

OF EAU CLAIRE

Our Landscape

Laurie Bieze Permanent Art Collection

Open to View Friday, January 8, 2021
Virtual Exhibit at pablocenter.org

Discover a surprising point of view as our fair city is explored through works of art selected from Pablo Center's Laurie Bieze Permanent Art Collection.

ROSE DOLAN-NEILL, CURATOR

Visual & Literary Arts Manager
Pablo Center at the Confluence

It is only natural that our area's visual artists would be drawn to the beauty surrounding us—there is so much scope for the imagination in the Eau Claire area. On exhibit are reclaimed objects, beautiful watercolors of familiar places, and the rivers along with the flora and fauna that they bring. We are honored to present new acquisitions to our collection and contributions to our community that will inform, educate, and inspire future generations of art enthusiasts. Don and Laura Gabor have donated a lovely sculpture reminiscent of a bird that is not found round these parts but crafted with objects that are certainly familiar to many in our region. Also newly added to Pablo Center's Riverfront Room is a special commission of glorious stained glass by Michael Pilla contributed by James W Hansen. You can catch a glimpse of *The First Treasure* as you walk between Pablo Center and the Chippewa River.

There is so much beauty tucked away in our art collection. We are proud to offer you a glimpse into the Laurie Bieze Art Collection.

Contributions to the Laurie Bieze Permanent Art Collection enrich the art experience for anyone who walks through the doors of Pablo Center.

www.pablocenter.org/support/donate/

ARTIST STATEMENTS AND BIOGRAPHIES

Statements and biographies are written by the individual artists and are published with their permission. The views expressed are their own. Thank you.

WILLIAM BENSON

Silver on Black Progression

Intaglio print | Donated by Amy Benson

Drawing, painting in water media, printmaking and photographic images have held expressive interest for over half a century. I am grateful for this broad array of inspiring, aesthetic possibilities. Residents of West Central Wisconsin are blessed with an array of natural amenities. Scenic landscapes are found in every direction, studded with flocks of animals and fields of nature's rich bounty.

William "Bill" Benson, Professor Emeritus of Art and Design at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, passed in the spring of 2019. He was a resident of the city of Eau Claire for over fifty years, thirty of which as an studio art professor on campus where he taught printmaking, design and art education. He was an active member of the Wisconsin Art Education Association-one of the largest memberships in the country. In October, 2017, he received the WAEA Distinguished Fellow award, celebrating his past presidency of the organization.

LAURIE BIEZE

The Eagle

Stained glass | Donated by Verna Larson Duchesneau

"Fire in the belly" is that quality of mind which has guided Laurie Bieze, stained glass artist, from the beginning. She never really wanted to do anything else, and that intense dedication to her craft led her on a merry chase as something of a gypsy, until she landed in Eau Claire. After completing her studies at the Colorado Institute of Art, she took various jobs across the US, as well as abroad, doing art for movies, TV and print media, as well as other design work. While she was working at the University in Oregon, her skill as an artist who could actually draw, loved to sketch and produce original designs, opened the door to getting involved with designing stained glass windows for other glass artists. Her subsequent study of the art of stained glass processes gave her the confidence to think that she could work for herself and actually make a living as a stained glass artist in Eau Claire.

She began designing for homes, as well as producing windows, doors, sculptures, mobiles and other spectacular stained glass art for churches and restaurants, CVTC, the IBC, Luther Hospital, among many other clients. One can follow Laurie Bieze's footsteps as an artist, by traversing the Chippewa Valley from one glistening shimmer of evocative color to another.

She had a studio at Banbury Place for over fourteen years. The ambiance seemed to attract a broad spectrum of

creative tenants, who of course come and go, but mutually benefit from the eclectic mix.

Laurie Bieze described the energy in downtown Eau Claire as wonderful... "positive and forward thinking." What was most important to her? "Creating good art. I mean creating good pieces is the ultimate...which means I have to like them...that they excite me when I make them. I demand a lot, I guess, of how I spend my days, but I just love making art..."

In a reflective mood, she described herself as a very spiritual person who had a lot of freedom in her days, which suited her just fine. The last window she planned to do in Eau Claire was at the Unitarian Church, a place where she had special ties. "It will be a huge window and I'll pull in enough help to get it all done."

This content was taken from a November 2011 interview of Laurie Bieze. Chippepedia.org

TIM BRUDNICKI

Urban Exposure

Urban logs | Donated by the artist

By mulling my own lumber, my process begins while the wood is still in log form. A majority of the wood I use is from urban logs that have been taken down in the city of Eau Claire. In all of my work, I strive to engage not just the woodworker or craftsman, but the artist within. I was taught to swing a hammer back in the mid-eighties in my high school woodshop class in Waterford, WI. One spice rack later I was hooked for life. After working a decade or so as a finish carpenter in the greater Milwaukee area, my interests shifted to that of artistic fine woodworking. My family and I (wife Christine and sons David and Jack) reside in rural Eau Claire on a 5 acre "slice of heaven."

www.eauclairewoodworks.com

JEFF BUCKLEW

Informalistic

Photograph | Donated by the artist

Jeff began making photographs in the mid-1970s using film while serving in the Marine Corps and continued to explore photography attending UW Stout as a Graphic Arts Management student. At that time, he processed his own film and made prints in a wet darkroom. He began shooting digital in 2009 and now makes giclee prints using archival methods and the wet darkroom is a fond memory. Photographing or processing images in black and white has the strongest appeal to him lately. He believes in many cases it allows the viewer to get the most out of an image without the distraction of color. Through photography, Jeff attempts to get the most interesting or thought-provoking visual content from the world around him and he likes to keep the process and images simple and minimal when possible. Jeff's images have been published in various travel guides, magazines, and calendars.

www.bucklewphotography.com

DAN CLUMPNER AND MEL SUNDBY

Confluence

Raku glazed bowl | Donated by the family of Dan Clumpner

This work of art was created in collaboration as part of an annual fundraising event for the Children's Museum of Eau Claire in which local celebrities are paired with visual artists to create a work of art for auction. It was donated to Pablo Center at the Confluence as a significant piece of our history.

Dan Clumpner: "My experience as an artist is very limited. It includes one semester of design in the NDSU School of Architecture and one session of painting at an ECRAC Wine and Whimsy event. However, I do claim friendship with several accomplished artists. About midway through my architectural design course, my lead professor strongly encouraged my transfer to the School of Engineering. I did. After participating in the painting class, ECRAC staff accused me of displaying the work of others in our session-ending group photo. I did that, too. I continue to seek validation of my artistic and design abilities and I am anxious to rid myself of the "art fraud" moniker. This opportunity to address personal issues while benefitting a wonderful community resource like the Children's Museum is greatly appreciated. My glazed bowl was completed under the tutelage of the talented and generous sculptor, Mel Sundby. With Mel and Sally's guidance, I have attempted to represent the synergy and collaboration demonstrated by the Eau Claire community as our city is reinvented one block at a time.

DON AND LAURA GABER

Toucan V

Sculpture is 5/7 in a series created using reclaimed components from antique farm equipment and barn lumber locally sourced from the Chippewa Valley. Stained glass was inlaid to offer balance and beauty to the piece. | Donated by the artists

Don and Laura Gaber are artists from the Chippewa Valley who create art using materials reclaimed from discarded or obsolete antique farm equipment and reclaimed barn lumber from local farms. "Our objective is to create unique, eco-friendly art using mainly reclaimed or found materials as the medium. Well-worn iron, steel, and wood have distinctive tactile and visible textures and hold stories that cannot be duplicated with new materials. Incorporating stained glass and other materials compliment the pieces and offer a unique balance."

www.repartsart.com

MALCOM HOLZMAN

Confluence

Watercolor | Donated by the family of Dan Clumpner

This work of art was created by Pablo Center architect, Malcom Holzman and was the main source of inspiration for Dan Clumpner's *Confluence*. This watercolor paired with Dan's artwork and was auctioned as part of an annual fundraising event for the Children's Museum of Eau Claire in which local celebrities are paired with visual artists to create a work of art. It was donated to Pablo Center at the Confluence as a significant piece of our history.

Malcolm Holzman provides a first look at the concept his team is developing for our community arts center. This is the culmination of a long and comprehensive planning process, a milestone in the evolution of the design process and further evidence that "It really is happening".

ANN MARIE MEULENERS

Pablo Center at the Confluence

Watercolor and ink | Donated by the artist

During my childhood years in the 1960s I grew up in a rural area south of St. Paul, Minnesota. My mother, aunt and grandmother always encouraged me to continue drawing and painting. My perception of the world was greatly influenced by my surroundings of nature and wildlife, as well as the dramatic change of seasons in Minnesota. While attending the University of St. Catherine I received a B.A. in elementary education and studied art as well. During the next thirty years of marriage, raising a family and working as a teacher, my desire to create was always there. I continued to take several artist workshops and college classes which inspired me to work on my own at various methods of portraying a painting or drawing. The subject matter in my work can vary from landscapes, florals, portraits or abstract works. Before I can begin any painting, the subject matter must mean something to me. From that point, I will work at arranging a composition or design and choose my palette of colors to create a mood within the painting. I try to emphasize full, rich colors and a free expression within my latest paintings. By using a variety of paints, papers and techniques my paintings can display many layers. It is my intention to convey a sense of feeling within each painting, and to reach out to the viewer. Some of my work has been on exhibit and has been purchased by people all around the country.

This painting was featured in the inaugural exhibit of Pablo Center at the Confluence – The Confluence of Art Annual, September of 2018 in the James Hansen Gallery.

www.etsy.com/shop/AnnMeulenersArt

SUSAN PHELPS PEARSON

And Then There Were None

Acrylic on canvas | Donated by the artist

I was trained many years ago as a painter. I celebrated my long life as an artist last year with a retrospective exhibit of my art: "80 for 80" (80 works of art for my 80th birthday). It was a way to reflect on how important my art is for me. Every day I am excited about the fact that I can go to my studio and create. Most of who and what I am as an artist has come from a continuous hunger to learn, grow, and change. When I paint, I want to express my emotional response to a place—the lushness of a summer day, the shy quiet of dusk, or the rowdy crowding of a city. I often pick out a scene that forces me to solve a problem—a restaurant window with people inside, reflections, and people outside. Or a steep set of steps going down a cliff edge. I have learned that in order to paint what you see you must forget logic and look only at color and shape and their relationships in the painting.

People ask me what kind of art I do. I hesitate because my art is personal. It is a visual diary of my life – what I see, feel, and think. A work may originate from a quirky dream, a photo of a place, or a found metal shard. Something that sparks an idea. With that inspiration, I begin to work. It may be a painting, as in *And Then There Were None*, which I painted to keep alive a small grove of joyful trees. Walking across the Barstow Street bridge last fall, (2016), I noticed a huddle of trees clinging to the bank to my left on the south side of the Eau Claire River. They were brilliantly beautiful in the late afternoon light. I knew they would be gone the next fall to make room for our new plaza. I felt a sadness at the loss of their beauty, so I photographed them and painted their rich glow.

On frequent evening walks downtown, we make it a point to pass the Pablo Center. The place literally glows (outside and inside) and gives the city of Eau Claire a new, vital focal point for the arts. In our experiences with the staff, they show justifiable pride and joy as they greet guests and expertly help artists make their contributions to local arts culture. It certainly doesn't hurt that all of this is on the edge of two important rivers, calling attention to this beautiful, natural setting in our city.

This painting was featured in the inaugural exhibit of Pablo Center at the Confluence – The Confluence of Art Annual, September of 2018 in the James Hansen Gallery.

www.suzartsite.com

MICHAEL F. PILLA

The First Treasure

Stained glass window installation | Special commission donated by James W Hansen

Though I am not an architect I work in the realm of architecture.

Line, form and glass are the tools that I use in the medium of light. Light is the medium that both serves and nourishes architecture, and through its presence, brings life to a structure and its environs. It evokes a sense of awakening, transformation, and healing. Successful architecture has a life unto itself. Art glass becomes an integral part of that life whether through a luminous wall or a radiant skylight. Through my work I invite the light to dance and play. Light

entices a space to share its secrets and reveal the spirit that can feel hidden within the architecture. Consequently, the light and the space touch the essence of our being; and this nourishing quality can bring to us a moment that expands our mind, and speaks to our soul.

Michael F. Pilla is an award-winning stained glass artist with extensive experience creating original stained glass window designs, fabrication and art; repair, restoration and conservation of stained glass windows and art. He also provides consultation services for churches, architectural and conservation groups and corporations. He has owned and operated Monarch Studios, Inc., for more than 40 years working in public art, corporate art, churches, private residences and private art collections.

5/2020

In Honor of the Confluence

At this beautiful confluence of two rivers we experience both death and life.

One river ends while one grows stronger.

This art piece was built and installed during the pandemic of 2020 and embraces the symmetry of the confluence of the rivers and our lives.

The challenges that have defined their forefathers' journey to this location are now forgotten and the new youthful process of learning and joyful play continues anew on its own journey downstream.

Not unlike our own lives.

I hope in this stained-glass piece by Michael Pilla we see the challenges and the responsibilities of our own lives and their ultimate end but also the birth of a new and stronger tomorrow.

- James W. Hansen

JAKE RING

Untitled

Photography | Commissioned by the Eau Claire Regional Arts Center, Community Supported Arts Program

What makes this work perfect for the Community Supported Arts program is that this art is here only because of the community and its support. I have been living in Eau Claire since 2006 and decided upon graduation from UWEC to call this place home. This was a choice based on this community and what it has to offer, but also a choice made for what the future holds here. My frame-maker and friend, Brent, is also a graduate of UWEC. After graduation, he too chose to call Eau Claire home. Now we are able to take talents that were honed and developed right here in Eau Claire and use them to create artwork for the community. We want to show this place how thankful we are for such a vibrant and rich environment for growth. I think sharing art is the best way to say, "Thank You, Eau Claire."

Jake Ring grew up along Lake Michigan in the city of Manitowoc, Wisconsin, enjoying everything about maritime culture and the lake. After graduating with a degree in Biology and Environmental Science from UW-Eau Claire, he applied his passion for the outdoors to his work, focusing on fisheries biology in the Grand Canyon, as well as landscape and adventure photography and videography. He currently resides in Eau Claire, Wisconsin and splits time between his photography and videography business and doing water resources work for the local DNR. He draws inspiration from the natural world and the connectedness of everything.