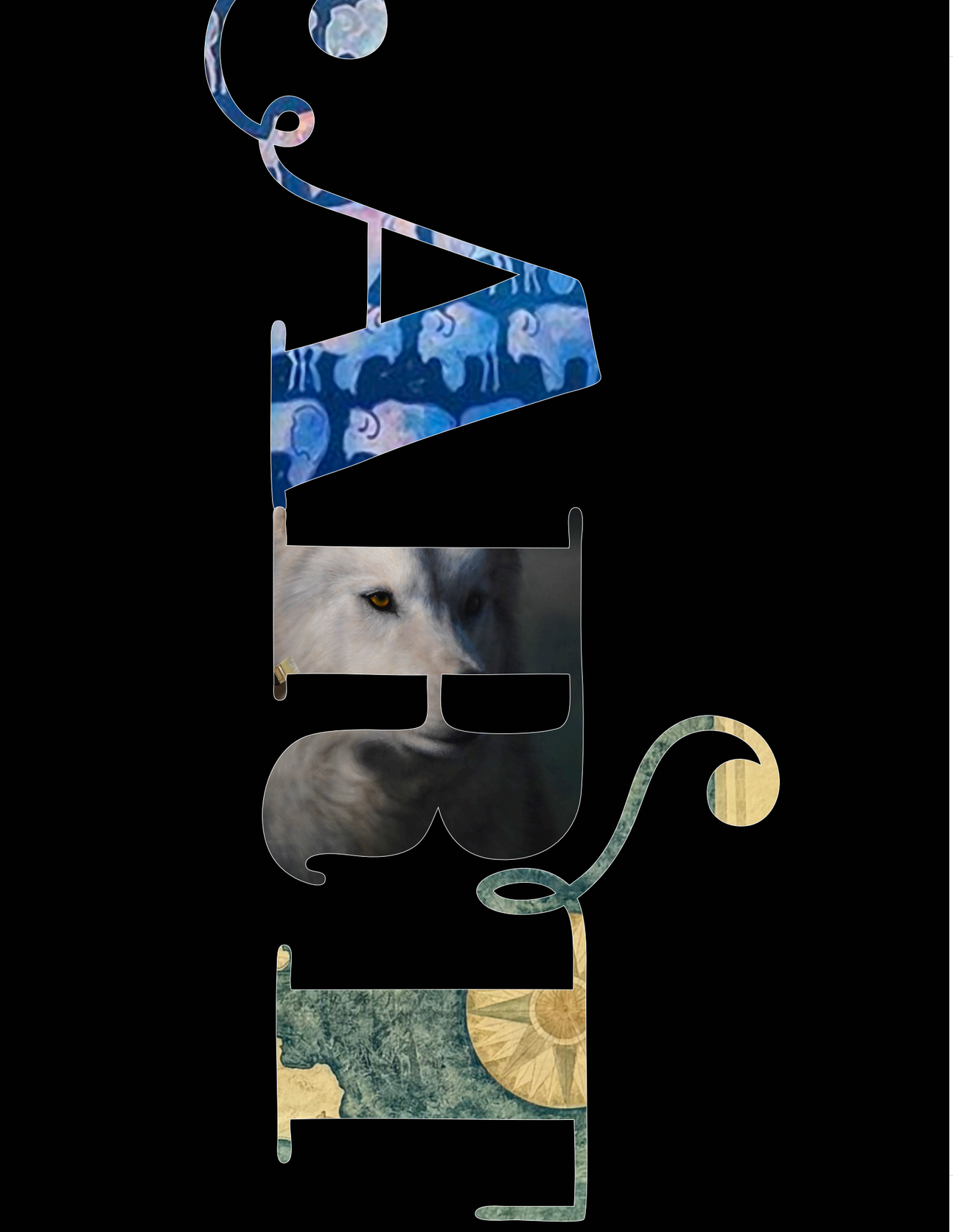


FRAMING *the* WILD

introduction by **LAURENZ BUSCH**

ART OFTEN BEGINS WITH SIMPLY PAYING ATTENTION. IT MIGHT BE A GRIZZLY'S GAZE OR THE HISTORY HELD IN A RUSTED OBJECT. WHATEVER THE SUBJECT, THE WEST GIVES ARTISTS PLENTY TO WORK WITH, FROM WILD ANIMALS AND WIDE-OPEN SPACES TO WEATHERED OBJECTS AND STORIES TUCKED INTO EVERYDAY THINGS. IN THIS SECTION, WE VISIT THREE GALLERIES AND MEET THE PEOPLE BEHIND THEM, EACH OFFERING A FRESH PERSPECTIVE ON FAMILIAR SUBJECTS.

AT COURTNEY COLLINS FINE ART IN BIG SKY, GEORGE HILL PAINTS GRIZZLIES, WOLVES, AND BISON AT A SCALE ONCE RESERVED FOR KINGS AND QUEENS, GRANTING THE WEST'S APEX PREDATORS THE GRAVITY OF ROYAL PORTRAITURE. AT OLD MAIN GALLERY & FRAMING IN BOZEMAN, THE RIGHT EYE AND THE RIGHT FRAME CAN TURN ALMOST ANYTHING, FROM A RUSTED GUN TO A FAMILY DRAWING, INTO SOMETHING WORTH PRESERVING. AND AT GALLERY WILD IN JACKSON HOLE, CARRIE WILD AND THE ARTISTS SHE REPRESENTS BRING COLOR, EXPERIMENTATION, AND A CONTEMPORARY SPIRIT TO WESTERN WILDLIFE ART.

OLD MAIN GALLERY & FRAMING

WHAT'S IN A FRAME?



A BOZEMAN GALLERY PROVES ALMOST ANYTHING
CAN BECOME ART WITH THE RIGHT POINT OF VIEW

by **MICHELE CORRIEL**

> I FIND THINGS NOT IN PERFECT CONDITION AND TAKE THEM TO OLD MAIN, AND THEY MAKE THEM LOOK LIKE WORKS OF ART,
>
> *David Perlstein, Collector of rare Montana objects*

The scent of freshly cut wood hangs in the air at the workshop of Old Main Gallery & Framing, located just a few blocks from its downtown Bozeman gallery. Here, the polish of the finished frame gives way to the work behind it.

The new frame shop has three main workrooms and a separate space for storing artwork. In the woodshop, table saws and other equipment allow the team to shape pieces both large and small. Because the precision framing and sawdust are not natural companions, owner Lindsey McCann created a partitioned area for installing the artwork in the finished frame. Behind a plastic curtain, they can mount artwork using a vacuum press and place it beneath glass in a dust-free environment.

Throughout the shop, McCann and co-owner Micah Jastram handle everything from valuable artwork to family photographs and children's drawings. The works vary widely, but the approach is always the same; each one is treated as unique, valuable, and personal.

That's obvious in McCann's work with David Perlstein, a collector of rare Montana objects. Perlstein travels the state, visiting old houses and barns and working with historical societies, universities, and private collectors to uncover unusual finds. Many eventually make their way to Old Main.

"I find things not in perfect condition and take them to Old Main, and they make them look like works of art," Perlstein says. "I trust them completely."

One of the most striking collaborations is a floor-to-ceiling display of Perlstein's collection of found guns. Some are rusted, others skeletal, and a few appear ready to use. McCann and Perlstein selected a blue fabric background and a wood frame that would give the collection the presence of a museum display without distracting from the objects themselves.

"I've been lucky to have Old Main on my team," Perlstein says. "They take the pieces to the next level. And the quality of their framing is fantastic."

He adds: "I save it and find it, but they bring it back to life."

For McCann, bringing an object back to life is more than presentation. It can also mean protecting something before it's lost.

Light exposure, moisture, and humidity can cause lasting damage to artwork and heirlooms. McCann evaluates each piece to determine whether it needs conservation work and whether existing damage can be mitigated. For the most serious cases, she works with a conservation expert in Chicago.









> WE FRAME EVERYTHING. NOT JUST THINGS THAT ARE CRAZY VALUABLE, BUT WHATEVER NEEDS A FRAME. WE OFTEN FRAME KIDS' DRAWINGS.
>
> *Lindsey McCann, Gallery Co-Owner*

"We frame everything," McCann says, clarifying that not everything needs to be a rare object. "Not just things that are crazy valuable, but whatever needs a frame. We often frame kids' drawings."

The process begins with a few general questions, like McCann asking where the piece will hang and what the client envisions for it. Then, she considers the materials and finishes that will complement the work rather than compete with it.

"We want to highlight the artwork, not the frame," she says. "We always recommend a conservation-grade glass."

A framed poster in the shop compares three options—conservation clear, museum glass, and reflection control. McCann is particularly enthusiastic about museum glass.

"The museum glass has the most amazing clarity," she says. "Once I used it at home, I had to change all the other glass."

Old Main's gallery and frame shop were once housed together, but when their previous location went up for sale in 2023, they realized finding another space large enough for both operations downtown could prove difficult. They ultimately moved the frame shop in 2024 and then the gallery in 2026.

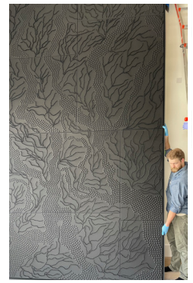








> IT'S REALLY HARD TO GET PEOPLE TO COVER THE GALLERY BECAUSE EVERYONE WANTS TO WORK HERE, USING THEIR HANDS AND BUILDING FRAMES
>
> *Lindsey McCann, Gallery Co-Owner*







> OLD MAIN IS REALLY ABOUT PRESERVING HISTORY. IF IT'S IMPORTANT TO OUR CUSTOMERS, IT'S IMPORTANT TO US.
>
> *Lindsey McCann, Gallery Co-Owner*

While the two locations remain only a few blocks apart, the change gave the framing operation considerably more room. The team can now offer a wider range of frames and work with more varieties of wood, mill and miter pieces, build biscuit joints, and make inlaid corners in-house.

"It allowed us to widen the types of frames we can offer to our customers," McCann says.

The expanded workshop has also created an unexpected staffing challenge.

"It's really hard to get people to cover the gallery because everyone wants to work here, using their hands and building frames," she says.

McCann's enthusiasm is understandable. For all the machinery, glass, and wood filling the shop, each project begins with a story. "The object brought through the door might be rare, a family heirloom, or a child's drawing, but its value is not determined by what it might bring at auction, but by what it means to the person who carried it in," she says.

"Old Main is really about preserving history," McCann adds. "If it's important to our customers, it's important to us." ■

