

High Peaks Art Festival

The Artist's Journey to Nederland

by Dave Gibson

Of the 42 artists presenting their works for sale at the 15th Annual High Peaks Art Festival in Nederland last weekend, some have turned their innate but practiced gifts into lucrative businesses. For others, their artistic endeavors only provide supplemental income while traveling from show to show and maintaining "day jobs." The "struggling artist" is alive and well. In either instance, I suspect that the artists and craftsmen unanimously concur that, even without monetary compensation, they would gladly still produce their pieces for the pure satisfaction of creating. A journey unto itself, when others appreciate the result and are willing to pay for it, the destination is merely a bonus.

Ceramic, paint, metal, wood, cloth, yarn, stone, stained glass, beeswax, gourds, and digital photography were some of the many mediums utilized in creation of the fine art offered.

Below are six of the talented artisans featured at this year's festival.



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Kristen Haug

All the way from Silver Lake, Kansas, Kirsten possesses a degree in design from the University of Kansas and a Graduate Gemologist Certification from the Geological Institute of America. For the past seven years, she has worked as a bench jeweler in Lawrence. With a keen interest in minerals and gemstones from a young age, Kirsten uses stones that are visually stimulating often containing colorful swirls intermingling two minerals that fused together over eons. Jasper, amethyst, agate, and various garnets are showcased in the earrings and pendants trimmed with sterling silver. The necklace chains are linked by hand at a rate of one inch per hour. www.ElementalJewelryCo.etsy.com.



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Craig and Lisa Liftee

Originating from Honolulu, Hawaii, Craig and Lisa Liftee have called Pierce, CO, home since 1990. Combining Craig's years of experience fabricating in his uncle's welding shop and Lisa's design background, they forged their company Fusion which specializes in custom metalwork. Business signage and shelving, railings, gates, and furniture comprise most of their orders. Craig boasts that "If it can be drawn, I can make it." Affordable wall hangings are also for sale. Their piece entitled "Four Seasons," with four trees silhouetted against four different colors of glass that correspond to the respective seasons, is inspired. For those on an even tighter budget, the hand-cut metal sea turtles decorated in beads is a good seller. Successful enough to forgo the time and expense of establishing and maintaining a website - and possibly somewhat technologically averse in a manner that might make a lot of us jealous, the best way to purchase their wares, other than at art shows and custom orders by calling (970) 834-1829, is at The Promenade Shops at



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Centerra or Medicine Bow Furnishings in Loveland.

Bruce White

The seasoned pro of the lot, Bruce is the only artist to win best of show at the High Peaks Art Festival twice. From his studio in Littleton, he has produced logos for a long list of clients and fine art watercolors for companies and corporations like Gates Rubber and Coca Cola. Bruce's architectural illustration and commercial illustration expertise is reflected in his cityscape scenes inspired by his travels to Italy, France, Greece, Costa Rica, and Tahiti. Naturally, familiar Colorado vistas are also part of the extensive portfolio. I found the use of purple in the shadows unexpected yet soothing in a painting of an elk backed by Long's Peak. His automotive series is suitable for man-cave or museum. Check out website www.BruceWhiteArtist.com.



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Pat Hayes

Perhaps you have admired Pat's wildlife photos displayed on the walls of local restaurants. For thirty years Pat and his wife Mary have visited national parks and wildlife sanctuaries across the country pursuing quality wildlife images. With our interest in wildlife photography in common, we speak the same language. While both of us have been to Homer, Alaska, on photo shoots, in the case of that particular location, his dedication was greater than mine. My stays occurred in July, he was there in February. Enduring the biting wind and freezing temperatures was a minor inconvenience for Pat while capturing a crisp close-up of a bald eagle flying towards him, set against Cook Inlet and the Kenai Mountains. His trio of deer fawns lying down in a field of daisies and clover is superb. Check out his website at www.LaughingBearPhotography.com.

Lisa Goodman

In an eco-friendly approach to jewelry-making, Lisa has incorporated discarded items such as guitar strings, skateboards, antique dice, shed deer and elk antlers, and airplane parts into her necklaces, bracelets, and earrings. Used guitar strings are donated to her from Rob's Boulder Music and Woodsongs Lutherie of Boulder. First moti-



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vated by a leftover metal binder from a spiral notebook that she recycled, Lisa turned it into a hanger for jewelry. That spiral would become influential in future creations that revolve around a coiled theme. Works range from 35 to 45 dollars apiece and are available at www.ReviveBoulder.com.



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Phyllery Ball

Sometimes there is no place like home. That's how Phyllery Ball felt when she returned to Colorado to live after a seventeen year hiatus in Northern Pennsylvania tending a herd of 100 Border Leicester sheep, Nubian goats, and Angora goats. She now has time to weave, knit, and crochet the harvested wool into warm and attractive works like hats, bags, scarves, shawls, and rugs. The name of Phyllery's company, Three Sisters Weaving, is in honor of the close bond she shares with her sisters. Her younger sister taught her how to weave and her older sister supported Phyllery's fiber business while she resided in Pennsylvania. Phyllery states that "I can't imagine life without a couple of Angoras," so she brought two Angora goats, that are descendants of Amelia (an original matriarch of the Pennsylvania herd), back with her. The names of the goats that donated the wool are listed on the tags attached to her merchandise. www.ThreeSistersWeaving.com.