

June 8 through August 11, 2019

*Thingmaker*  
works by Kearney,  
Nebraska, artist  
**Elmer Holzrichter**  
(1924-2016)



Detail of an Untitled piece (II G 6) by Elmer Holzrichter

### Statement

I am a clown  
a lump of the great  
stardust mud of Earth  
warmed by a spark of God  
to raise my head  
to witness  
and to celebrate.  
When I am tired  
I will return to be  
remade as grass  
as a great whale  
as one that soars  
and I will continue  
the dance.

Elmer Holzrichter, Thingmaker

### Biography

Elmer Holzrichter was born on the family farm in Harvey County, Kansas in 1924. He was motivated to pursue art by his elementary school teacher. Upon graduation from Burrton High School, he was invited by Birger Sandzén (1944) to study at Bethany College; however, concerned he would not find employment to pay tuition and living expenses, he took his first job teaching in a county school in Kansas. Elmer earned a B.F.A. from Wichita State University in 1949. He moved to Dodge City to teach art at the junior and senior high school where he met Margaret Rowlands, the music teacher. Along with the students, they produced the annual school opera. They were married in 1950.

Elmer spent four summers taking courses at the University of Colorado. There he met many prominent artists who greatly influenced his life and philosophy of art. He completed his M.A. at Fort Hays State University and accepted a teaching position at Kearney State Teacher's College in 1963. He retired in 1989 as emeriti Professor of Art.

Elmer was an artist and an educator. As a young child during the depression, with few possessions, he developed a life-long commitment to stewardship of the environment and a respect for plants and animals. He was known as a thoughtful and inspirational teacher. His artwork encompassed a broad range of mediums including painting, drawing, collage, fiber banners, papier-mache masks, assemblages and constructions, often including original poetry and recycled objects. Taking ordinary objects and materials and making them extraordinary became his artistic expression. He was known as the "Thingmaker." He was a founding member and served as the first president of the Southwest Kansas Art Association and was heavily involved in the vision and planning of the Museum of Nebraska Art (MONA). Elmer passed away in Kearney, Nebraska, on June 9, 2016.



*Birger Sandzén*  
- MEMORIAL GALLERY -

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