TRANSFORMATION & METAMORPHOSIS



Pensive | 24”x 30” | Oil on canvas | Angela Zanolari

by **MICHELE CORRIEL**

Each of the stories in this Art Section seeks to understand the fluid boundaries of what makes fine art. The artists all communicate an overriding sense of optimism and an abundance of curiosity, encouraging the viewer to take a second look at the world.

From taking rusty, broken wire and turning it into an elegant portrait of the wind, to black and white fine art photography that includes a nod to Warhol and a pinch of diamond dust, to the inner voice of an artist finding herself on the canvas, to the sisters who create not just painting but transform the meaning of place for their clients, they each explore their individual creativity, and their unique perspectives come across loud and clear.

Enter the studio of Kevin Noble who found a way to capture a weather phenomenon in his exquisite black and white photographs of Yellowstone Park; or the workshop studio of Jennifer Pulchinski who tames barbed wire into sculptural tranquility. Angela Zanolari unleashes her creative soul onto the pages of her journal, and sisters Terry Hall and Kathi Gerritsen work to help their clients understand their own environments through painting, photography, and digital art.

By exploring these artists and galleries, the hope is to further the reader’s interest in more than just a second look, and to understand the creative process on a deeper level.



Water Whispers
detail | 48”x 58”x 24”
barbed wire, steel,
& reclaimed timber
Jennifer Pulchinski



Dancing Redheads | 48” x 48” | oil on canvas wrap
Sanguine Fine Art & Boutique



The Mask | 43” X 43” | photography with
“diamond dust” finish | Kevin Noble

Jennifer Pulchinski

AT OLD MAIN GALLERY



Detail of Pulchinski's process.





The Boat | 124"x 45" x 36" | barbed wire, steel, & reclaimed timber

"I WAS ON A MISSION; I NEEDED TO MAKE SOMETHING, ANYTHING. SEEKING AND SEARCHING FOR AN IDEA. I HAD THE CREATIVITY, THAT FEELING IN MY BODY THAT MAKES ME MOVE, MAKES ME FEEL, AND MAKES ME WANT TO TRANSLATE IT INTO SOMETHING. I HAD THE FUEL, BUT I WAS MISSING SOMETHING."

–Jennifer Pulchinski, Artist

Barbed wire's long and infamous history goes back to the 1870s and has wound its way through prisons and riots, through range wars and cattle grazing fights. Jennifer Pulchinski wrangles found barbed wire into powerful yet elegant sculptures.

In her studio, random pieces of cut wire lie scattered across the floor, circles of barbed wire tower, stacked along the back, and frames populated with barbed wire trees climb the walls. Her larger pieces whirl and eddy, while reaching skyward toward a single point, elegant as a dancer.

She discovered the versatility of barbed wire while still a student, getting her art degree.

"There I was standing in a field," she recalls. "It was a hot day, not a cloud in the sky. I was surrounded in blue – the sky was endless."

At the time, she was taking a sculpture class but had not figured out what to use for her medium.

"I was on a mission; I needed to make something, anything," she says. "Seeking and searching for an idea. I had the creativity, that feeling in my body that makes me move, makes me feel, and makes me want to translate it into something. I had the fuel, but I was missing something."

As she continued her walk, she began to pay attention to the wind. "It felt nice, soft, on such a hot day. I heard a light rustle in the field from the tall grasses moving and I thought, wow, not so much blue anymore but yellow! I was surrounded by shades of yellow."

But it was the movement from the wind that caught her attention.

"As I looked down, I saw it! A huge pile of discarded, used, and rusting barbed wire. Seeing that pile, with the misshapen forms it made, that was it," she remembers.



Whispers | 86”x 52”x 15” | barbed wired & reclaimed timber



Wind Rights II | 74”x 40”x 5” | barbed wire & concrete



Ghost Ships | 96”x 48”x 120”
barbed wire & reclaimed timber



Lombard III | 91”x 16”x 16” | barbed wire, railroad tie, & steel

“EACH PIECE HAS ITS OWN ENERGY. SHE LETS THE MATERIALS DICTATE HER WORK AND SHE CONTINUES TO AMAZE.”

–Lindsey McCann, Owner, Old Main Gallery



The Post | 68”x 12”x 12” | barbed wired & reclaimed timber

Lindsey McCann, owner of Old Main Gallery, has been working with Pulchinski since 2016.

“I remembered seeing her work behind the Bozeman Public Library along the Gallagator trail and I also saw the one she made that is installed on the Montana State University campus,” McCann says. “It was a really good framing client who went to school with Jen and told us to check out her work.”

It didn’t take McCann long to invite Pulchinski into the gallery, where there is usually at least one of her pieces visible from the window.

“I just absolutely adore her as a person and as an artist,” McCann says. “Her sculptures always bring people inside the gallery – and people are always surprised that she’s a woman.”

Maybe it’s the barbed wire. Maybe it’s the strength of her work. Most importantly, for McCann, it’s the pure joy.

“Each piece has its own energy,” McCann says. “She lets the materials dictate her work and she continues to amaze. Plus, she’s a wonderful storyteller: she makes me laugh.”

When clients walk into Old Main Gallery, they are constantly in awe of Pulchinski’s work, hardly able to believe or even conceive that the sculptures are made of barbed wire – found and collected barbed wire.

“They’ll stare at it and try to figure out how she does it,” McCann says. “They will circle the piece several times in utter disbelief.”

As far as installing her pieces, McCann says if people have concerns, they can either ask Old Main to install it safely or have it placed outdoors.

Back in the studio, surrounded by her primary materials, Pulchinski sits close to the concrete floor and absent-mindedly grasps a small piece of the barbed wire, immediately smoothing it out. Entranced by the inherent movement of triple-twisted and rusted wire, she pulls on it, her hands strong from this practice. “There’s a flow of movement within the barbed wire,” she says, still pulling and cajoling the wire to obey. “I’m constantly learning with it.”

Each piece brings with it years upon years of experience. Scraps of fur and hide, seeds, and grass cling to the barbs like wishes.

“There’s a natural flow,” she says. “Part of it is the memory of the wire and just letting it be itself.”

It’s exciting and dangerous. The barbs are sharp and biting. However, Pulchinski doesn’t dull them. She likes the fight of the wire and the daring beauty. Her ability to bend the wire into the design she holds in her mind seems to defy the nature of the crooked and somewhat corroded material.

“There’s a randomness that I depend on,” she says. “It opens a creative door in my mind. The wire has a voice and a song to it.”

Everything that Pulchinski uses in her work is found in the wild. She hikes into the backcountry, while picking up strands of abandoned wire that lay entwined in weeds and grasses. She then coils it up and takes it back to her studio. She also gathers old pieces of wood and fallen logs to which she adheres her barbed sculptures. Sometimes they have weathered and frayed cables attached. All the better. “Everything becomes part of the story,” she says. “Once I had a piece for three years before I realized what it wanted to become.”

Picking up a long-handled wire cutter, she snips at a stray strand of wire. Metal clatters to the floor.

“For this one, I wanted to experiment with the idea of unfinished circles,” she says, as the tamed wires coalesce into a single form. “I wait to get a feel for where the piece needs more weight, more shape.”

At first, her process felt like weaving, but her practice evolved over 20 years of working with this savage material. Now, she intuitively knows what the pieces need, and how to make the wire feel fluid and soft.

“But I am constantly open to the process,” Pulchinski says. “I am still learning, experimenting, and trying to sculpt the wind.”□

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