with colors, shapes and textures. Through my art I seek to express life's journey, our interconnection to all that is in all of its fullness, whether it be hidden or emerging, buried or exposed."



Today she is known primarily for her dramatic large-scale thread paintings, where she layers individual threads of various weights and colors, one thread at a time, onto a surface. In the *OneHeart Call* exhibition, Rothe combines technology with tradition to complete her project vision, where layers of sound, community art works, video and audio recordings are woven into a creative visual display. The concept presented stems from her vested interest in the betterment of human relationships and the positive results of creating bonds through art despite individual differences.

The OneHeart Call Project

“is to remind us all that in spite of all our beautiful differences—may it be language, culture, traditions or skin color, we all have one thing in common which is our beautiful heart!”

Phone: 406-727-8255 or visit www.the-square.org for updated information

Photos courtesy of Christina Rothe



Titled: Shadowheart

Textural Sculptures by Artist Jessica Drenk

Jessica Drenk is an American artist raised in Montana, where she developed an appreciation for the natural world that remains an important inspiration to her artwork today. Tactile and textural, her sculptures highlight the chaos and beauty that can be found in simple materials. Drenk’s work is also influenced by systems of information and the impulse to develop an encyclopedic understanding of the world. *Photos courtesy of JessicaDrenk.com*



IMPLEMENTS

The sculptures in the “Implements” series are created by gluing thousands of pencils together and then sanding the outside of each form. In doing so, each piece exhibits a contrast between man-made geometry on the inside, and an outside evocative of natural shapes and textures. Interior and exterior have been reversed: inside the sculpture you see the outside of each pencil, while the interior of the pencils is revealed on the exterior surface of the piece.



CIRCULATION

In the “Circulation” series, coiled strips of book pages hint at the material connection between books and the wood pulp used to make them—a reminder of the circular life-cycle of materials and the connection between the natural and man-made worlds.

Arts Learning



Continued from page 1

Art Mobile of Montana: Experience Art at Home

By Dana Waganer

If we've learned anything from the COVID-19 pandemic, it's that much of our daily routine can now be done virtually. Aside from school and work, we're connecting with family and celebrating milestones and the holidays at a safe social distance via Zoom, Skype and Teams. But where does that leave art and the essential role it plays in our lives?

Enter Art Mobile of Montana (AMM), a nonprofit traveling arts outreach and inclusion organization, serving schools and diverse groups across the state of Montana.



Photo courtesy of Art Mobile of Montana

These art projects can be used by all sorts of groups like nursing homes, hospitals or families who want to log in from home on weekends. "We have shows or extensions," said LaPorte. "We have interviews with our artists. You can also book a virtual visit with Nick, our teaching artist. He will meet virtually with classes, go through the virtual exhibition, and lead groups through the project kit of their choice sent out previous to the session. We can pack a lot more in because this is virtual." Projects can be implemented over a whole year and participants can share the artwork they've created on AMM's online community gallery. Going virtual has made AMM's services more affordable and allowed them to reach a lot more people without the limitations of physical traveling. Because of this "we are relying more on donations for funding than we have before on schools."

And it's not just schools across Montana that AMM is supplying with art. There's opportunity for us older and bigger kids to benefit too with their virtual exhibition *The Current Condition: Visions of the Contemporary West*. This show is a dynamic representation of life in present-day Montana, with artists addressing issues like the global pandemic, environmental threats and human inequalities, while others celebrate Native American culture and history, Montana's places and people, and the power of imagination.

While there's no substitute for experiencing art in person, this exhibit does allow visitors to view public sculptures, murals and performances. You'll see Tessa Heck-George's "Quarantine Dreams," an impetus for a series of masks inspired by high fashion, yet always impractical and appealing to the artist. Truly, masks are the new medium to make our own fashion statement. Parker Beckley's "COVID Comic," is a reflection of life during the pandemic from March 2020. How were we to eat when all we'd heard was to keep our hands away from our eyes, noses and mouths? Carlin Bear Don't Walk's oil canvas, "Defend + Protect + Preserve," paints a vivid picture of environmental threats to our natural landscapes. Stella Nall's woodblock print, "First Descendent: Sterile Hybridity," demonstrates the emotional confusion and identity questions raised by blood quantum.

See these works and more at www.artmobilemontana.org through August 2021.



Photo courtesy of Art Mobile of Montana

Founded by Sara Colburn in 2000, the Art Mobile has exhibited contemporary Montana art and provided quality art education programs for 20 years. To keep Montana schools and communities safe and healthy, AMM has gone virtual this year. "By having it virtual we can do a lot more," said AMM Director, Jo LaPorte, when we spoke by phone. "There are six pre-recorded project tutorials that teachers can download and do at home too."

Chip Jasmin, Montana Music Educator

By Russ Lawrence

For Chip Jasmin, music, dance, history and the natural environment were not separate concepts. When he encountered a group of children, whether it was in a classroom, at a wildlife refuge or in a community dance hall, his infectious joy for sharing music blended seamlessly with his enthusiasm for teaching in a whirlwind of moving bodies and singing voices.

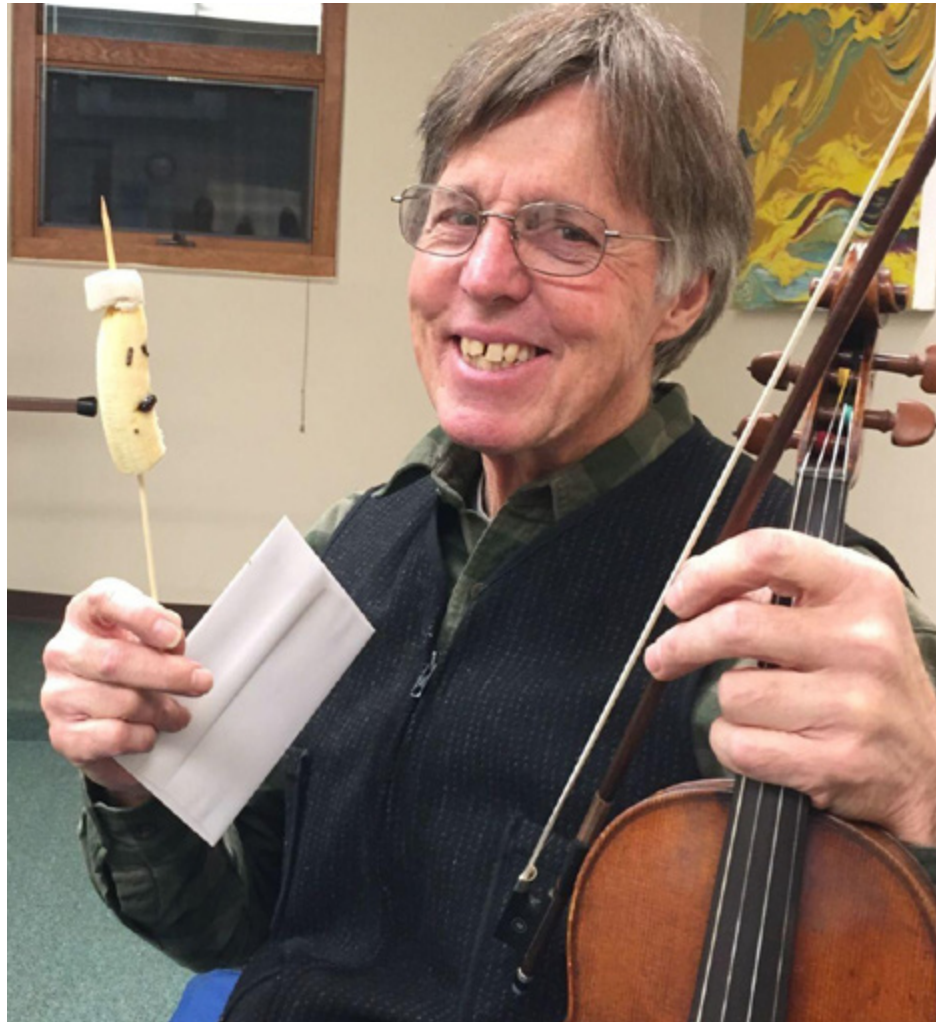


Photo courtesy of Russ Lawrence

Funded by a variety of agencies, including the Montana Arts Council, Young Audiences of Montana, the NEA, Montana's Indian Education for All program and local school districts, Chip spent 30 years enlivening Montana's education scene. His son, Cove, had a front-row seat for much of it.

"I have this image of my dad with all these instruments, and for whatever reason he would carry them all in at the same time, this big hump of instruments," Cove recalled. "He was just tireless, he had so much energy." Now a musician himself, Cove was born in 1990, and soon after began traveling to his father's gigs, along with his mother, Amy Dittmaier.

"He really was a master at getting you to buy in early. He would just jump in loud and fast right at the beginning; it was shock and awe with the accordion and some dance moves," Cove laughed. Chip would get everybody singing and dancing and then, once he had them hooked, he'd get to "here's why we're doing this, what's the reasoning," Cove explained. "He'd do the teaching in the middle, with lots of dancing at the end. He'd have a whole assembly of kids doing the 'sit-down square dance,' and convince them that this is a cool thing to do, and if you think it's not cool, you're missing out. It was always really effective."

Jasmin held both bachelors' and masters' degrees in education. He had a deep appreciation for history and a love of the natural world, but it was his honest affection for kids that made him effective as a teacher.

"He had that smile and sparkle in his eye; he really was the Pied Piper of Montana, and the children naturally followed—they would do whatever he asked of them," said Marina Weatherly, who collaborated in the classroom with Jasmin for many years. She would focus on visual arts, while Jasmin used music and dance to help communicate their message.

"He met them on their own level, he was a friend to all students. He knew what music did for himself, and he wanted to share that," Weatherly said.

Susan Luinstra invited Jasmin to her all-grades classroom in Bynum, and he left as much of an impression on her as he did on the students. "Chip had an openness to the children, a very open heart. It was not an act, it was just pure Chip. He could bond with children and they trusted him completely, they loved the stories and the singing," Luinstra observed. "They were so excited to see him, especially once they had formed a relationship with him—they'd be excited for months ahead," she said. "Even the most shy child was 100% involved."

His first visit to Bynum was so successful that Luinstra invited both Chip and Cove back repeatedly. The strong bond between father and son wasn't lost on the students. "His love for children and his own son were so obvious, he just inspired us. It was magical every time he came; he changed me as a person," Luinstra recalled.

He always left teachers with a trove of additional resources as well.

Jasmin might use his skills to teach history in a classroom setting, or bring kids to a wildlife refuge to focus on environmental education. He could offer anything from a one-day visit to a two-week residency, and he was always open to a chance to collaborate on something new.

Corvallis social studies teacher Chris Maul-Smith invited Jasmin to help him develop a unit on the voyageurs, the French-Canadian fur trappers who plied the north woods in canoes. Their goal was "to make a connection with history in some other way than textbooks, get the kids to feel the experience in their body," Maul-Smith said. "We cooked pea soup, we made flags for each canoe group, the kids had the experience of being part of a team. Chip would come in with music, with dance, he'd create art projects without judgment, invent a song to go with any activity."

Jasmin taught the voyageurs' paddling song, "En Roulant Ma Boule," and the fifth-graders learned the dip-pull-swing rhythm of the canoeists. "There wouldn't have been as many bales of fur that got out without that song," Maul-Smith's students realized. Chip's gift was engagement, according to Maul-Smith. "At first, they were kind of surprised: 'are we really doing this?' Then, they got over it," he laughed.

The week-long experiment ended with a "rendezvous" and dance, attended by the students and their parents. Many of Jasmin's residencies ended up with a community dance. The "barn dance" tradition he began in Bynum grew so popular that they had to move it to Choteau, 15 miles distant, to accommodate the crowds.

"Most of his teaching revolved around the idea of community," Cove Jasmin said. His programs were designed to make students "think about the people around you, and learn their stories; think about your place in the natural world, how you can help it be healthy and grow."

Jasmin's programs weren't just good fun, they had lasting impact. Cove recalled attending college and hearing his father's songs being sung by people he didn't know. They'd learned them as schoolkids, he said, "but as they got older, the deeper meaning sunk in, and they could apply it to their lives."

Weatherly, too, saw kids in their 20's who remembered the Lewis and Clark unit that she and Jasmin taught, but the history lesson was the least of what they retained. "It gave them something they could carry their whole life, skills to be better human beings."



Arts Learning at Home

By Monica Grable

Over these many months of hybrid or distance learning during the pandemic, two things have become abundantly clear: 1) Nothing can replace the robust experience of hands-on, collaborative, in-person learning; and 2) arts organizations across the state and around the nation have met this moment with innovation, adaptation, thoughtfulness and a guiding belief that the arts have the ability to sustain us in the most difficult of times.

Whether you are a classroom-based teacher or a teaching artist leading arts learning experiences on behalf of K-12 students of varying needs, a parent guiding home school learning, one who is engaging adults of all ages and abilities within distance learning venues, or a student seeking opportunities to learn at your own pace, here are a few currently available opportunities to support you.

Art Mobile of Montana

AMM's virtual exhibition, *The Current Condition: Visions of the Contemporary West*, exhibits artworks that reflect current experiences and represent the diversity of Montana artists. The virtual program allows schools, groups and individuals to access Montana-inspired visual art education throughout the entire school year. Simply go to artmobilemontana.org and after taking a virtual tour of the exhibition, become an AMM member to access an abundance of educational resources inspired by the exhibition, including tutorial videos, lesson plans, an education guide, artist interviews and art supply kits. Also accessible is the ability to schedule a live virtual visit with AMM's teaching artist, Nick Danielson, to discuss the exhibition and to guide you through a hands-on art activity, supplies included.

MAPS Media Institute

While anxious to resume their hallmark in-person learning for students in grades 8-12, MAPS Media Institute has adapted programs to an online format for students in Lewis and Clark and Ravalli Counties. As always, the program is offered free of charge to participating students and all skill levels are welcome. Enrolled students will be issued an iPad loaded with the software and accessories needed to participate. Classes that begin in January include: "Music for Movies," "Comic Book Creation" and "Smart Robots" (which provides a robot kit to each student.) To enroll or check out the new three-week classes added each month, visit mapsmediastudio.com.

Missoula Art Museum

Responding to school, family and individual needs during this time, the MAM has significantly expanded their virtual learning opportunities through their Museum as Megaphone distance-learning platform. Giving students and teachers access to contemporary art exhibitions on view at MAM and a chance to interact directly with artists and arts educators, Museum as Megaphone allows participation from schools all over the state in real-time and interactive tours in the MAM galleries. MAM's arts educators lead students on an inquiry-based tour to engage and promote self-discovery through dialogue and discussion. Learn more at missoulaartmuseum.org/virtual-programs.

Missoula Writing Collaborative

Since schools were shut down last spring, the Missoula Writers Collaborative has produced, and made available free of charge, poetry lessons geared toward school-aged students, though enjoyable for anyone. Text and video lessons geared toward K-3 students, those in grades 3-5 and students in grades 6-8 are available at MWC's website, missoulawriterscollaborative.org, under Digital Resources.

Spark! Arts Ignite Learning

Since the pandemic began to impact us, Missoula's Spark! Arts Ignite Learning has cataloged an extensive array of teaching resources available online, as a way to support families' arts learning needs. Their dedicated page, Spark! Creativity at Home, highlights learning opportunities in the form of teaching videos across the disciplines of creative movement and dance, theatre and storytelling, visual art, music, creative writing and Mindfulness Arts. Explore the possibilities at sparkartslearning.org/spark-creativity-at-home.

Yellowstone Art Museum

This fall the YAM launched an online version of their popular Art Suitcase program. The Online Art Suitcase is an art resource for fourth grade educators to teach standards-aligned, inquiry-based art education. Currently, "The Artist and the Landscape" focuses on art and artists from the Montana area that are displayed in the permanent collection at the YAM. Discover the program at artsuitcase.org.

JANUARY

Jan 1-Jan 9 – Doug Turman: Curious Missoula Art Museum missoulaartmuseum.org/exhibits/doug-turman-curious
Jan 1-Jan 15 – Brought to Fruition Holter Museum of Art, Helena www.the-square.org/
Jan 1-Jan 16 – Works in Progress: Prints from the New Deal Missoula Art Museum, Helena Tue-Sat 10 AM-5 PM www.umt.edu/montanamuseum/exeventsschedule/default.php
Jan 1-Jan 29 – Masterwork by Ellsworth Kelly Missoula Art Museum www.umt.edu/montanamuseum/exeventsschedule/default.php
Jan 1-Feb 6 – Kristi Hager: Equal; A Work in Progress Missoula Art Museum www.missoulaartmuseum.org/exhibits/kristi-hager-equal-a-work-in-progress
Jan 1-Feb 12 – Kristi Hager: Equal, a Work in Progress Paris Gibson Square Museum of Art www.the-square.org/
Jan 1-Feb 13 – I Ventured Into the Dream: A Sheryl Bodily Retrospective Hockaday Museum of Art www.hockadaymuseum.org
Jan 1-Feb 27 – Members Salon 2020 Hockaday Museum of Art www.hockadaymuseum.org
Jan 1-Mar 15 – Kathleen Herlihy-Paoli: Act Three Paris Gibson Square Museum of Art www.the-square.org
Jan 1-May 31 – Forever Glacier C.M. Russell Museum www.cmrussell.org/exhibitions
Jan 1-Jan 31 – Colors: Works by Kelly Bourgeois Holter Museum of Art www.holtermuseum.org/upcoming-1
Jan 5 – Tracy Linder: Open Range Yellowstone Art Museum www.artmuseum.org
Jan 15-Apr 4 – Quilt National '19 Holter Museum of Art www.holtermuseum.org/upcoming-1
Jan 16 – Abstract Beginnings with Connie Herberg Yellowstone Art Museum www.artmuseum.org
Jan 17 – Ben Darce Firebrand Lounge www.firebrandhotel.com
Jan 22 – Yellowstone Art Auction 53 Yellowstone Art Museum www.artmuseum.org

FEBRUARY

Jan 26-Mar 31 – Nancy Erickson: Imagining A Post-Nuclear Eden Missoula Art Museum www.missoulaartmuseum.org/exhibits
Jan 27 – Aaron Watson The Wilma www.logjampresents.com/
Feb 3-Mar 31 – Featured Artists: James Seward and Mana Lesman R307 Bar and Grill 842 E. Pike Ave., Columbus
Feb 4 – Artists Conversations Series Hockaday Museum of Art www.hockadaymuseum.org
Feb 11 – Adult Cooking Class -Even More Chocolate Yellowstone Art Museum www.artmuseum.org
Feb 18-Jun 19 – The Last Glacier Hockaday Museum of Art www.hockadaymuseum.org
Feb 20 – Contemporary Charcoal Drawing with Louis Habeck Yellowstone Art Museum www.artmuseum.org
Feb 20 – C2021 Benefit Art Auction Missoula Art Museum www.missoulaartmuseum.org/event/2021-benefit-art-auction
Feb 22-Mar 31 – Eric Carlson: Entanglements Missoula Art Museum www.missoulaartmuseum.org
Feb 27 – Adult Cooking Class -One Recipe -Many Meals Yellowstone Art Museum www.artmuseum.org
March 6 – Yellowstone Art Auction 53 Yellowstone Art Museum www.artmuseum.org
Mar 9-Apr 27 – All Manner of Shapes: Children's Art Exhibition 2021 Hockaday Museum of Art www.hockadaymuseum.org
Mar 11 – Adult Cooking Class -Exotic Desserts Yellowstone Art Museum www.artmuseum.org
Dec 17-Feb 25 – West African Dance Class, Oumar Keita and Djebe Bara The Barn Movement Studio www.djebebara.com
Dec 24-Mar 4 – West African Dance Class, Oumar Keita and Djebe Bara The Barn Movement Studio www.djebebara.com
Dec 31-Mar 11 – West African Dance Class, Oumar Keita and Djebe Bara The Barn Movement Studio www.djebebara.com

MARCH



Paris Gibson Square MOA's Curative Art Collective students

Remaining FY21 Artists in Schools and Communities Grants Awarded

By Monica Grable

Four deserving organizations were recommended for funding following a review of applications to the Nov. 4 Artists in Schools and Communities' (AISC) Grants Under \$1500 deadline. Montana Arts Council members approved the following grants at their December meeting:

- **Bigger Sky Kids, Inc.**, \$1500 | Studio Mastery for Beginning and Intermediate Artists
- **Lame Deer School District**, \$1500 | First Voices: The Tribes of Montana, A Red Curtain Project Initiative
- **Liberty Place, Inc.**, \$1195 | Photography Workshop: Poetry and the Landscape
- **Paris Gibson Square**, \$1500 | Curative Art Collective

Artists in Schools and Communities grant program begins a new cycle of grant requests in 2021, with detailed guidelines available beginning Jan. 15. AISC grants awarded during this spring cycle will fund projects that take place between July 1, 2021 and June 30, 2022. For further information regarding upcoming AISC grant opportunities, contact Monica Grable, MAC Arts Education Director, at Monica.Grable@mt.gov or 406-444-6522.



This documentary short showcases an area in Montana where there is an initiative to restore what was lost.
Watch it here: https://youtu.be/_Q673Utzggs Learn more here: nationalgeographic.org

State of the **ARTS** Spring Issue
MONTANA ARTS COUNCIL

Want to be a contributor?

Our spring theme is all about road trips for inspiration. We'd love to hear about your inspirations and favorite places! Please send submissions to mac@mt.gov. See page 2 for more ways to contact Montana Arts Council.

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The Flathead Lake International Cinemafest premieres Jan. 29-31, 2021

The FLIC 2021 film lineup, featuring entries from 17 countries and many from Montana, will be available for online viewing for about a month following the Showboat Cinema 6 in-person encore week. Visit FLICPolson.com to learn more.

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State of the Arts is provided free of charge upon request. An alternative accessible format is also available upon request. Call 406-444-6449