MAC announces 2017 Artist’s Innovation Award recipients

The Montana Arts Council approved eight Montana artists to receive its Artist’s Innovation Award. The $3,000 award is given every two years to performing, visual, and literary artists who exemplify innovation in their work and artwork, originality and dedication in their creative pursuits, as well as a marked capacity for self-direction.

Panels of experts convened in November to determine the nominees who were presented for the council’s approval at their December meeting in Helena.

“Montana has an exceptionally rich creative environment,” says Tatiana Gant, executive director of the Montana Arts Council. “The Artist’s Innovation Award recognizes artists who have demonstrated commitment and encourages their continued exploration. The ingenuity of the artists selected for the 2017 awards highlights the brilliance of Montana’s cultural community.”

This year’s recipients are:
- Performing Arts: Joy French and Sam Krahn
- Visual Arts: Catherine Courtenaye, Stephanie Frostad, Alison Reintjes and Bently Spang
- Literary Arts: Jennifer Groneberg and Aaron Parrett

For more information, please visit art.mt.gov/aia.

East Helena receives $500,000 ArtPlace America grant

For decades, East Helena held community-wide picnics hosted by the Asarco Smelter, with everyone welcome. Everyone would bring food to share, often tied to their ethnic roots, and play ball games and horseshoes. It is this community spirit East Helena seeks to rekindle with a $500,000 grant it received in early December from ArtPlace America.

The grant will help the town create an East Helena Food and Culture Hub, a program to celebrate the town’s unique identity, create a new culinary training program to support local businesses, and engage local artists to inspire East Helena citizens in community planning.

“Congratulations to East Helena on this well-deserved award that will not only prepare folks today to fill the jobs of tomorrow, but also ensure small businesses can continue to find success, grow, and contribute back to the community,” said Lt. Governor Mike Cooney, who attended a celebration in East Helena Dec. 5.

Project partners include the City of East Helena, the East Helena School District, the Environmental Protection Agency, entrepreneur Shalon Hastings of Taco del Sol, the Helena Community Offender Re-entry Program and the Myrna Loy.

The project hearkens back to some of the unique events that make East Helena a welcoming and special place to live. It will fund community feasts, music and storytelling events, and other arts-related projects designed to inspire East Helensans and engage them in future planning.

“It starts with food – celebrating food,” said East Helena Mayor Jamie Schell. “At its core, this is a workforce development effort, but overall it is designed to use the arts to engage the whole community in planning for the future.”

Alexandra Swaney, 1944-2017

Cultural heritages and traditions formed the common thread first of many cross-cultural travel experiences. She took her undergraduate degree at Mills College, and earned a doctorate in cultural anthropology from the University of Colorado, Boulder. Her interest in cultural heritages and traditions was the common thread in a life of diverse explorations.

She was privileged to work with her role model from childhood, Frieda Fiegelman, an early student of anthropology at Columbia University. Frieda and Alexandra were a unique team, reviewing papers together and generating possibilities for their hometown community. Alex edited a chapbook collection of Frieda’s poems, Beyond the Mores.
Being new to Montana, and new at the helm of MAC, I’m looking to the past to see the future. What is easy to pick up on is Montana’s long-held reverence for its environment and the culture that springs from it.

— Tatiana Gant

"ArtPlace America saw in this community the things I must see and what I must know. I look forward to each opportunity. My time in Montana can be counted in months, and I have so much to learn and discover. Already I have been gifted with input on the things I must see and what I must know. I look forward to each opportunity."

Tatiana Gant, Executive Director

The grant was highly competitive with 987 applicants, and East Helena as one of just 23 recipients out of 70 finalists. "ArtPlace America saw in this community and us something they don’t see elsewhere," Schell said. He believes it’s the way all the community came together to work on the grant. School Superintendent Ron Whitmoyer said the culinary arts program will use school kitchens, home ec classrooms and East Helena businesses. It will help expand the school’s adult education program to include culinary arts and other job-training courses.

The grant was written by Krys Holmes of the Myrna Loy to demonstrate how effective artists can help build community vitality. Holmes said the ArtPlace team that visited East Helena this summer was "totally charmed," noting the new school, trail system and housing going up in the community and its strong community partnerships.

"They saw this little town in the shadow of the slag pile re-envisioning its future," Holmes said.

Javier Torres of ArtPlace America said the grant-makers are "absolutely thrilled to be investing in East Helena."

"This project is a shining example of how rural communities can design equitable futures for themselves by elevating the unique culture and character of their place," he said.

The comprehensive culinary arts workforce program that East Helena, the Myrna Loy and their partners have developed will undoubtedly create great economic opportunity for the region."

ArtPlace America is a 10-year collaboration by a number of foundations, federal agencies and financial institutions that works to put arts and culture at the center of community planning and building.

The beauty of public investments in the arts is that they follow the will of the people. Resources allocated by elected representatives are distributed at the direction of publically crafted plans, under the oversight of citizen advisors. MAC and the programs we implement are democracy in action.

Montana’s Masters

Weeks into my tenure, I had the opportunity to visit Crow Agency to present with the Department of the Interior’s Indian Arts and Crafts Board. It was my good fortune to meet Mary Lou Big Day, an artist that MAC has the privilege of recognizing through the Montana’s Circle of American Masters (MCAM) award.

Like many MCAM awardees, Mary Lou learned the art of bead-making from her elders. She makes objects infused with meaning and cultural significance. Mary Lou has received many honors, and her work has been presented internationally. Mary Lou shares her skills and passion as the matriarch of a family of traditional Crow artists. The roster of MCAM artists captures the breadth of traditional Crow culture, ensuring that artists like Mary Lou Big Day remain central in Montana’s history.

As I have become more familiar with Montana’s Cultural and Aesthetics Projects Trust, my appreciation for the commitment to Montana’s culture grows. The legislated partnership between MAC and the Montana Historical Society ensures a balanced investment in preserving and growing Montana’s culture.

A Bridge Between Past and Present

In my third month here, I had the opportunity to visit an organization that benefits from the trust, the Yellowstone Art Museum (YAM) in Billings. Beginning business in the old Yellow- stone Art Center more than 50 years ago, YAM has maintained a focus on contemporary artists and education programs.

When entering YAM the bridge between past and present is visible as the modern building sits on the former Yellowstone County Jail. The YAM collection is grounded in a flourishing period of Modernism without being stuck in a point in the past. Exhibitions and acquisitions continue to spotlight innovative artists from Montana. I was in town during Billings Art Walks and the art around YAM was full of activity, being on of many cultural anchors downtown.

Art and the Military

During my busy fall, I surprised the Missoula Children’s Theatre (MCT) with an unannounced visit. I took it in stride: the organization was buzzing with the news that they had been invited to present to the National Council on the Arts. MCT had recently prioritized arts programs that serve the military and MCT was asked to present on its long-running program that serves military families.

MCT travels the world, under military contract to military bases, giving children the chance to see shows and build essential skills. MCT’s military program will help them navigate the challenges that can come with prolonged parent deployments and frequent moves. MCT’s mission is to do just one aspect of the work they do that shares the arts in communities beyond their own.

The final month of a year is a time for reflection. Especially so with 2017 marking the 50th year of this arts agency for the State of Montana. Montanans know that skilled artists working in their communities add richness. Montana is home to many thriving cultural districts that contribute to healthy economies. Montana uses the arts to heal and grow. The arts in Montana keep us connected to our history. I am proud to become a part of this state, in service to these values.

My time in Montana can be counted in months, and I have so much to learn and discover. Already I have been gifted with input on the things I must see and what I must know. I look forward to each opportunity.

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ArtPlace America grant (from page 1)
Glen Gilmore, an artist-blacksmith from Corvallis, who won Best Artist - Metal at the 25th Western Design Conference, held Sept. 7-10 at the Snow King Center in Jackson Hole, WY. A panel of five jurors unanimously chose Gilmore’s piece, “The Wave,” a custom-forged stair railing inspired by the artist’s visit to a geological formation on the Utah-Arizona border. The capitol pieces were forged from large diameter round steel and given a weathered steel surface. The railing was assembled using recycled materials and traditional blacksmithing techniques including mortice-and-tenon joints. The entire railing, which is 36” tall, 64” long and 4” deep, has a hand-rubbed wax finish. Twenty-one artists, designers and craftspersons received top honors in seven judging categories for their one-of-a-kind furnishings, functional art pieces and fashions.

Other Montana winners include Kibler & Kirch of Billings and Red Lodge, which was awarded Best Interior Design for their dining-room overhaul, which included timeless pieces from their collection of furnishings, rugs and lighting. Additionally, Bear Paw Designs (Mike Roth, Stevensville) took home the Western Spirit Award for a rustic, Old West-style batich. For a complete listing of this year’s winners go to: www.westendesignconference.com/awards.

Conrad Pedicabs Manufacturing, based in Bozeman, has been a Made in Montana manufacturer that’s making its mark in the arts. The company, which produces pedal-powered passenger cars also known as rickshaws, had its products on display Sept. 15-Oct. 8 in Philadelphia for a public artist exhibit by the celebrated Chinese artist Cai Guo-Qiang. “Fireflies,” the artist’s largest American public art project in a decade, featured custom pedicabs adorned with hundreds of colorful lanterns, along Philadelphia’s Benjamin Franklin Parkway four nights a week. The Association for Public Art contacted Bonner-based Conrad Pedicab last year because the company’s attention to detail caught the eye of the organization. After the company sent a custom version of its standard pedicab, the artist placed an order for 27 of them.

Coaster Pedicab ramped up production to fulfill the order – its largest to date – and shipped the fleet even earlier than expected. Coaster Pedicab started in 2005 as Boston Pedicab, where Justin Bruce, now the company’s chief operating officer, led a project to reinvent the tradition of pedicab. He found an established bicycle manufacturer to work with in Darby, and relocated Coaster Pedicab’s headquarters to Montana. One year later, Coaster Pedicab was listed in the historic downtown of Polson. “We feel extremely fortunate to have found our home in the Big Sky and to have all of our trikes Montana made,” said Bruce.

Bozeman metalsmith Kimberly Navratil-Pope, whose work was included again this year in Robert Redford’s Sundance catalog. The catalog highlights American artists and their craft along with curated work. Navratil-Pope, a fifth generation Montanan, has been a professional metalsmith for more than 20 years. Her work is included in the Smithsonian National Gallery and has been published in various books and magazines.

The 2017 High Plains Book Award winners from Montana: Sneed B. Collard III, Medicine of the Land: Thinking Ahead of Climate Change; Snowshoe Hares, Science, and Survival, published by Bucking Horse Books; On the Edge: This is the Story of a Nevada Natives, published by the Nevada Historical Society; and Surviving, published by the University of Illinois Press. For a complete list of Montana winners go to: www.highplainsbookawards.org.

Montana State University graduate student Jason Roehrig, who won the top prize at the Wildlife Conservation Film Festival in New York City with a short documentary about efforts to protect a red Madison River beaver in Nevada. Roehrig won the award for an episode of “Stewardship with Vision” about Nevada rancher Dave Spicer and his efforts to protect the Madison River population, which only exists in a 10-mile stretch of the Oasis Valley in the Amargosa Desert. Roehrig, who is a student at MSU’s Science and Natural History Filmmaking MPA program, made the film as an intern for the Western Landowners Alliance, and was the chief interviewer, writer, crew and editor for the production. While at MSU, Roehrig has cobbled together an assortment of skills. In his free time, he is working on his thesis film that is being shot in Hyalite; the film has no narration, but will have musical accompaniment, he said.

Tippet Rise Art Center in Fishtail, which was named Best Museum of the Year of the Western United States, on Sept. 29 by the 2017 Leading Cultural Destinations Awards. The prestigious award recognizes institutions, museums, conservatories and cities that have provided exemplary contributions to local cultural life. The awards ceremony took place in London, at the Trafalgar St James Hotel, at the foot of the South Bank. Tippet Rise opened in 2016 as a destination for local residents and international tourists to celebrate the union of land, art, architecture, and music. Located roughly midway between Bozeman and Billings, the center offers an unexpected oasis that presents concerts by world-renowned musicians and young artists, and large-scale contemporary sculpture on a 10,260-acre working sheep and cattle ranch. As an institution founded to serve its neighbors in Montana, as much as visiting musicians, artists, and audiences, Tippet Rise develops and supports year-round educational programs in schools at the K-12 level, in local colleges and universities, and other organizations. Leading Culture Destinations Awards is a platform created to explore, recognize and promote the world’s best destinations for cultural experiences, and 2017 marks the fourth edition. More information is available at www.lcdawards.com.

The Missoula Art Museum, which secured a $25,000 grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) Museums for America program. The grant will fund a statewide project to improve community access and collection resources for libraries and museums. Only 24% of applications to the highly competitive program were funded, placing MAM among the ranks of 138 national projects that the IMLS goal to support community access to their area’s cultural resources. MAM’s project, CARES: Catalyzing Access, Research, and Education Solutions, engages museums, libraries, civic agencies, and other partners from across Montana in a needs assessment to improve access to cultural collections and increased resources for preservation and conservation. Montana has a rich history, and its institutions hold important collections of artwork, documents, and archival materials. However, many of the state’s museums and libraries are experiencing shrinking capacity as collections continue to grow. CARES will determine the potential for collaborations in collections-driven research and inform the conceptual design of a MAM collections center in Missoula. Project Director Brandon Reintjes says, “Museums and libraries tend to develop and share resources and collections. However, there are significant opportunities for us to collaborate with our colleagues throughout the state, specifically in regards to the humanities. We’re extremely proud to have received this important national grant at this time.” Nearly $22,000 of the total grant will stay in Montana communities and provide direct benefits for Montanans, including training stipends and new access to much-needed resources. Learn more about IMLS.gov.
Celebration of the Arts
launches Emerson's anniversary

The Emerson Center for the Arts and Culture in Bozeman celebrates its 25th anniversary as an arts organization and the centennial of the building that houses it in 2018. The anniversary year kicked off Jan. 26 with the third annual Celebration of the Arts.

This year’s theme is “A Night to Remember – Winter Formal,” a throwback to the era of formal dances, vintage fashions and the historic prominence of the Emerson, which was a schoolhouse from 1918-92. The Celebration of the Arts Exhibit, a silent auction and juried collection of original art donated by local and regional artists in support of the Emerson, is on display through Jan. 26. The Emerson also partnered with the Gallatin History Museum to curate two complimentary exhibits that explore the origins of school and social dances as well as vintage fashions. The Weaver Room features historic photographs from school and community dances that took place around the Gallatin Valley, and the Lobby Gallery displays vintage formal attire, courtesy of the Gallatin History Museum and community members.

For details, call 406-587-9797 or visit theemerson.org.

TRANSITIONS (continued)

booking agent are put in place. The Montana Repertory Theatre will continue to offer its very popular, state-wide educational outreach tour, “The Missoula COLONY, the playwright development program (5 on 5 and 4 by 4); and will continue its downtown presence in Missoula with its “Visions and Voices” program. The Rep expects to be at full operational capacity in the 2019-20 season with a new national touring production and new and exciting leadership, vision and energy.

So long and best wishes to Robyn G. Peterson. The long-time executive director of the Yellowstone Art Museum left her post Dec. 8. Since assuming the position of executive director in March 2006, Peterson launched a successful capital and endowment campaign, conceived and oversaw construction of the Visible Vault, rebranded the YAM, led the staff through a series of acclaimed exhibitions and new programs, and achieved national accreditation for the YAM. She notes how unusual it is that a city the size of Billings should have such a large and active art museum, and that a state as sparsely populated as Montana should have so many exceptional artists. “The opportunity to work in such a generous and supportive community has been unmatchable,” she says. I’m pleased to be able to leave the museum in a strong position, confident that the community will continue to ensure that the YAM remains a centerpiece of its thriving cultural environment.” Peterson will be moving out of state to pursue new projects.

Emeritus trustee Carol L. H. Green and senior curator Bob Durden will serve as co-interim directors, until permanent executive director is hired. Green joined the YAM Board of Trustees in 1997 and served as prior interim executive director (July 2005-March 2006), and board president (2006-2008). She was granted emeritus status in 2012, and is currently acting chair of the Endowment Committee. She earned her bachelor’s in art history from the University of Minnesota in 1965, and master’s in public relations from MSU-Billings in 2004. She and her husband, John, have served on various boards including the Library Foundation, the MSU-Billings Foundation, Billings Symphony Orchestra and Chorale, the Archie Bray Foundation for the Ceramic Arts, the Lewis & Clark Bicentennial Commission, and others. Durden was formerly on the curatorial staff of the then Yellowstone Art Center in the 1990s, acting as staff project manager for the expansion of the museum that opened in February 1998. Durden returned to the Yellowstone Art Museum staff in January 2012 and has since been responsible for curating an active series of acclaimed exhibitions, including “Face to Face, Wall to Wall” during the YAM’s 50th anniversary year (July 2015-June 2016). He earned a bachelor’s from MSU-Billings in 1984 and master’s from MSU-Bozeman in 1990. In addition to his exceptional abilities as a curator, Durden is a practicing artist whose work is exhibited statewide and beyond.

CONDOLENCES TO …

Blackfeet actor Steve Reeves as Art in “Fishing Naked.”

The family and friends of actor Steve Reeves. The Browning native also appeared in dozens of films, died Dec. 7 at a hospital in Missoula; he was 56. During his career, he appeared in the films “Twin,” “Dances with Wolves,” “Last of the Dogmen,” “Fargo,” and “The Longest Yard.” He appeared in the TV shows “Walker, Texas Ranger” and “JAG.” Reeves was born Aug. 14, 1962, to Curley and Lila Reeves and raised on the Blackfeet Reservation in Browning. According to the actor’s IMDB profile, he lived the struggling actors’ dream in a quest to act in film and movies. He graduated from Flandreau High School and attended Haskell Indian Junior College in Lawrence, KS, where he received a degree in arts. After Haskell, Reeves began his acting career in Los Angeles while living on the beach in his car, a 1971 Ford Torino. Reeves’s first role in the film industry was as a stunt rider in the 1987 film “War Party,” which also featured his brother, Tim Reeves. His first acting role, in 1988, was in Universal’s “Twin.” He played a non-speaking role of a Cheyenne warrior in the highly acclaimed “Dances With Wolves” in 1990. In 1993, he was cast as the Apache scout, Chato, in “Geronimo: An American Legend,” starring Wes Studi. Reeves is perhaps best known for his 1995 Native American lead role in “Last of the Dogmen” with Tom Berenger. In 1996, Reeves received an award from First Americans in the Arts (FAITA) for his supporting role in “Dances With Wolves,” which grossed over $500 million. In 1997, he was featured as a Regular cast member on the critically acclaimed show “Fargo,” and in the made for television movie “Crazy Horse.” In 2004 he received the honor again for his work on the ABC series “Line of Fire.” One of Reeves’s last performances was in 2015 on the independent comedy “Fishing Naked,” directed by Peter Coggon. A GoFundMe page has been created to help the family.

Alexandra Swaney (from page 1)

Alexandra Swaney

Talented as a writer, artist and musician, Alexandra focused on her gifts as a keyboardist and composer in her work with Cheap Cologne. In the mid-1980s she studied music composition at CalArts in California.

Most recently, she sang with Musikantin in their performance of Bach’s B Minor Mass.

Alexandra’s generative creative energy contributed to the founding of Second Story Cinema in Helena, now the Myrna Loy Center. She was also part of creating the Montana Artists Refuge in Butte, ensuring residences for Native American artists. She was an adjunct professor of anthropology at Carroll College, and co-led several journeys of spiritual exploration with the Feathered Pipe Ranch Foundation to Peru and other sacred sites.

Alexandra was an advocate. She was a strong proponent of women’s and gay rights, supporting the founding of the Montana Women’s Lobby Fund and contributing regularly to the gay community’s Hearts and Humbugs events.

For a decade, Alex worked as the folklife director at the Montana Arts Council, travelling across the state to discover and support a variety of artists. Her work helped establish the annual Montana FolkFestival in Butte.

Many friends were honored to be part of Alex’s support team over the last two years, after the death of her partner, Lillian Michalsky. Gratitude is extended to John Sims, M. J. Williams, Nan Parsons, Nancy Owens, Melissa Kwasywski and Bryher Herak. Alex’s care team would like to thank her loving caregivers, Maureen Sullivan, Judy Moon Vasquez, and also the staff at Bear Grass Suites in Boulder; appreciation also goes to her many friends at the Montana Arts Council and the Feathered Pipe Ranch. Also important to Alex’s well-being were Jo Reid Smith, Arnie Malina, Rhandi Rachlis, Joan Bird and Nancy Collins-Warner.

A memorial service in honor of Alex’s life will be held at a later date.

Judy Martz: Arts advocate

Former Montana Governor Judith Helen Martz, 74, passed away peacefully at her home in Butte Oct. 30, after a long battle with pancreatic cancer.

Martz was born in Big Timber to Joe and Dorothy Morstein. She was one of six children and loved being around her siblings. She moved to Butte when she was a little girl, attended Havre Elementary School and graduated from Butte High School. She loved to compete, at anything!

In 1965, she married Harry Martz. For 37 years they owned and operated Martz Disposal Service together.

In 1996, she was selected by Marc Racicot to be Lieutenant Governor and then in 2000 she was elected Montana’s first female governor.

In a column in 2004, former MAC Executive Director Adylnn Fishbaugh expressed her appreciation for the governor, and her advocacy for the arts. During Martz’s tenure, the governor’s office established the Creative Enterprise Cluster as part of the state’s plan to boost Montana’s economy through the arts, culture and businesses involved in creative enterprises.

“All of this would be possible without the commitment of Governor Judy Martz,” she wrote. “We all owe her enormous thanks for bringing to life her belief that the arts mean business in Montana.”

The intrepid Alex Swaney during a visit to Mongolia.

Gov. Judy Martz
MAPS wins national Youth Program Award

The Montana Arts Council proudly recognizes and congratulates Hamilton-based MAPS Media Institute, chosen as one of only a dozen awardees honored by the President’s Committee on the Arts and Humanities as a recipient of the 2017 National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award.

The National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award recognizes a project’s positive, meaningful impact on underserved youth in rural and urban communities. MAPS received a $10,000 grant and representatives traveled to D.C. in November to accept the award plaque at a Kennedy Center ceremony. As with all awardees, MAPS is also receiving capacity-building and communications support, designed to make the organization stronger.

The National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Awards initiative praised the exemplary education of Montana’s youth.

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Meet the eight Montana artists who received the 2017 Montana Arts Council’s Artist’s Innovation Award:

Performing Arts
Joy French, Missoula

Joy French is a dancer, choreographer, videographer and producer based in Missoula. After earning her MF in dance performance and choreography at the University of Colorado, Boulder, she moved to Missoula in 2011 founded BBD Dance (BBD – currently Montana’s only professional contemporary dance company).

She created BBD to build her choreographic pursuits, provide “a home for dancers in the region” and to produce nationally and internationally acclaimed dance events.

In addition to BBD, French is an adjunct faculty at the University of Montana and teaches in Missoula high schools through BBD’s Montana MoDE (Model Dance Educator) program.

Professional, she has performed with Montana with Ballet West, Dance Co. and the CoMotion Dance Project, and with Impact Dance Co. and Evolving Dance in Colorado. Her creative work has been showcased by a variety of schools, dance companies, theaters and festivals, including Bellingham Repertory Dance (WA), Sans Souci Festival of Dance Cinema (CO), Perry-Mansfield Performing Arts School (CO), Ursinus College (PA), and the University of Colorado Boulder (CO).

As a dancer, choreographer and director, she primarily focuses on American female narratives, exploring “who we are as contemporary modern women and how these identities are shaped by history.”

Extensive research goes into her narratives. “I scaveng through literary works, visit historical museums, and open personal discourse with various groups of women.”

“Through this research I try to find unique characters, vibrant stories, and human ‘universal truths’ that can transcend age, class, and even gender.”

In her late 20s, French began to experiment with technology, “specifically the video camera and all its tangential components” to tell stories, explore new worlds. “Some members have never played an instrument or read music before meeting in this group, such as myself, who have performed professionally and have advanced degrees in music.”

The orchestra challenges Krahn “to find ways for a group with a wide range of abilities to create music together without reading traditional notation.”

Panel members describe his application as “satisfying, intriguing and beautiful,” and appreciated learning about microtonality.

“Sam’s work is many things at once: engaging, challenging, evocative, emotional, menacing. And the way he brought it out of the performers through reactions to sketches is inspired,” wrote one panelist.

“I work enthusiastically with both fact and fiction, developing in metaphor as much as the vital world around me,” writes Frostad.

Her narrative paintings seek to present the essential elements of a story, and portray “figures and scenarios that are both personally compelling and socially relevant.”

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19th century handwriting embedded beneath layers, including naturalistic studies of birds of the American West, pen-and-ink drawings, aerial landscapes, and maps. “My own gestures are in a kind of conversation with the shape of imprinted text and scribbling,” she writes.

Through the years, she has sought new ways to highlight “the strange beauty and expressiveness of the ordinary handwriting of our ancestors.”

In the process, she’s developed a technique that employs photo silkscreen to transfer facsimiles of handwriting above and below fields of color. “I believe I’ve found a way to conjure the passage of time abstractly – by employing layers, translucency, and revealing what lies beneath the surface,” she says.

Panel members praised her “compelling application to stimulus and language translation in her work, and the depth and ingenuity of her recent body of work, which combines birds and language “in a fluid and meaningful way.”

“Those new works are an exciting departure from her previous work,” notes a panelist. “She maintains her focus on script and written communication, while including visual elements that speak about space, structure and distance.”

“She is successful in her creation of translucent surfaces, layering and abstraction in her works, where the shapes and lines, not the word itself, creates the composition.”

Stephanie Frostad, Missoula

Montana artist Stephanie Frostad creates graphite and oil paintings on primed two-dimensional surfaces. Her work is “endlessly inspired by both nature and culture,” and ranges from night sky and flora and fauna to intricate compositions depicting human endeavor.

Frostad earned her MFA from the University of Montana, her bachelor’s at the Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore, and studied at the Studio Arts Center Institute in Florence, Italy.

She has exhibited throughout the United States and abroad in Canada, China, Italy and New Zealand. Her work is held in numerous public and private collections.

Her public art projects include “Radiant,” a mural created for the Montana Natural History Center, and a three-part 120-foot-long mural created with art students from Willard Alternative High School on Missoula’s Bitterroot Spur Trail. Self-employed as an artist since 1994, Frostad remains active as a teacher, mentor and speaker on art.

“I work enthusiastically with both fact and fiction, developing in metaphor as much as the vital world around me,” writes Frostad.

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Reflections from an AIA recipient
Receiving the Art-ist’s Innovation Award was a major event for me as an artist. Even though the grant was not for a large amount, it was the affirmation of my work and the encouragement it provided that made such a difference.

Also, Montana, in terms of its population, is a small state and somewhat isolated. The recognition of the state was important in providing incentive to continue to explore and pursue innovative work. These grants make a big difference. To know that your work is appreciated and valued in your own state means a lot. Please let the Arts Council know what a service the grants provide, not only to artists, but to the local community of MT as a whole.

Everyone benefits in a climate of creativity and innovation! — Phoebe Toland, 2019 Artist’s Innovation Award recipient
Two Montanans named First Peoples Fund Fellows

First Peoples Fund announces the 2017 artist chosen by a national selection committee to receive the 2017 Artists in Business Leadership Fellowship and Cultural Capital Fellowships. First Peoples Fund offers $5,000 annual grants to Native artists dedicated to the well-being of Indigenous artistic expression and its relationship to the Collective Spirit® of First Peoples.

“We are proud to welcome artists from across Indian country as First Peoples Fund Fellows,” said First Peoples Fund President Lori Poriour. “Each one of these fellows works within their communities and community to further the cultural values we hold strongly at First Peoples Fund – generosity, wisdom and integrity.”

However, his education continues with every piece he creates and with every story he shares. Pepion incorporates traditional design elements into colorful contemporary illustrations, leaving his work highly recognizable. Most importantly, this deepens his connections to self and place, providing him with a sense of strength.

The exhibition continues Red Star’s dedication to redefine archival and historical norms through the lens of new historical, social, and cultural dynamics, both within and outside of contemporary indigenous realities. Art in America magazine currently features an online interview with Red Star about the exhibition.

Also at MAM:

“The Shape of Things: New Approaches to Indigenous Abstraction” runs through March 2–July 28, and showcases works by Molly Murphy Adams (Oglala Lakota), John Hitchcock (Comanche, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw Tribes), and Diane Slick (Meshwaki/Nezahau). For more information, visit missoulartmuseum.org, or call 406-728-3447.

Installation view of “Our Side,” curated by Wendy Red Star and featuring works by four contemporary indigenous and First Nations artists. (Photo courtesy of Sikilak Photo-Video)
The Lil Smokies:
Changing Shades
Music from one of Montana’s most accomplished bands. Visit lilsmokies.com.

The Lil Smokies prefer a relentless tempo characterized by the bass player, “/accessing his groove as soon as the band begins to play” and the rhythm guitarist and drummer, “flying his honed baritone. Other members, with equally dazzling chops, are Matt Cornette, banjo; Scott Parker, bass; Jake Simpson, fiddle and vocals; and Matthew Aaberg, Montana’s fleet-fingered pianist. His own and others’ compositions are featured. Aaberg calls the tracks “uncategorifiable,” representing many of his musical trades funky, syncopated licks on the bluesy “Bala Blue” with Kinobe, a digi- tal shapeshifter, who also purrs vocals. Aaberg’s solo pieces shine. He started composing in the ’80s, and treats us to the improvised “Dream Track,” with its pensive and relaxed pace. He’s also an alum of many of the Bay Area’s early rock and blues powerhouse groups, and mirrors the Elvin Bishop Group’s monster hit, “Foolshed Around and Fell in Love.” It’s terrific! He also offers a stunning rendition of “O Shenandoah,” filled with movement, ebbing and flowing.

For the great players, music is an extension of their bodies, and Aaberg is no exception. His technique is so fluid that the musculature of his hands seems unbridled by joints and bones. His own and others’ compositions are featured. Aaberg calls the tracks "uncategorifiable," representing many of his musical trades funky, syncopated licks on the bluesy "Bala Blue" with Kinobe, a digital shapeshifter, who also purrs vocals. Aaberg’s solo pieces shine. He started composing in the ’80s, and treats us to the improvised “Dream Track,” with its pensive and relaxed pace. He’s also an alum of many of the Bay Area’s early rock and blues powerhouse groups, and mirrors the Elvin Bishop Group’s monster hit, “Foolshed Around and Fell in Love.” It’s terrific! He also offers a stunning rendition of “O Shenandoah,” filled with movement, ebbing and flowing.

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Montana 1864: Indians, Cowboys, and the Year of the Statehood
By Ken Egann Jr.
“History demands humility of the historian,” writes Ken Egann. And milestones in Egann’s history writing is work that is factually compelling. His far-ranging month-long, month-by-month trajectory includes characters familiar to most Montanans: Marcus Daly, who declared, “I have now quit politics for good”; Charlie Russell as a restless young cowboy; the distinguished “Me Montana.” In the book, Graveline Stuart, who takes a new wife, and Sarah Bickford, who rose from slavery to proprietor of the Virginia City Water Company. Egann also delves on lesser-known figures who had their own impact on Montana’s history. Madams, Chinese doctors, and many Native American voices are brought to light through Egann’s well-painted words, their own writings, and the book’s many historical footnotes.

At 288 pages, the book is organized into easy-to-read, thought-provoking chunks. And, for those who haven’t yet read Egann’s Montana 1864, readers will surely be inspired to look it up.

Egann is the executive director of Humanities Montana.

— LK Willis

Ballet at the Moose Lodge
By Caroline Patterson
Best known as the editor of the Willa Award-winning, Montana Writers workshop, Geography of the Heart, Caroline Patterson is also the author of powerful short fiction. A new collection by Drumheller Institute in Helena showcases 16 of her extraordinary stories. Patterson explores what it is to grow up female in the American West. Her narrator delves into the lives of travelers, homemakers, radio-show announcers, mothers, teachers, dancers, shop clerks, and the subtler terrain of girls. They take their readers from a ferry dock in Resurrection Bay, Alaska, to a two-room school in the Bitterroot Valley, from brush, backpacking college students to young new mothers on the edge, and from the 1920s to the 1990s.

In Ballet at the Moose Lodge, Patterson explores in delicate and searing prose the visible and invisible negotiations women make to navigate lives bound by the rugged western landscape. Patterson explores what it is to grow up female in the American West. Her narrator delves into the lives of travelers, homemakers, radio-show announcers, mothers, teachers, dancers, shop clerks, and the subtler terrain of girls. They take their readers from a ferry dock in Resurrection Bay, Alaska, to a two-room school in the Bitterroot Valley, from brush, backpacking college students to young new mothers on the edge, and from the 1920s to the 1990s.

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Cold Hearted River
By Keith McCafferty
In the sixth book in the series of Sean Stranahan mysteries, McCafferty marshals his fly-fishing buddies on a unrelenting puzzle that revolves around a lost steamer trunk of flies and gear belonging to Ernest Hemingway. Once again, Sean struggles with — and against — the law as he discovers bodies. Certainly, the Bozeman author is deeply familiar with the stretches of rivers he mentions winding through Montana, Wyoming and Michigan. There are fine turns of words, “the spring storm had dropped a blanket of trouble”; “the river of his mind joined currents with the river of geography”; “the wind was a broom that swept the insects off the river.”

McCafferty writes about the psychology of greed and what it can do because most animals must climb before they can glide. Even certain species of snakes have mastered glide. There’s an easy way to write about science that entices the reader to turn the page. It may be just the thing to interest a reluctant reader or encourage interest in the natural world.

Collard packs his book with illustrations and/or colorful photographs on every page. Humans even get a couple of pages for their inventive use of hang gliders and wingsuits, which mimic the patagia, or glide. The author has an easy way of writing about science that entices the reader to turn the page. It may be just the thing to interest a reluctant reader or encourage interest in the natural world.

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Lament of the Antichrist in a Secular World and Other Poems
By Cara Chamberlain
Cara Chamberlain’s new collection of poems is mesmerizing, amusing and a little spooky. Poems, prefaced with Biblical quotes, introduce characters and reinterpret passages from the Old and New Testaments.

The dire prophet Ezechiel tends the Powell County Fairgrounds (al- though he hates kids), frightens mall walkers, is afflicted by the flu, and proclaims to his barber, “You shall come to a dreadful end and shall be no more forever.”

He also focuses on lesser-known figures who had their own impact on Montana’s history. Madams, Chinese doctors, and many Native American voices are brought to light through Egann’s well-painted words, their own writings, and the book’s many historical footnotes.

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— LK Willis

Poems Across the Big Sky II: An Anthology of Montana Poets
Edited by Lowell Jaeger and Hannah Biswell
Of this second collection, Montana-made poems, editor and contributor Lowell Jaeger writes, “I’ve done my best to select poems which mirror the complexities of human endeavor at Montana and beyond as truthfully as possible.”

Poet laureates, including Jaeger, the new one, Kristi Niemeyer, will be among some of the state’s best-known writers, and plenty of unfamiliar ones. Native Americans, Montana natives, and more recent immigrants share their sense of place, people, meaning. Step back slightly and a chorus lifts up, out of the book, infusing our ears and senses.

— LK Willis

How to submit a book for State of the Arts
To submit a book by a Montana author for inclusion in State of the Arts’ “About Books” section: Please send a copy of the book to Kristi Niemeyer, 207 6th Ave. E, Polson, MT 59860; or submit the following information electronically to kristi@livelytimes.com or mac@mt.gov:
• Title, author, publisher, and month/year published;
• A brief description of the book (no more than 200 words), and a short bio of the author;
• A cover image: minimum 200 dpi in pdf, jpg or tiff file; and
• If other publications or authors have reviewed the book, send a brief sampling of those remarks. If you would like us to return the book, include a note with it saying so. (We will pay for shipping.)

Books submitted to State of the Arts appear in this publication at the Montana Arts Council’s discretion and as space permits. They will not necessarily be re-printed at livelytimes.com.

“I conceive a perception of chickadees,” writes Sandra Alexander; and Marc Beaudin finds “still grasses still lost in dervish dance … & my face and shoulders wet/ from being too alive to go indoors.”


Mark Gibbons professes a more urban experience: “Three miles of cars, no place for pedestrians. The homeless/ are tucked away in the best shelters/ they can find before darkness.”

It’s overwhelming, really, the quality and quantity of fine poems coming from Montana’s heart and brains.”

“Maybe it’s just this: ‘Home is all the wisdom I need to know’,” (Vic Charfo)

Thanks to Many Voices Press, for spreading good words and deep wisdom.

— Kristi Niemeyer

Love and Other Consolation Prizes
By Jamie Ford
Great Falls author Jamie Ford was combing through the newspaper articles about the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition of 1909 – the AYP – and unearthed a story about a raffle for an orphan.

Appalled and intrigued, the author’s imagination was conjuring this tale of a half-Chinese boy, sent by his dying mother to the United States aboard a slave ship. Shunted from posthouses to state-run boarding schools, young Ernest eventually ends up as one of the prizes given at the AYP, “a healthy boy, free to a good family.”

He’s claimed by the flamboyant Madam Flora and taken to the Tenderlon, her elegant home in the Garment District, where her cultivated young Gibson Girls entertain gentlemen on a nightly basis.

A half-century later, on the eve of another World’s Fair, Ernest wrestles with how to tell two adult daughters about his unsavory past, and worries how those memories might affect his aging wife, Grace. The fair’s “brave, sentinels carved from board … rooted in bedrock … His life, his wife’s, the mystery caught in between.”

His reflections are entwined with the story of young Ernest, who leads a charmed life, a “new world steeped in the music and the stories.”

The story takes an unfailing look at the plight of women and immigrants in the early 1900s – a turbulent time of desperate poverty, obscene wealth in the boardrooms of the fair’s patrons.

People with brave and vulnerable characters, the novel brims with wisdom, as Ernest discovers that “sometimes you need to feel everything to live.”

Ford, who grew up in Seattle, is the author of Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet and Songs of Willow Frost.

— Kristi Niemeyer

Catching Air: Taking the Leap with Gliding Animals
By Sneed B. Collard III
Draco lizards, flying fringes and gliding geckos there are just a few of the exotic creatures profiled in Missoula author Sneed Collard’s latest book, a part of the How Nature Works series. Even spectacular creatures, like the bat, have mastered gliding, managing to “crawl” through the air.

Gliding, we learn, is hard work, at least at first, because animals must climb before they can glide.

As usual, Collard packs his book with illustrations and/or colorful photographs on every page. Humans even get a couple of pages for their inventive use of hang gliders and wingsuits, which mimic the patagia, or glide.

There is an easy way to write about science that entices the reader to turn the page. It may be just the thing to interest a reluctant reader or encourage interest in the natural world.

Collard, a prolific writer of nature books, For kids, with 80 titles to his name, and has also authored fiction for kids.

— LK Willis

Lament of the Antichrist in a Secular World and Other Poems
By Cara Chamberlain
Cara Chamberlain’s new collection of poems is mesmerizing, amusing and a little spooky. Poems, prefaced with Biblical quotes, introduce characters and reinterpret passages from the Old and New Testaments.

Judas, at a last meal with disciples, “folded the bitter letters in his shirt/pocket, savored the tender kiss he’d just given back last night, gone as Kerouac, through heavy streets.”

The dire prophet Ezechiel tends the Powell County Fairgrounds (although he hates kids), frightens mall walkers, is afflicted by the flu, and proclaims to his barber, “You shall come to a dreadful end and shall be no more forever.”

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— LK Willis

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By Bernard Quetchenbach

Montana’s new poet laureate is a “poet of commonplace things that matter,” writes Joe Wilkins, “the rhythms and cast-off minutes that animate our days and lives.”

Lowell Jagger’s recent collection begins with a tender ode to librarians, who offered him “kindness of the sort I’ve rarely known through the bush of my loneliness anywhere else.”

He contemplates hypocrisy and rage, generosity and kindness, and traces his family’s lifelines, adolescent daydreams, yearnings. He reveals his own childhood penchant for stealing books: “Blame it on the spellbinding rapture of syllables/ squeezed to my lips, line by line.”

And he savors the pantry, ants are bulleled in their bunk and a bear smash the bird feeders “Animal Behavior;” a stock of poems that considers our emnity and fascination with nature, “this puzzling world’s peculiar travelers.”

A recipient of the Governor’s Humanities Award and fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Montana Arts Council, Jagger teaches writing at Flathead Valley Community College in Kalispell.

In addition to his many books of poems, he’s edited three collections.

Accidental Gravity: Residents, Travelers, and the Landscape of Memory
By Bernard Quetchenbach

In his erudite and deeply personal collection of essays, Billings author and English professor Bernard Quetchenbach travels widely, from his birthplace in suburban Rock Creek, Montana, to various teaching gigs in California, Florida and Maine, and eventually to the Greater Yellowstone – Powell, WY, and his current home in Billings.

Lake Ontario and Yellowstone Park emerge “at the twin natural centers of my universe, the group of islands I constructed with I think and how I feel about my life.” His interconnected collection explores this nexus “where suburban and wilderness, routine and miracle, individual life and big picture, merge.”

A suburbanite by birth and a naturalist by heart, Quetchenbach writes eloquently of the wild world. The journey he takes is both lyrical and well informed. A bevy of birds flock through the pages, keeping company with bears, moose, old friends, family, history lessons and observa-
tions about the plight of Earth.

Part two, the portion informed by the author’s passion for, and experience in, the West, explores punishing wildfires, destructive beetle infestations and “the most ubiquitous invasion of all, the jaggernaut of human tourism.”

Still, there’s something uplifting about this collection. A sense that the territory he covers “this last best edge” of the world is well loved.

Quetchenbach is the author most recently of a collection of poems, The Hermit’s Place.

The Comfort Pathway: Walking and Writing Through Death and Grief
By O. Alan Weltzien

“When we write about the dead whom we loved, they come back in some ways and leave lasting traces. They don’t stay as far away,” writes Weltzien in the forward to this “chapbook essay” about his mother’s last weeks of life. When his mother has a stroke, Weltzien joins his brothers at the ICU unit of a high-tech hospital: As his mother slides further away, the author must execute her advanced directive, dubbed “The Comfort Pathway.”

“I know we’re on a helluva ride down somewhere with a dead end (pun intended),” he writes. “It’s simple: no interventions, keep the patient pain-free. But this pathway in no way lessens our writing.”

Without being maudlin, Weltzien’s words convey the pain and path he feels while staying by his dying mother. He is unsurprised in the family dynamics of the deathwatch – always a turbulent experience.

The author is a long-time English professor at the University of Montana, Western, and the author of nine books and another chapbook.

Montana’s Pioneer Botanists: Exploring the Mountains and Prairies
By Rachel Pottier and Peter Lesica

Nearly thirty years ago, Arthur Knuckeberg (1920-2016) envisioned a book of biographies of historical Northwest plant hunters, with essays written by botanists of today. He asked Peter Lesica to recruit authors for stories of Montana’s botanists, and a dozen or so essays were written or drafted.

As the years went by and there was no sign of a Pacific Northwest book, Lesica decided to publish the Montana essays and asked Rachel Pottier to offer results in a historical essay collection written by 18 au-
thors, interspersed with photos of the botanists and the plants they discuss.

Aaron Parrett, in a review that appears in Montana: The Magazine of Western History, praises their effort: “The photographs throughout this edition leap from the page in vibrant hues, immersing the reader in a tableau of botanical specimens to accompany the splendid period portraits of the botanists this team of essayists has profiled.”

“While Lesica and Potter have composed the majority of the profiles compiled here, a dozen other authors document the various contributions of Montana botanists, from the first inhabitants before the Europeans to figures who have only recently passed away.”

A Waterfowler’s Tale: For Those Who Like to Hunt Ducks
By Jay Gore

Missoula writer and wildlife ecologist Jay Gore explores his love affair with duck hunting, and all things that go with the sport: guns, dogs, decoys, duck conservation and photography.

The author spent much of the first 18 years of his life near the banks of the Missouri River in northwest Montana. At age 10, he hunted small game in wood-
lot on family farms.

Millions of ducks and geese that used the Missouri River as a corridor for migration provided him with ample opportunities to hone his waterfowl skills, and even sparked a career in wildlife management that spanned more than three decades.

Anyone interested in wildlife conservation and with a love of duck hunting and retrievers, will find something to like in this book,” writes Dale Burke, award-winning outdoor writer and conservationist.

Gore also wrote Is Life Worth Living Without Labs? His first Labrador retriever possessed him at age 26, while living in Tennessee, and he’s seldom been separated from the breed since.

Both books are available in paperback and as eBooks.

How Could He ...!?: An Ordinary Journey with an Extraordinary God
By Carol Spurgeon

The author is a long-time English professor at the University of Montana. She is also a writer, who lives in Great Falls, and who is inseparable from her writing.

In addition to photographs from her life, she includes examples of her watercolor art, each depicting some aspect of her many mission trips. I especially enjoyed her rendering of Tag, the Indian elephant, and his “friendly eye.”

Spurgeon continues to pursue her Christian life in service, and share her paintings.

—LK Willis
New MHS exhibit looks at “Montana and the Great War”

When the U.S. entered World War I in April 1917 to make the world “safe for democracy,” a conflict over American ideals erupted at home. What happened when pro-war propaganda swept across the nation? What ideals were Montanans fighting to protect?

Montana Historical Society's newest exhibition, "Times of Trouble, Times of Change: Montana and the Great War," explores how every day Montanans served the war effort on both the home front and the Western Front. The exhibit showcases some of the contributions Montanans made, including a Red Cross drive to raise money for relief efforts.

The exhibit also examines how patriotic fervor pulled some communities together and tore others apart. Montanans, including non-citizen Native Americans, served in the military in record numbers. Those who returned found their home communities struggling with inflation and drought.

The exhibit offers several interactive experiences for visitors to step into the lives of Montanans during the war, including a life-sized trench replica and a “Follow a Montanan” character experience. Learn more at mhs.mt.gov.

Spring brings flurry of art auctions

Missoula Art Museum Auction: Beth Lo, “Me, You (USA, China)”

MAM’s annual soiree pays homage to power of art

The Missoula Art Museum celebrates the power of art at the 46th Benefit Art Auction, 5-9 p.m. Feb. 3 at the University Center Ballroom at the University of Montana.

This year’s art auction is driven by the museum’s belief that art has enormous power to ignite innovation, engage the next generation, transform perspectives, and inspire a lifetime love of collecting contemporary art. Eighty locally and nationally renowned artists contributed new and vibrant works this year, including John Buck, Beth Lo, Steven Young Lee, and Wendy Red Star. Works are on display Jan. 5-31, with an opening reception 5-8 p.m. Jan. 5.

The benefit art auction provides critical support for MAM’s contemporary art exhibitions, educational programs, and outreach.

Visit missoulartmuseum.org, or call 406-728-0447 to purchase tickets.

Yellowstone Art Museum gala turns 50 years

The Yellowstone Art Museum celebrates the 50th anniversary of the longest running and most diverse art region’s art auctions. This event has opened the door between art and the community, has helped make Billings an art-rich environment.

Celebrate this milestone at both the exhibition opening on Thursday, March 25, and the main event on Saturday, March 3. The event will be held at the Yellowstone Art Museum, located at 401 N. 27th St., Billings. The Annual Art Auction is the YAM’s most significant fund-raising event, generating proceeds in support of exhibitions and educational programming for the year.

The opening event will be the first chance to view this year’s Art Auction 50 selections by 131 artists from across the nation, including 110 Montana artists.

The exhibition includes live music and hors d’oeuvres and free admission for members. The exhibition remains open for viewing and silent auction bidding until the event on March 3. Advance tickets to Art Auction 50 go on sale Jan. 25 online at www.artmuseum.org and at the museum. Call 406-256-6804.

The Russell auction and Western Art Week

Art enthusiasts and artists converge in Great Falls March 14-18 for Western Art Week. The curation of art shows, auctions and special events coincides with the birthday of famed western artist Charlie Russell, and begins as a fundraiser for the C.M. Russell Museum.

Among the offerings:

- The Russell: An Exhibition and Sale to Benefit the C.M. Russell Museum, March 15-17 at the C.M. Russell Museum and the Mansfield Center in Great Falls. The centerpiece of Western Art Week is the signature fundraising event for the nonprofit museum.
- The Russell Kickoff Thursday with the Rockin’ the Range Fashion Show followed by a preview party at the museum. Friday brings Art-in-Action to the Meadowlark Country Club and the First Strike Auction at the Mansfield Center. A free Russell Educational Symposium is on tap Saturday morning, and festivities culminate in The Russell Live Auction. Art is on display at the museum beginning Feb. 16. The Russell Skull Society of Artists sale is open Thursday-Saturday at the Mansfield Convention Center (406-727-8776 or www.cmrussell.org).
- Out West Art Show, March 14-17 at the Best Western Heritage Inn. This show, which originated at the same time as the acclaimed Russell Auction, fills 110 exhibit rooms with works by more than 140 artists. Highlights include the Gala Opening and Launch Party; the Montana Miniature Auction, 14 Squared Small Works Auction and quick finishers (406-887-2869 or outwestartshow.com).
- Western Heritage Artists’ “Footprints on the Trail,” March 14-18 at the Holiday Inn. The 37th annual event features works by more than 60 artists in an array of media (406-868-9649 or www.westernheritageartshow.com).
- Wild Bunch Art Show, March 14-17 at the Hampton Inn. Artists from Montana and the West show paintings, sculptures, jewelry and pottery (406-842-5266).
- Jay Conway and Friends Art Show, March 15-17 at the Hilton Garden Inn. Sculptor Jay Conway annually invites professional artists to show their work (406-452-7647 or jayconwayart.com).
- March in Montana Dealer Show and Auction, March 15-17, at the Elks Lodge. The Couer d’Alene Art Auction of Idaho and Manitou Galleries of Cheyenne produce this annual auction and sale that attracts dealers and buyers from around the world (307-635-0019 or www.marchinmontana.com).
- For a round-up head to westernartweek.com.

Spring brings flurry of art auctions

A Silhouette of Liberia, Photographs: 1974-1977

By Michael H. Lee

Helena photographer Michael Lee recently published a collection of haunting photographs taken 40 years ago, when he and his wife were working as Peace Corps volunteers in Liberia.

These images, taken just before civil war devastated that African nation, offer an intriguing glimpse of its people and landscapes. Sometimes stark (as in “Homeless, Monrovia,” often bold, and always carefully composed, the photos evoke a more tranquil time and place.

Because Lee was stationed in the capital of Monrovia, as well as remote “upcountry” communities (many accessible only by air, foot or water), viewers see a broad swath of the country. Shots of crowded political rallies, street scenes and makeshift shelters contrast with mischievous “growna boys,” barefoot girls balancing goods on their heads, and elders, labeled old “pa” or “ma.” Lee also chronicles cityscapes and landscapes—among his favorites is “Morning Light, Maryland County,” with mist lifting from a still slumbering village.

He accompanies images with equally riveting recollections of his experience there:

- What was immediately apparent after a few days in Monrovia was that I had stepped into a richly endowed visual environment,” he writes. “And, before my initial impressions faded into the familiar, I had to begin taking photographs.”
- Lee’s interest in documentary photography emerged during his 1969 Vietnam tour. When he returned home to Billings, he earned his bachelor’s degree from Eastern Montana College and worked as a staff photographer for the campus newspaper. In Liberia, Lee was shooting Kodachrome II color-slide film (a rare commodity) and mailing it to the U.S. for pre-pressing—a major expense, especially on a monthly stipend of $150.

“Light is in this book, a personal project, and it is an attempt to make the quality of his images even more impressive.”

In 2008, he donated two-dozen of these photographs to Libera’s National Museum, and hopes to someday return more to the towns and villages where this book was shot.

Lee’s photographs were included in the 1977 book Rock of the Ancestors that he co-authored with the William Siegmund, and Cynthia Schmidt. Other photographic projects include an exhibit of portraits he made of Helena-area Vietnam veterans that was displayed at the Myrna Loy Center. —Kristi Niemeyer

State of the Arts • Winter 2018

Artists in Print

“My decision to take a photograph usually involved a quick calculation that weighed alternative choices,” he writes. These constraints—most unimaginable in today’s digital world—make the quality of his images even more impressive. In 2008, he donated two-dozen of these photographs to Libera’s National Museum, and hopes to someday return more to the towns and villages where this book was shot.

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Maria Rose Wimmer, “Suburban Whimsy”

Continuing through Feb. 2 at Paris Gibson Square Museum of Art, Great Falls

Artist’s website: www.mariarosewimmer.com

“Deeply Whimsical” by Maria Rose Wimmer

and the loss of childhood dreams. The paintings may appear Surrealist in nature, but rather than looking for inspiration from dreams, Wimmer creates metaphors pulled from real-life experiences including motherhood, death and the predictability of suburban life. By coupling these often heavy topics with playful imagery set against a stark white background, she challenges the viewer to discover their own personal metaphors.

“I want people to go there and find something they connect with. They can find a deeper meaning or can find it charming or whimsical,” says the artist. “Either is fine with me. Hopefully they’ll do both.” Wimmer, who began formal art training at 13, has worked and lived in the West. In 1999 she attended college at Eastern New Mexico University on the Lorraine Schula Scholarship for Art, and later received a bachelor’s from the University of Montana and her master’s degree in art history from the University of Denver.

She moved to Casper, WY, in 2009 and teaches at Casper College and Southern New Hampshire University. Her work has been displayed regionally and nationally, including several group shows and solo exhibitions, and can be found in private collections throughout North America, Europe, Asia and Australia. Works by her husband, E.K. Wimmer, are simultaneously on display at Paris Gibson Square in “Path of Destruction,” a collection of collages created within the span of a year.

Paintings and Drawings by Paul Blumenthal, “Wilderness Schmilderness”

Throughout January, with a reception 6-8 p.m. Jan. 4
Headframe Spirits Tasting Room, Butte

Architect and artist Paul Blumenthal shares paintings inspired by two separate artist resistencies: one at Twin Lakes cabin in the Beaverhead Mountains near Wisdom, and another at Grand Teton Climbers Ranch within Grand Teton National Park. While at Twin Lakes, he drew and painted the rugged landscape he was experiencing and exploring. An avid hiker and aspiring alpinist, Blumenthal carried drawing tablets with him on each hike to capture studies that he later developed into works that retained the rawness and power of his initial impressions. His goal was to create a body of work expressing the cabin, the lakes, and the mountains that surrounded him. During his time at the Grand Teton Climbers Ranch in Wyoming, he drew, painted, and talked to climbers from around the world. Those pursuits helped him build “the honest observation of light and shadow, texture, and color” that he experienced in the backcountry and at the ranch. His process for creating art is to draw in situ, not looking through a camera, but rather through his mind’s eye, using all of his senses.

A native of Houston, Blumenthal has been living in Montana with his wife (Sarah De Money) and three sons (Andrew, Ian, and Brychan) for 22 years. He’s employed as an architect for the State of Montana. He has traveled extensively in India, southern Europe and the Middle East, interpreting the environment and culture through painting, drawing and mixed media collage. The resulting works have been exhibited throughout the United States and Israel.

Zachary Begler, “A Lens to the Streets”

Jan. 19-April 12 at the Holter Museum of Art, Helena, with a reception 5-8 p.m. Jan. 19
Artist’s Website: zach-begler.squarespace.com

Over the course of three-and-a-half months, Helena photographer Zachary Begler traveled up and down the West Coast. His journey took him to Phoenix, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle and Portland to photograph homeless men and women. He took photographs, wrote short sentences or small quotes based on their conversations, and slept in his car at night.

The result is “A Lens to the Streets,” composed of more than 50 film-based photographs. “I take a guerrilla-style approach to documentary photography in the tradition of the concerned photographers who become personally involved with their subjects,” he writes. “I walk the neighborhoods that most people drive through with their doors locked and their windows closed, observe alcohol and crack-cocaine abuse, and witness the lives of individuals who are often treated as sub-human.”

Their stories and faces are diverse, as evidenced in the images. The photograph of the young boy and body language are immensely candid, as if I were just taking photos of family members or friends, which is actually what a lot of them turned out to be.

“This project is about showing empathy and respect, but most of all, it is about showing the human condition. It is to be someone’s friend.”

Begler grew up in Helena and began taking photographs during his junior high year of school on a digital Nikon camera. During his senior year, he took photography classes and was introduced to film. “I fell in love.” He studied photography at Montana State University before embarking on his road trip. Ziegler shot the images that appear in this exhibit on film, primarily black and white, and occasionally color. He believes film facilitates human connection with his subject and cultivates patience.

“I trust the aesthetic of my final exhibition prints and printed book will convey this deeply emotional and socially relevant content.”

Marie Shirley-Jones, Hand-Stitched Art Quilts

Feb. 1-28 at the Depot Gallery, Red Lodge

Marie Shirley-Jones shares 30 art quilts with an emphasis on hand stitching. Jones paints thickened dye and fabric and then spends hours enhancing it with hand stitching. The fiber artist, who lives in Red Lodge, grew up in Montana and taught school in Miles City, Great Falls and Whitefish before moving to Red Lodge, where she worked as K-8 art teacher for 17 years.

She recently retired, which has given her more time to focus on her work. Jones appreciates “all the surprises” the way in her artistic process, which begins with hand-dying fabric or hunting for vintage treasures. Often, she uses a rust-transfer process on her fabric to give it an earthy feel and create a sense of history. She embellishes her vibrant quilts with rust-transfer process on her quilts and creates within the span of a year.

Her fiber work is exhibited throughout the United States and Israel. She has traveled extensively in India, southern Europe and the Middle East. She has taught internationally and has been a featured artist in India, Australia and the United States. She is a past recipient of the Helena Arts Council’s Artist of the Year Award and the State of Montana Governor’s Arts Award. Her work is represented in private collections throughout the United States and abroad. Her fiber work is exhibited throughout the United States and Israel. She has taught internationally and has been a featured artist in India, Australia and the United States. She is a past recipient of the Helena Arts Council’s Artist of the Year Award and the State of Montana Governor’s Arts Award. Her work is represented in private collections throughout the United States and abroad.
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Two Montana-centered films selected for Sundance

By Allison Whitmer

Commissioner, Montana Film Office
Montana Department of Commerce

Two films with Montana ties have been selected by the Sundance Institute for the 2018 Sundance Film Festival: "Dark Money" and "Wildlife." Both films were selected out of thousands of submissions, each earning one of only 16 spots in their respective categories: U.S. Dramatic and U.S. Documentary.


"Wildlife," based on the novel of the same name by Richard Ford, 1960s Great Falls is the setting for a family crisis in which Joe Brinson, the 16-year-old narrator, watches his parents’ marriage fall apart after his father brings the family to Montana in search of economic opportunity. This film marks Paul Dano's first film as a director, and he was selected to be a Sundance Director in Richard's book I saw myself and many others. I have always wanted to make films - and have always known I would make films about family." Logistics prevented the crew from going to Great Falls, so Livingston stood in. The streets were transformed back to the early 1960s. Local car clubs came out in force to support the project, and a peri-fence-less crime wave was built down the valley. Great Falls itself has been represented at the festival with other films, however, Alex and Andrew Smithish's first feature, "The Slaughter Rule," showcased the talents of Ryan Gosling getting it on out on the frozen fields of six-man football brood. The otherworldly "Northfork" brought a star-studded cast to the rugged foothills of Augusta. Daryl Hannah and even Ally Sheedy stuff of legend, and the last time I was there, you could buy a piece of the pool glass she touched.

"Dark Money" (Director and screenwriter: Kimberly Reed. Producers: Katy Chevigny, King Will.) For the U.S. Documentary category, the hot button topic of campaign donations detailed in "Dark Money" made the cut. Here's the description from Sundance: "Dark money contributions, made possible by the U.S. Supreme Court’s Citizens United ruling, flood modern American elections – but Montana is a different story. 406 residents, King Will's "Dark Money" is one of 16 films selected to make the cut this year. Montana Film Office Commissioner, Montana Film Office Montana Film Office Montana Film Office Montana Film Office Montana Film Office Montana Film Office Montana Film Office Montana Film Office Montana Film Office Montana Film Office."

Winter brings new season of film festivals to Montana

Big Sky Documentary Film Festival celebrates 15 years

Now entering its 15th year, the Big Sky Documentary Film Festival (BSDFF) is established as Montana’s premier cinematographic and educational event. The festival is one of the state’s largest events and the largest documentary film festival in the American West.

A program of the nonprofit Big Sky Film Institute, BSDFF is a prolific 10-day event held every February in Missoula and lights up western Montana with over 150 extraordinary films from across the globe. The festival hosts hundreds of filmmakers and 20,000 engaged filmgoers who attend screenings, live Q&As, concerts, educational programs, and film-industry forums. Official theater venues include The Wilma Theater, the University Auditorium, The Art House, and The Elks Lodge. In recent years the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences selected BSDFF as an Oscar-qualifying festival in the Documentary Shorts category. Named one of MovieMaker Magazine’s “2017-2018 Best Film Festivals Worth the Entry Fee,” BSDFF received a record 1,800 entries from 75 countries.

In addition to screenings, BSDFF hosts the Big Sky DocShop, a five-day filmmaker’s forum that includes panels, workshops, and the popular Big Sky Pitch for works in progress. The 2018 DocShop conference will focus on the intersection of film and technology and features representatives from Vimeo, VideoPax, Sundance Institute New Frontier, Tribeca Film Institute, Gravitas Ven- tures, Seed & Spark, Fandor and ITVS among other industry voices.

Each year BSDFF presents retrospective programming spotlighting the body of work of celebrated and accomplished filmmakers. In 2018 the festival feature Academy Award-nominated and Emmy Award-winning filmmaker Kirby Dick, known for exploring issues of secrecy, hypocrisy and human sexuality. The festival also launches its Native Filmmakers Initiative this year. Funded in part from around the world.” True to its name, FLIC once again offers a broad selection of full-length features, shorts, animated films, and documentaries from 24 countries including India, Australia, Canada, Spain, Taiwan, Turkey, Croatia, Iran, Japan, and the U.S. In addition, there are several films produced in Montana that trend that keeps growing.

The Flathead Lake International Cinema - Series, from New York Times VR. For more information on the festival, please visit www.bigskyfilmfest.org. (Director and screenwriter: Kimberly Reed, Producers: Katy Chevigny, King Will.) FLIC: Bringing cinematic treasures to Polson Jan. 26-28

The Flathead Lake International Cinema Festival (FLIC) premiers its sixth annual winter festival during the weekend of Jan. 26-28, at the 2018 Showboat Cinema on Main Street in Polson. "Dark Money," which was recognized as one of the top 15 Winter Film Festivals in the United States by the Audience Awards. "Dark Money" went on to bring a diverse slate of 68 independent films to Polson and the Mission Valley for the sixth year in a row," said David W. King, co-chair and producer. “Each year brings with it new cinematic treasures (which hosts a second reception 5:30-7 p.m. on Saturday). Film showings on two screens begin Friday at 7 p.m.

The FLIC judges have enjoyed unearthing FLIC 2018’s guilty. This year’s standout films include “Iron,” in which a young woman escapes the crowded tenements of early 1900s New York to take on a demanding railway job. Another strong picture is “Game," in which a new kid shows up at the high school boys’ basketball tryouts and instantly makes an impression. Directed Kathy Kasic filmed “The Garden—er” at Tipple Rode, an 11,000-acre art center in Montana. World-renowned French composer and pianist Julian Brocal shares an introspective and hopeful perspective on the human and animal connection in this documentary. In a live presentation, “Anatomy of a Film and Television Career,” King Will will recount his story. This year’s high school seniors will be able to attend this event as a standalone offering.

A more informal gathering from 4:30-6:30 p.m. at the Vine and Tap on Main Street. Additional information is available at www.flicol.com and Facebook.
Still looking for a statewide arts calendar? 
We’ve got you covered! 
Although State of the Arts and Lively Times no longer offer print versions of arts and exhibit calendars, you can still find that information online.

Head to livestimes.com or art.mt.gov/artcalendar for up-to-date info on music, dance, performing arts, festivals, theatre and exhibits.

Send us your events! 
And remember, submit arts-related events online at events.livetimes.com. Those submissions also appear on the Montana Arts Council’s arts calendar, and Visit Montana’s online arts calendar.

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PERFORMING ARTS

MPAC heads to Fort Benton for showcase and conference

Seventeen professional performing artists will showcase samples of their work on Saturday, Jan. 28, in the Fort Benton Elementary School auditorium. Part of the 35th annual Montana Performing Arts Consortium (MPAC) booking conference, the showcases are free and open to the public.

These 12-minute performances offer an opportunity to sample a wide variety of media and entertainment of some of the finest performing artists from across the U.S., Canada, as well as Montana.

Selected 2018 Showcase artists include: Christian and the Moon, Ricardo Lemvo and Makina Loca, Chinook Winds, The Lucky Valentines, Otter Creek, Harpdog Brown and The Trav’lin’ Blues Show, Rob Flax, Bare Bait Dance, O Sole Trio, Men of Worth, The Lone Mountain Trio, The Wardens, Jared Shekelle, The Sound Exchange, Sundae and Mr. Goessl, Lance Bendiksen/Gareth Laffely, and Okaidja Afose.

An MPAC jury chose these 17 artists based on standards of artistic excellence, and marketability in Montana, to qualify for this showcase. Additional arts will be housed in a Resource Room at the Montana Agricultural Center. The showcase is open to the public but entry to the Resource Room and other conference activities requires registration.

MPAC is a statewide non-profit public benefit arts organization that brings professional artists to Montana communities and promotes education through the arts. Representatives from approximately 17 presenting organizations in Montana will attend the conference and select artists for their public performing arts series as well as for their educational community outreach programs.

The artist showcase and conference are made possible in part through a legislative grant from Montana’s Cultural and Aesthetic Trust, plus support from Montana Arts Council, National Endowment for the Arts, and Western States Arts Federation.

Doors open 15 minutes before the start of each showcase set. Although the showcases at the elementary school are free to the public, the conference requires advance registration and will take place in the Fort Benton Agricultural Center and Museum.

Additional conference information, registration materials, and the showcase schedule are online at www.mtpereformingarts.org or from MPAC, PO 1872, Bozeman MT 59771-1872, 406-585-9551.

Ballet Beyond Borders: A ballet nation in Missoula

Rocky Mountain Ballet Theatre celebrates its 20th anniversary season and the world premiere of “Triple B – Ballet Beyond Borders” Jan. 9-13, 2018 in Missoula.

The inaugural event builds upon the success of RMBT’s pilot collaboration with the Vienna International Ballet Experience (VIBE, USA), held in Missoula in 2016 and 2017. BBB presents five professional and dance talent for five days in Missoula, with the goal of inspiring both the dancers and the public to develop new connections and understanding about the world on a global stage.

While excellence is our goal, we also seek to preserve the heritage we passionately share. We will strive to improve, protect, inspire, and connect the next generation of young artists with professionals of the highest caliber and with dancers that align with these ideals,” says Charlene Campbell Carey, founder of RMBT and executive director of the event. BBB fosters the growth of professional and amateur dancers and students from around the world and offers daily workshops, stage experience, cultural programs and a diplomacy conference, in addition to the competition.

BBB participants mark their footprints along a lesser-known trail in what Campbell describes as “a quiet and picturesque ballet neighborhood and a community aligned with your core values.”

“Please bring your dances and your stories, your technique, and your artistry to our ballet nation and western frontier,” she adds.

Among the highlights:

• Opening Night: Patricia Kelly, Gene Kelly’s wife, offers “Gene Kelly the Legaci- cy,” 6 p.m. Jan. 9 at The Wilma. Her one-woman show celebrates her husband’s legacy as an innovator, director, choreographer, dancer and diplomat.

• The Dance Challenge: Dancers learn and compete daily, Tuesday-Friday from an array of accomplished teachers, including Charla Genn, currently on the ballet faculty of the Juilliard School; Broadway veteran Leslie Stevens, award-winning choreographer; and principal dancer Andile Ndlovu; Caridad Martínez, a former principal dancer with the National Ballet of Cuba; Merrill Moors, a professional ballet dancer and quantum physicist; Charmaine Hunter, a former principal ballerina of Arthur Mitchell’s Dance Theatre of Harlem; and many more.

• Public School Cultural Exchanges: The Missoula Writing Collaborative joins an international cadre of dancers for presentations Jan. 9 at Lewis & Clark and Rattlesnake schools in Missoula and Jan. 11 in Dixon on the Flathead Reservation.

• The Art of Diplomacy: How the Arts Empower and Transform Our World: Dance performances and talks by leading experts from around the world explore how the arts shape international relations, build bridges across different communities and promote cross-cultural understanding, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Jan. 13 in the third-floor University Center Ballroom. Learn how dance is transforming science and medical research, and how Cuba took the Latin American dance scene by storm. Listen to world-class coaches offer tips on how to become and succeed as an international performer and a global leader, and see dance performances from Panama, South Africa, Korea and Montana.

• Film Festival: Nanette Melville screens her film, “Niyatigraf: For the Love of Dance” and a trailer for her new film on dance in Cuba at 6:30 p.m. in the UM Masquer Theatre. Melville is a filmmaker and photographer and has worked for The New York Times, the National Ballet of Cuba, Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts and Julliard.

• The Gala Finale: International stars and BBB winners will perform in styles ranging from classical ballet to hip-hop at 6 p.m. Jan. 13 at the UM Donlinon Theater, with an after-party for all participants at the University Center Ballroom. The finale is the celebration and culmination of five days of global cultural exchange and the results of the international dance challenge and diplomacy conference.

For details, visit rmbt.org/bbb or call 406-549-5155.

This year’s Wholesale Buyers’ Day is 9 a.m.-6 p.m. March 23; and Public Showcase Day is 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m. March 24 at the Lewis and Clark County Fairgrounds’ Exhibit Hall.

Exhibitors come from all over the state to display and sell their innovative products, artful creations, and tasty treats to buyers who will soon put these products on their store shelves, in their restaurants, and make them available statewide to visitors and Montanans alike.

The public is also able to share in the bounty on Public Showcase Day (Saturday), when they can experience firsthand the quality and beauty of unique products made by Montana artists, designers, and manufacturers.

Call 406-841-2757 or visit madeinmontanausa.com.

Made in Montana

Tradeshow for Food & Gifts

The annual Made in Montana trade show connects wholesale store buyers from across the region with over 150 members of the Made in Montana program.

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Ballet Beyond Borders: A ballet nation in Missoula

Meritt Moore is a guest artist from California currently dancing with London Contemporary Ballet Theatre and English National Ballet.

The Sound Exchange is among the performers at this year’s MPAC Showcase. (Photo courtesy of GL Berg Entertainment)
How Latin animates will reveal, during tant, Chrysti Smith, teacher and consul-
ting editor of the Radio Series. A special edition of "Latin: Word Origins" to the general public, based on his 2016 book, presents a program "Books for Kids," which will make the general public aware of the goodness of this day. Foremost of which, despite our separate hardships, is the goodness of this day.

Gratitude

I'm driving the long way home. Meandering along a backroad meadow where I've stalled to breathe and watch the horses play.

Gratitude

by Brian D'Ambrosio

Jim Rempp's wooden bows: A return to simplicity

By Brian D'Ambrosio

As part of a recent consumer backlash against cheaper, newer materials, in the last 10 years, primitive archery has reemerged as a sensible alternative. In a reversal of attitude, many of today's archers prefer traditional wooden bows over their modern counterparts.

"People are tired of current technology," says Missoula bowyer Jim Rempp, proprietor of Hamstring Archery. "They want to go back to the simple things. Wooden archery is the original Native archery."

In Rempp's opinion, simple and basic are the natural equals of skill and precision.

"These are the most primitives bows that there are," says Rempp, in between rounds of target practice on a spacious slice of farm-
land off of Mullan Road. "They are all wood. Basically, they are just a stick."

Using a wooden bow to hunt or to protect is no novelty. In fact, the functionality and premise of such tools has been valued for many centuries. In its role in the lives of hunters and gatherers was comprehensive.

"Wooden bows have been around for at least 200,000 years," says Rempp. "I'm convinced of it. More game has been killed by a tool like this than can ever be imagined."

Rempp points out that he is not inventing, or even re-inventing, anything, but simply re-applying the wisdom and innovation of the ancients.

"Indians were technologically advanced," says Rempp. "No two ways about it."

Rempp quit using non-wooden bows de-
cades ago. Years ago, he was hunting with a compound bow, and he had wounded his prey. Due to logistical obstacles, however, he could not maneuver a second shot.

"On the first shot he flinched, but the string broke," says Rempp. "See, you can't put a new string on a compound bow without having special thread and special tools. When you're out in the field, you can't just take the bow to the shop. So I ran home quickly and got my father's old wood bow."

"The moose was still there, and I did get my moose. I decided right then and there to go back to traditional archery."

"Not only is a wooden bow more attuned to nature and its blessings, but it is more sensitive and delineated. It will not tolerate the abuse of a modern-day bow. It is not as flexible. It may only be pulled a certain dis-
tance – and no further. If careful precautions are taken, a wooden bow should last between 20 and 30 years."

"I have a bow almost 45 years old," says Rempp.

"In the boyer's case, a bow is not only a piece of artwork and an instrument of enjoyment, but a therapeutic device as well. Rempp, 66, has spent a lifetime in construc-
tion, contracting, and driving trucks. He has fallen three stories from a high rise; cut him-
self with a skill saw for 250 stiches; broke his wrist in a cabinet shop."

The result of a succession of taxing occupa-
tions is that his body hurts all over. In 2009, he was laid off from the truck-driv-
ing industry because of complica-
tions from a badly fused wrist. This change of circumstance renewed Rempp's love of the pleasant simp-
licities of woodworking.

"I'd worked my whole life," says Rempp. "And I needed something. I needed these bows. I started making them."

Some of Rempp's earliest child-
hood memories stem from wood-
working with his father. As an adult, while living in Hawaii, he carved his own surfboards, and apprenticed for four years under Japanese carpen-
ters.

"Superb craftsmen," says Rempp. "Most everything they do is handmade. For the first year and a half, I wasn't allowed to pick up an electric tool. That's until I could master the hand tools. I love the handmade of the bows."

Rempp is still impressed by his wood's set
democare, how it firmly dictates and, in the end, determines the finished bow. Its character-
istics are so stiff, in fact, that he will not even consider customizing a wooden bow.

"If the wood is strong enough to make a strong bow, I'll make a strong bow. But if it's too weak, I won't make a bow at all."

There is also something, in his opinion, pre-
cious about wood. After all, its essence ensures uniqueness. Bows can even be made from a variety of different sources.

"Yew wood was used by tribes for eons and it's been the premier bow wood for centuries," says Rempp. "Native Americans used what-
ever was available, what could be gathered, serviceberry, juniper, you name it. I'm rather fond of nontraditional wood."

Rempp has an inventory of at least three hundred completed and partially completed bows, those on the fanciest side are plated with water buffalo horn, snakeskin, or sinew.

"You can make a bow almost indestructible by applying sinew," says Rempp. "It's twice as heavy and extremely strong in comparison. It's what the Indians used for their fiberglass. The same idea. They knew their craft."

"And it could kill a dinosaur," he adds, shifting his hands across a polished bow.

Recently, Rempp was inducted into Monta-
na's Circle of American Masters – a hall of fame of Big Sky's most able artisans. He was unaware that a friend had suggested him for induction. While the award has boosted his confidence as a craftsman, his primary purpose for constructing beautiful, utilitarian bows remains in the love of the craft's unvarnished techniques.

"I do have a bad wrist and some respira-
tory problems," says Rempp. "But can I still produce some bows? Yes, I can."

Jim Rempp at work at one of his wood-
en bows. (Photo by Marty de Aze)
Art and Photography: Who’s responsible for copyright protection?

By Bill Frazier ©2016

I recently participated in a legal seminar for art gallery directors, managers and museum curators. The main concern was the responsibility of such directors and curators for the protection of the copyright and other intellectual property rights of their artists, donors or other owners of artwork on display. Apparently, this is a real problem in many areas.

I have mentioned this before, but it is important to remember that museums can only receive the ownership interest of the person making the donation to the museum. If an artist donates work to the museum, he can transfer both the artwork and the copyright or just the art work. If only the artwork is donated to the museum, the artist retains ownership of the copyright for his life plus 70 years. In this situation, it is incumbent on the museum to make a reasonable effort to protect the artist’s copyright.

This can be done by not reproducing images of the work without the artist’s permission and forbidding viewers from taking photographs, if that is the artist’s wish. Some artists do not care, but others do, and there should be a provision in the loan agreement or gifting document addressing this concern.

If a third-party donor donates work to a museum, the museum only receives his interest in the work. If the donor does not own the copyright, neither does the museum. It will own only the physical artwork.

If there is no copyright, and the work is in the public domain, the museum can decide whether it will allow access to the work for photography, and whether it will charge a fee. This is sometimes controversial, but the museum owner gets to decide.

Similarly, if the work is in an even, permanent loan, the actual owner gets to decide the photography question and this should be addressed in the loan agreement.

If the museum has a policy of disallowing photography of the artwork, it should be followed. However, while this was an important issue in past years, the current trend seems to be that galleries and museums are allowing visitors to photograph work on display, especially if it is a work in the public domain.

As a practical matter, now that nearly everyone has a smart phone of some sort with a camera, policing a no-photography policy is problematic. Still, flash should be prohibited due to potential damage to the artwork.

Museums and galleries should ask artists or other lenders for permission to allow photography of works still under copyright protection.

A best practices policy for such organizations would distinguish flash/no flash photography, should state that permission is for personal use only, no commercial use or reproduction, and that selfie sticks and tripods are not allowed due to potential damage. Clearly, a policy could be more expansive, but these are some basics to be considered.

Commercial galleries

Commercial galleries have different interests from art museums and their relationships with artists represent are different. Some states have laws that make galleries trustees/insurers for the artists’ work on display, and this requirement applies equally to auctions and transfer by gallery. It is reasonable for galleries to seek permission for reproducing images for promotional literature for the artist and for advertising shows. I have seen some gallery contracts demanding that the artist transfer the copyright to the gallery for so long as the gallery represents the artist (or longer). This is not reasonable and I encourage artists not to sign such agreements.

As a result of all of the above, many artists simply do not care, but galleries should still use their best efforts to protect the copyrights of their artists from unauthorized copying.

Despite various admonishments, I continue to see viewers photographing work at shows and in galleries when they think they can get away with it. In large shows, watch for photographers all over the room zeroing in on a specific image or sculpture. Some call it “spamming.”

All of the above are issues that can be addressed in lending or gifting documents and gallery representation contracts. If this is a concern for artists, read your agreement to see if it is covered, but you should have found this out before you signed it.

Legislation, scams & taxes

Collectors, in U.S. Senate Bill No. 2648, there is a proposed tax provision which would lower the capital gains tax on art and other collectibles when sold for a profit. This is an important measure for artists and galleries, as well, since it should be an encouragement to art sales. It would help dramatically to get this passed if you would let your congressmen and senators know that this is of interest to you and valueable to you.

One does not normally find tax information in art magazines, so I like to remind readers every year as tax season approaches to get your tax and business matters in order. Go to a real accountant (CPA), and preferably one with an interest in the arts. The tax laws change every year, and no one always know what has slipped in, or out, as the case may be.

As a routine matter, artists and their representing galleries should search the internet from time to time for evidence of copyright infringement. I would check major art dealers, as they will be listing the representative number of other art sales sites. Ebay is good about removing unauthorized work, and many others will, also. While you may not catch anyone, it is important to know what is going on.

Scams continue to proliferate to appear so unethically anything that seems too good to be true, or anything that strains your comfort level. If a solicitation seems questionable, do not respond. If something seems to be a scam, or if you feel threatened, notify a law enforcement agency. As noted before, the FBI has an entire department that deals in internet scamming.

Happy New Year!

Bill Frazier

Bill Frazier served a lengthy and invaluable tenure as chairman of the Montana Arts Council. He can be reached at artlaw@listireangle.com. MAC thanks Art of the West for permission to reprint this series.

Meet up with MAC on Facebook

“Like” us for updates on Montana Arts Council activities and opportunities, as well as information for and about artists, arts events and organizations across the state: www.facebook.com/pages/Montana-ARTS-Council/347466251951287.

Technical Note

By Mark Ratledge

The news is rife with Bitcoin stories these days, and it will only get better, or worse, depending on your interest in decentralized digital cryptocurrencies. If that phrase is too much to think about, I understand. But if you’re interested, a good place to start is the Wikipedia page for Bitcoin.

Bitcoin is the “first decentralized digital currency — the system works without a central repository or single administrator.” The Wikipedia article is obviously written by advocates of Bitcoin, but you can learn what Bitcoin mining is (how Bitcoins are created) and that Bitcoin was created by an unknown person or group of people and first released in 2009. Bitcoin transactions are recorded in a vast, publicly available exchange called the blockchain.

If Bitcoin is a decentralized currency and works without an administrator or banks, then how does it work? It works on the amount of confidence people have in the technology, and the waverning of that confidence has resulted in huge swings in the value of Bitcoin in the last few years.

I’ve used Bitcoin for some purchases online. The best way for a beginner to use Bitcoin is to use a broker, such as coinbase.com. That way, you can easily buy Bitcoin from your regular U.S. dollar bank account, convert to dollars and transfer back to your bank, rather than having to learn how to install and use a “wallet” on your computer and buy Bitcoin from an individual. Or try to “mine” the cryptocurrency yourself.

Bitcoin problems are many: bitcoin exchanges get hacked and people lose all their money. Personal wallets get hacked. There are problems with double counting (in the software) of bitcoins in the software have “disappeared” millions in value. The Blockchain itself is slow and is limited to a small number of transactions each second. Groups of advocates and miners have attempted to make changes, but success has been mixed, and several Bitcoin “forks” (duplicates of the system with updates and changes — have fallen flat.

But the concept of the Blockchain as a transaction ledger has many uses, and major banks and countries have been looking at its possibilities. And, of course, a universal and private currency is a major draw for many.

But there are many bags – technical, social, economic and political – to work out. But there are now close to 100 new cryptocurrency startups; of course, there are probably more by the time you read this.

The only certain thing in Bitcoin right now is volatility. On the day I wrote this, $60 million in Bitcoin was stolen from an exchange. Bitcoin’s value peaked at a new high and then crashed 20% in a few minutes; coinbase.com crashed and “cash out” conversion to dollars was impossible; and a few big banks announced they will offer futures trading in Bitcoin, which will increase volatility. If anything, Bitcoin is a learning experience in new technologies.

Mark Ratledge is a WordPress consultant. Check his website at markratledge.com.
Montana Artrepreneurs

Celebrate Montana Art – Mission accomplished!

By Sheri Jarvis
Montana Artrepreneur Program Director
Celebrate Montana Art and the 2017 Montana Artists Gathering, held Nov. 9-12 in Helena, were very successful once again.

Celebrate Montana Art
More than 700 happy shoppers attended the Showcase and Sale featuring 63 MAP artists, some showing their work to the public for the first time.

The show featured artists from as far west as Heron, east as Miles City, north as Eureka, and south as Ennis. MAP artists appreciated opportunities to connect and learn from each other in real time.

Shoppers and collectors were treated to festive and compelling artwork in various media; and coaches were on hand to lend support and guidance.

Montana Artists Gathering
Professional development topics for the Gathering this year included: Artists Thrive, Public Speaking, Getting Published, Working with Spreadsheets, Commission Negotiation, Productivity/Organization, Pecha Kucha, Money Matters, and Making Happiness – a TEDx presentation.

Artists reported that they loved the workshops and were grateful for the diversity of learning opportunities.

Joining us again this year was Jim Grace, executive director of the Arts and Business Council of Boston and the area’s Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts (VLA). He led a specifically selected group of 20 MAP artists and three coaches through a full day of professional practice evaluation and strategy development using a tool called “Artists Thrive” – a nation-wide project facilitated by the Emily Hall Tremaine Foundation.

“Artists Thrive” is an aspirational rubric developed as a tool for self-assessment by artists and the organizations that serve artists. We have conducted the first organized use of the tool in an educational setting.

As such, we had three coaches participate in the workshop to capture notes and impressions of the tool’s efficacy. Together, we furthered the mission of this project, and it was an honor to do this work.

We invite you to take a look at the rubric at: www.artiststhrive.org.

A group of artists participating in this year’s Montana Artists Gathering spontaneously gathered for a photo opp. Pictured here, left to right starting with the back row: Rickie Van Berkum, Liz Chappie Zoller, Bev Polk, Karen Savory, Melissa Dawn, Barbara Griffiths, Carrie Kohles, Amber Blazina, Anne Ross, Janice Bogy, Trudy Skari, Nate Anderson, Jim Grace, Jennifer Ogden, Lynn Liebers, Katherine Jore, Helen Harris, Youpa Stein, Ivette Kjelsrud, and Dulcie Belanger-Ferguson.

Photos by Sheri Jarvis (unless noted)

Shoppers and collectors were treated to festive and compelling artwork in various media. (Photo by Cinda Holt)

Artwork by: Amber Blazina, Bozeman

Trudi Skari, Helena

Id Chebul, Helena

NJ Anders, Bozeman

MAP Coaches were on hand to lend support and guidance, including, but not limited to (top to bottom): Lori Blaylock, Billings; Annie Allen, Lincoln; and Tim Carlburg, Columbia Falls.

Montana Arts Council grants, awards & commissions
Visit the Montana Arts Council’s website for a complete listing of grants, awards and commissions:
Individuals: art.mt.gov/grants_commissions_individuals
Organizations: art.mt.gov/grants_commissions_organizations
Schools: art.mt.gov/grants_commissions_schools
Programs and Services: art.mt.gov/programs_services

State-wide arts service organizations
Montana has many arts-discipline-specific statewide service organizations. You can find a complete list here: art.mt.gov/arts_service_orgs

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“Artists Thrive” is a nation-wide project facilitated by the Emily Hall Tremaine Foundation. The foundation has also been a major funder of the MAP program for many years.
Public Value Partnerships

The Three Rs at work in Montana

Public Value Partnership agreements between Montana nonprofit arts organizations and the Montana Arts Council champion the fact that the arts are of benefit to all the citizens of Montana and are worthy of state and federal investment. Public Value Partnerships utilize three tools we call “The Three Rs” to expand the public value of the work being done by Montana’s non-profit arts organizations:

• Building relationships;
• Creating greater relevance and spurring;
• Establishing return on investment (measured both as economic vitality and impact on people’s lives).

MAC believes that using “The Three Rs” strengthens participation, understanding, and support from audiences, donors and funders. We’d like to share some of the best examples of these stories with you from recent annual reports.

Building Relationships

Emerson Center for the Arts & Culture, Bozeman: This past year the Emerson has worked to build relationships by increasing the use of surveys, opinion polls and feedback questionnaires. In the past, feedback was always welcome, but not directly requested on a regular basis.

This past year, we’ve had specific asks to class participants, staff, interns, tenants and vendors to gather as much information about people’s experience as possible. We ask for feedback on the quality of programming, performance of staff, as well as where we have room to grow.

Surveys are sent out via Survey Monkey to every student after each class session asking how the class went and asking what they would like to see us offer in the future. Our summer interns and teachers are given the opportunity to study the arts at the university level. Two graduating high school students who plan to study the arts at the university level.

The theatre has a significant impact on a small rural community by bringing people from outlying areas to Conrad. There is a multiplicity of participants coming to town and patronizing businesses. This has an economic benefit to the community.

In addition, PAC provides a facility and offers programs that advance cultural education and opportunities. Others in the community use the theatre for Community Concerts, piano recitals, Christmas programs, and more. The movie series provides entertainment for children during the summer months and on holidays, giving them a safe and enjoyable place to spend their free time. These movies are provided at a nominal rate thanks to contributions from local businesses.

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What We’re Reading: Non-conformists and financial happiness

From Montana Artrepreneur Program

In this section, MAP shares ideas from the publications that inform our work. If you’re reading a book or journal article that you think might be of interest to us, please send us a note at map@mt.gov.

Originals – How Non-Conformists Move the World

By Adam M. Grant, 2016

In this book, organizational psychologist and Wharton School of Business professor Adam Grant expresses his belief that persistence, procrastination, transparency, and critical thinking are important factors that can literally contribute to our ability to improve the world.

Focusing primarily on entrepreneurship, Grant uses both stories and studies from business, politics, sports and entertainment to fuel innovation by championing novel ideas, battling conformity, and questioning outdated traditions. Exploring further challenges such as managing fear and doubt, creating business cultures that embrace dissent, recognizing a good idea, choosing the right time to act, and being heard instead of silenced are just a few of the groundbreaking insights he discovers that can be used to improve the status quo.

“The greatest originals are the ones who fail the most, because they’re the ones who try the most – you need a lot of bad ideas in order to get a few good ones,” writes Grant. And as an entrepreneur, Adam M. Grant, and as a creative, I found resonance with this quote as well: “Creativity is allowing yourself to make mistakes. Art is knowing which ones to keep.”

– Liz Chappie Zoller

The Art of Money – A Life Changing Guide to Financial Happiness

By Bari Tessler, 2016

I’ll admit, when I read the title of this book, I feared that it would be one more assemblage of sunshine sayings that bore little resemblance to real advice. Instead, I was smitten from the first page, feeling the book’s first question, “Why are you REALLY here?” in my bones.

Bari Tessler began her career with a degree in somatic psychology and a freelance bookkeeping business. As a financial therapist, author, and creator of an online money school, she brings a seemingly disparate worldview of creativity and financial acuity with language that serves only to elevate the reader – never to shame. She guides the reader through three phases of deep money work, offering reasoned and helpful advice about developing a refreshingly honest relationship with money, adopting healthy and supportive money practices, and creating a personal three-tier money map which she describes as a “heart-crafted, savvy tool for tracking your income and expenses and aligning them with the intentions and goals you have for your precious life.” I simply loved this book.

– Sheri Jarvis

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2017 Artist's Innovation Award Recipients

State of the Arts

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The board of directors and staff of Living Art of Montana stop for a photo during a strategic planning session led by MAC's The Art of Leadership facilitator Cinda Holt. After the "proper" photo was taken, they decided to do another, aiming for making contact with as many others as possible! Front row (left to right): Kasey Wright, Hailey Kern, Odette Grassi, Shellen Kenworthy and Sarah Mariani. Back row: Carly Reichert, Heather Sundheim, Patrick Quinn, Linds Sanders, Karen Neel, Jenny Parker, Ron Hooper and Tracy Pohndorf (not pictured: Heather Schwartz).

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State of Montana programs are available to all Montanans. Upon request, an alternative accessible format will be provided.

Call 406-444-6449

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