

January 29 through April 23, 2017

Alter Egos

sculpture by
Michaela Valli Groeblacher
from Lindsborg, Kansas



Clown #3

Statement

Questions of Identity.

My work is a slow reveal: it amazes with its realism and demands we look at faces that otherwise we might choose to ignore. It forces a spotlight on the elderly, a segment of society so ignored as to be invisible. Tucked away in nursing homes and hospitals, the aged remind us of our own mortality and the inescapable march of time. Carefully observing and recording the memory map of wrinkles found on their faces and forms, my sculpture records the noble souls of these elders through the details of their body. While sculpting on site at Bethany Home in Lindsborg with residents as models, I have discovered a way to put my art to work for society by recognizing, valuing and conveying an individual's life experiences. Honoring each human being with dignity my art seeks to celebrate beauty, individuality and life experience.

The latest pieces have taken me in a somewhat different direction. Triggered by the recent Self Portrait Invitational at the Sandzén Gallery, I traveled deep into myself to find "the Me." What is my identity? Who am I? How do I want others to see me? Or do I care? As humans, are we or do we create ourselves? Isn't life a continuous discovery of ourselves? How do we decide what we like and what we do not like? Can we change? Ovid offered a brilliant gloss on this theme: "Yes, change was everywhere—it could be playful, extraordinary, or grotesque—but it was not random. Endangered women and assaulted emperors alike metamorphosed not according to their fancy but in response to the crises of their lives, and their metamorphoses were not games or disguises but revelations. Ovid's characters changed, one might say, into themselves.

Enjoy the show.

Biography

Growing up in Austria, nature was my place. Eventually I became a physical therapist. For ten years I loved my patients and they loved me back. My family's move to the USA allowed (forced) me to become a full-time mother. We settled in McPherson, Kansas. My PT education got lost in the move, while my love for art and gardening led me to a degree in landscape design. By that time we had moved to Seattle, Washington. Life and work as a landscape designer in the Pacific Northwest felt like heaven on earth – until we moved again – back to McPherson.

In 2005, by then 45 years old, I fulfilled my lifelong dream and graduated from McPherson College with a bachelor's degree in studio arts, concentrating in ceramics and painting. Now, in my third life, I combine my experience and my interest in the human psyche with both of my artistic loves by sculpting the human figure from clay and subsequently finishing the sculptures in a painterly manner. After receiving my MFA from Fort Hays State University, I now teach art at McPherson College.

My work has been shown in numerous galleries and museums throughout the United States in group, solo and juried shows and has received many awards. It is also part of multiple museums, private and corporate collections throughout the USA, Austria, and Germany.

119th Annual *Midwest Art Exhibition*



Birger Sandzén
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Gallery Hours: Tuesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday, 1 to 5 p.m.