

August 22 through October 24, 2021

# *The Nature of Things*

works by

**Trish and Bruce VanOsdel**

from Wichita, Kansas

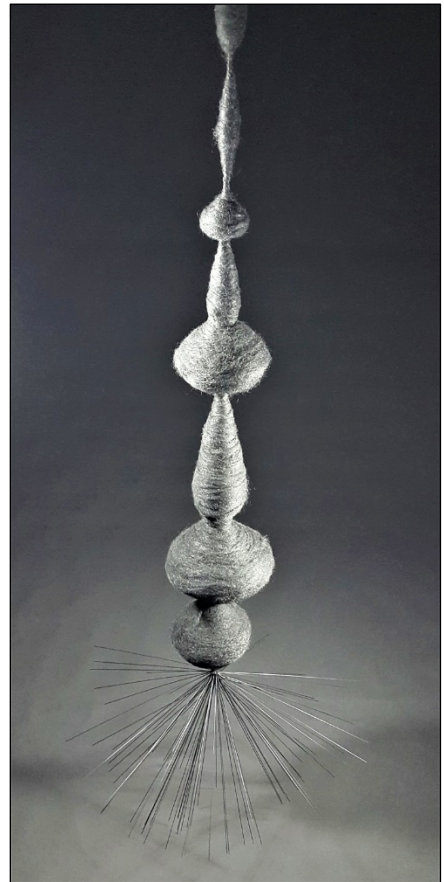
## Trish's Statement

Several years ago, while dealing with a personal loss I was asked how I would illustrate the creative process. With thoughts of mortality ever present in my mind I began to imagine the spark or birth of an idea being a simple thread or line. With the push and pull of thoughts and questions of how to articulate the concept, more threads/lines were added and the building began. Twisting, knotting, wrapping until the simple idea of a thread became a form. The process was intuitive; the result was elemental yet organic. Suspending and hanging the sculptural forms, they began to represent to me a foreign body or element. Some resembled forms similar to natural organic growth and botanical or aquatic life while others looked as though they were biological elements that could be invasive to the human condition like the spiky COVID-19 cell that has become all too recognizable. The suspended forms float in space and although they are life size, they don't threaten but exist.

Being a sculptor, I have worked with many different materials. Changing the viewer's concept of a material is often a challenge I set for myself. The metal wool lends itself to my work. I grew up in a motor repair shop which was our family business and being surrounded by many different materials, steel wool stood out to me. Although it is often used in industrial settings, steel wool has a place in domesticity as well as art history, as the humble yet infamous Brillo pad.

## Biography

Wichita native, professional artist, gallery co-owner, and more, Trish VanOsdel brims with ideas. She holds a bachelor of fine arts degree from Wichita State University and a master of fine arts from New York State College of Ceramics at Alfred University in Alfred, New York. Her work bridges the conceptual and the abstract from metal wool wigs to elongated forms suspended from the ceiling or growing up from the floor. Many times the abstract forms do not directly reference anything identifiable, but seem familiar in reference to nature and biology. Trish is constantly experimenting with different materials, removing them from their known uses and transforming visual perceptions. Additionally, she operates an estate sale



*Thistle* by Trish VanOsdel



*Wedge* by Bruce VanOsdel

business that helps people and organizations redistribute their art collections and is an appraiser of fine art, antiques and collectibles. She also has extensive retail background from years helping her family run Richmond Electric, which closed in 2015 after eight decades of providing highly personalized services.

## Bruce's Statement

In my work I have drawn from my past and made a conscious effort to push the limitations I sometimes impose on myself. Much like the work of the Abstract Expressionists artists of the 1950's and 60's I have employed a work philosophy of "Action and Reaction". Starting with the "Slam" bases I produce. This process is an action of taking a 25 lb. block of clay and slamming in on a table, rotating it, bending it, then slamming again until it reaches a form that has all those elements I look for; rolling edges, twisting forms, wrinkles, punches, stretches, breaks. The clay showing the evidence and record of my action and the clays reaction. To the contrary the vessel forms that I create to incorporate with these bases are made in a more traditional and controlled manner either thrown on the wheel or hand built. Many of the vessel forms are mechanical, architectural or organic in nature but still very intentional. Juxtaposing these two elements of the slam base and the manipulated vessel create an engaging dynamic in response to one another. Lastly color is applied. If I glaze the base a color that is very earthy and natural what happens when I combine it with a color that seems unnatural? Neon Yellow for instance. Does it enhance the form? Does it create more of a dialogue for the viewer? Sometimes I don't always know until it comes out of the kiln and I assemble the work. Is the color dialogue subtle or does it push the work further?

Even though I sketch my designs I love the spontaneity of the moment. Pulling, stretching, and forcefully expressing my will upon the clay. Asking it to do something I haven't seen or experienced before. It is action in the moment that I react to. Stretching those boundaries and hurtling any reservations or restrictions I might subconsciously impose on myself. The challenge of creating work that is ever evolving. Action, Reaction.

## Biography

Bruce VanOsdel lives and works in Wichita, Kansas. He holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the University of Nebraska at Omaha, and a Master of Fine Arts from Wichita State University. He has been working in low-fire ceramics for over thirty years, drawing imagination from nature or manmade artifacts. His work includes hanging platters to sculptural vessels to intricate vases, featuring mesmerizing colors and textures. Bruce is a 3-D Art Instructor at Wichita Northeast Magnet High School, part of the USD 259 School District.



Birger Sandzén  
- MEMORIAL GALLERY -

401 N. First Street, PO Box 348, Lindsborg, KS 67456  
(785) 227-2220 sandzengallery@gmail.com www.sandzen.org  
Gallery Hours: Tuesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday, 1 to 5 p.m.