



Wisconsin Visual Artists

M A G A Z I N E

4th Quarter Issue - Dec. 2019 Jan., Feb. 2020





ADVERTISE

Contact Terry Stanley at:

director@wisconsinvisualartists.org

CONTACT

This publication is edited by

Aaron Wilbers:

wvadesigner@gmail.com

General inquiries may be made to:

director@wisconsinvisualartists.org

GET INFO TO US

Members and venues may post events, exhibits and opportunities on our site.

www.wisconsinvisualartists.org

Post info one month prior to the issue date;

i.e., Oct. 1 for the November issue.

ON THE COVER: *Four Seasons of Wisconsin*,
(cropped - showing 2 of 4 panels; Autumn & Winter)
by Barbara Westfall, Fused glass and stainless steel,
24"w x 65"h (each panel). See story on page 8.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE *by Victoria (Tori) Tasch, WVA President*

Thank you for supporting WVA! At a recent State Board meeting the Chapter Chairs voted to renew our agreement with Executive Director, Terry Stanley. We are thankful for Terry's hard work and look forward to continued growth and generating opportunities for our members.

If you have any questions or suggestions please contact a Board member. We would love to hear from you.

Finally, please enter the Wisconsin Artists Biennial. This competitive, high profile, juried exhibition is our biggest fundraiser and a partnership with the Museum of Wisconsin Art (MOWA).

NEXT WVA STATE BOARD MEETING:

October 5, 2019,

11:00am-1:00pm.

At the Studio of WVA

Vice-President Jenie Gao:

931 E Main Street Suite 16,

Madison, WI 53703.

All members are encouraged to attend and participate in the discussions!

New works by Peter Dahlke:
"The Moon Shot" was a voyage of discovery from a compositional point of view. Visual things happenings kept popping up such as the crescent shapes. The other work with the Indian figurine is borderline kitsch Whimsical. I found the figurine in the bottom of a box at a rummage sale. The colors and the worn nature of it struck a cord."

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK *by Terry Stanley, WVA Executive Director*

I hope summer was full of creativity and good things that will influence your work during the coming darker, colder months. Perhaps you were inspired to create something for the WVA/MOWA Biennial?

The coolest thing about the Biennial, in my mind, is that you absolutely never know what the results of the exhibit as a whole or the award winners will be. Every cycle has different, highly qualified jurors (from outside the State) who, for the most part, don't know each other. Their differing experiences and aesthetics never fail to add up to interesting exhibits. You just never know whether the winner will be a traditional drawing or painting, a commentary on socioeconomic circumstances, or something entirely new and innovative.

So ENTER! The opportunity to show at the prestigious Museum of Wisconsin Art is not to be passed up.

Next month, we'll be letting you know more about some changes for our social media pages. Basically, while the WVA Facebook PAGE will remain public, the Facebook GROUP (the much more active of the two) can be made private - for our paid members only - and we will be transitioning to that with the goal of including timely announcements of exhibition opportunities, what's going on in galleries etc. You can still also participate in discussions in the group and post your work, but you'll also want to put your events on the WVA Page for the general public. If you put an event on your own page and just tag "Wisconsin Visual Artists" as a "co-sponsor", it will even do it automatically and be added to the WVA Facebook calendar!

Please put the Oct. 5 State Board meeting on your calendars...it will be in Madison at Jenie Gao's incredible studio. We'll remind you of course, but we'd love to see more participation in the meetings.

Happy art making this September!

- Terry

It's easy to understand why the image of cinderblock walls painted sea-foam green brings up an unhappy memory for WVA artist Barbara Westfall. As a 6-year-old child, she vividly remembers sitting in a patient room with her mother in the ER, waiting to be treated for a high fever and pneumonia. In this condition, she remembers feeling miserable. The displeasure of her physical condition was magnified by having nothing to look at but the four glum green walls. She wished it could be something beautiful and soothing instead, and that is one of the life experiences that she calls upon for inspiration to create beautiful work for people in need of an emotional lift, especially those in hospitals. She makes work with the intention and hope that viewers are transported, if only for some precious moments, to a place of restful calm and beauty, and find viewing her work of some help in whatever health struggle they may be dealing with.

In her youth, Barbara observed her father, a design-builder, construct the home she grew up in and other functional objects. She grew up with the trappings of that work, such as blueprints, on the kitchen table. This, and the needlework of her mother and a family sign-painting ad agency, also had a big impact on her. Through school field trips, Barbara would occasionally visit Chicago art museums, and the impact of seeing firsthand the large sculptures of Picasso and Miro was momentous for her. It instilled in her a desire to make large works, which is present in her art glass today, despite the challenges of a medium that is much easier on a small scale. Making things has been a part of her life since childhood, but her first career was in banking. She would make

a major shift back into the arts in the 1980s, venturing into glasswork, and earning both a Bachelor's and Master's degree in Fine Art from UW-Madison, graduating in 1993. She would go on to teach art and art education as a professor at UW-Platteville, and later retire and transition into work as a full-time artist.

Barbara loves the beauty of glass, and describes herself "as a crow" - in that she "gravitates toward shiny things". She noted that since glass has varying degrees of transparency, it can capture, but also reflect light. (A phenomena she is currently studying). She enjoys and engages deeply in the study of her subject matter. If a patron wants art about the sunlight on a particular lake or river, Barbara goes out and studies it in person. Not one to shy from the



- 1) Barbara Westfall with one panel (Winter) of her work *4 Seasons of Wisconsin* at Tomah Memorial Hospital
- 2) *Taking Three Deep Breaths*, Mural installed in the ER at UW-Health at the American Center Hospital, Fused glass, painted willow branches, carved baltic birch and granite inlays, 12'w x 5'h
- 3) *Coastal Flora 3 leaf ensemble*, Fused glass, 36"w x 40"h

logistical challenges of what others might consider a non-portable medium, she will go as far as taking glass chips out on a canoe or kayak with her to color match in the most accurate way possible, comparing the glass to the environment directly. She is fascinated by the interplay of light, water, plants, and motion and continues to explore them.

She does a lot of testing with the glass and kiln to fully understand how each piece will work. She said the firing is a labor intensive process, which can truly make or break a piece. For large works, firings can be a 3-day process, and small ones can take 15 hours. Typically, works are placed in the kiln at least three times and demand a great degree of attention to carefully monitor temperatures, ensuring pieces don't break or crack while heating or cooling. She participates in ongoing education, such as the kilnformed glass residency she attended in 2019 at Pilchuck Glass School in the Pacific Northwest, founded in part by glass artist Dale Chihuly, where she was encouraged to experiment extensively.





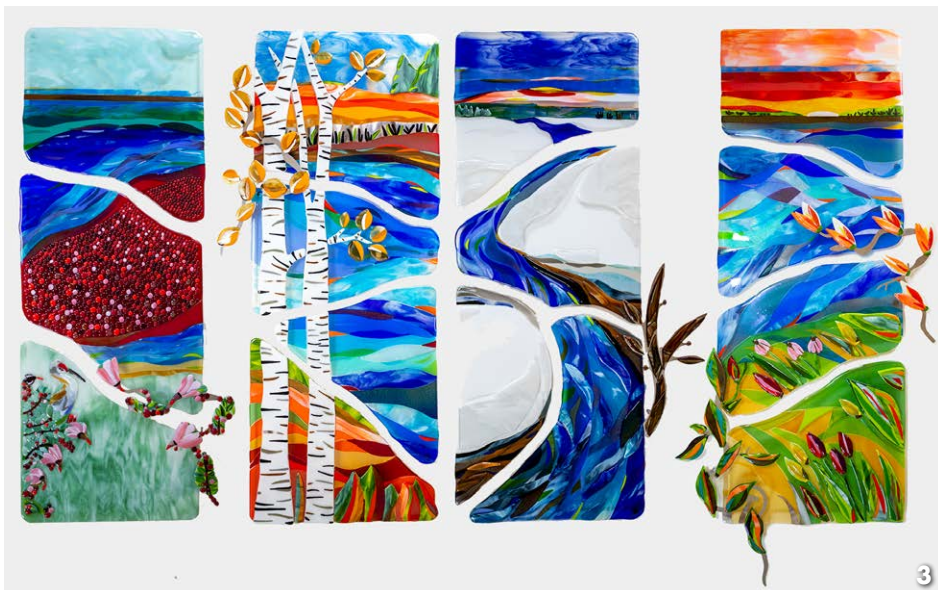
The primary medium Barbara works in is kilnformed glass, sometimes called “fused glass”, but she comfortably incorporates other media such as branches stripped of their bark, and metal or wood that is cut into shapes. Her large work in UW-Hospital at the American Center, for example, has carved basswood, carved granite, paint, and glass. She said it was a job with many challenges, but that it was also fun. Currently, she is most interested in working with a combination of glass and metal and is excited about the additional options made available from new technologies like compact LED lighting.

As a three-dimensional medium, some of her works physically breach the plane of their frames and are layered so that she can suggest the motion of the viewer moving into branches or reeds to enter deeper into the imagined space. You can see this in pieces like “Mangroves Near the Beach” and “Underwater Garden”. She wants her work to mimic how nature transports and immerses the senses. Harkening back to her experiences with large artworks in Chicago, Barbara likes making multi-panel pieces because it allows her to work in the medium of glass while working large. She mentioned that standing “at 5’9” tall”, working on a large scale comes naturally to her. One such recently completed large scale work is about the four seasons in Wisconsin and is installed in the lobby at Tomah Memorial Hospital.

Large-scaled commissions for commercial buyers, like Tomah Hospital, are the greater part of her earnings, but she also makes many smaller works, including functional items like dinner plates and platters. Barbara mentioned that size is not the only challenge with her work, but that overall it is quite an expensive medium to work in. The sheet glass she uses is hand made from Seattle and Portland, costs around \$100-\$300 per 30”x20” sheet, and is shipped by truck - so just acquiring the raw material to start her work is pricey. Then there are the costs of the kiln, the electric to operate it and building the facility to house it all, which are all requirements of a glass studio. Educating her buyers about these costs and their impact on the price of her art, are necessary factors to communicate. Beyond material, equipment and studio costs, it’s a continual challenge keeping an active business successful; self-promoting and wearing all the hats in running it, as well as some additional challenges of being a woman in business.

At the same time, she has felt a great sense of accomplishment from keeping her art business a success. She is also proud of her time as a professional art educator, making a difference for not only the students she taught but for all the future people her art education majors have gone on to teach. She’s gratified when people viewing her work say something like “it reminds me of... or I saw...”

She hopes her work will be emotionally moving because it connects to something in the viewer’s own life. Barbara is not attached to viewers “getting what she gets out of it”, but rather that they encounter the art filtered through their own experiences. Ultimately, she hopes that her work will bring joy to others. You can see more of Barbara’s art on her website: www.barbarawestfall.com



- 1) *Radiant Shore*, Fused glass, aluminum and stainless steel, 58”w x 20”h
- 2) *Chasing the Spectrum*, Fused glass, LED lights and aluminum, 40”w x 45”h
- 3) *Four Seasons of Wisconsin*, Lobby installation at Tomah Memorial Hospital, Tomah, WI, Fused glass and stainless steel, 24”w x 65”h (each panel)