



# A gallery like no other...

BY WIB MIDDLETON

Sedona Arts Center Gallery Director Cyndi Thau is thrilled to be running the day-to-day operations of what has become a world-class fine art gallery for local and regional artists. The eclectic array of gifted artists and artisans are all members of the Sedona Arts Center family, and their creative passions are attractively displayed in its two handsome gallery spaces. What began as a humble gift shop decades ago was completely transformed in 1995—thanks to a substantial anonymous gift—into today’s highly regarded and well-visited Sedona gallery.

Cyndi, an oil painter and former gallery owner in Costa Rica, joined the Arts Center in 2008 becoming Gallery Director in 2016. She has been quietly exuberant about the benefits of buying art at the gallery ever since. “As a non-profit, our gallery customers enjoy a wonderful selection of original art with the gift of no sales tax on any purchase. Members also enjoy the benefit of a membership discount,” explains Cyndi.

Currently, most gallery artists hail from Northern Arizona with 85% living and working in the Sedona, Flagstaff and the Cottonwood areas. Some are emerging artists and some have been in the gallery for years going back to its founding in the mid-90s. Every year it seems that the quality and diversity of the art, from paintings, bronzes, multimedia, fabric and fiber sculpture in the North Gallery to jewelry, landscape photography, glass and pottery in the South Gallery, just keeps getting better and better.

Gallery jury selection is highly selective. “Choosing art that inspires collectors and the casual buyer and is reasonably priced is part of the SAC mission,” explains Cyndi. Jurying takes place once a year, and once an artist is in, there is an evaluation after three months and another at six. If artists continue to sell, and so many do, their new art is displayed and often highlighted in rotation throughout the year. A little over a year ago the gallery pared things down to create an easier flow to improve the customer experience. “If visitors can view the art that is displayed in a more spacious way, it really helps them make a decision making,” reports Cyndi.

One of the special aspects of the gallery is the beautiful synergy it has with SAC’s Schools of the Arts. It would be difficult to count how many gallery artists took classes, worked hard and honed their skills to a point where they were juried into the gallery. Many of the long-time gallery favorites are also instructors like Dennis Ott and Gretchen Lopez who launched their fine art careers at the Arts Center. World-class artists, like bronze sculptors Ken Rowe and Susan Kliever teach, often doing live demonstrations, and sell in the gallery. Numerous SAC artists are retired, with the time to devote full time to their art, giving them in some cases a second career where their passions can be unleashed! Others are relatively new on the scene, but all have found a creative home at the Sedona Arts Center.

*Three of SAC’s special artists are profiled on the following pages. Their passion and rare talent enliven the gallery!*



## BYRON McKEOWN

"At the Kansas City Art Institute I wasn't taught to do 'ART.' I was encouraged to ask questions...about everything. But more importantly, I was encouraged to find the answers for myself," says Byron McKeown. There he learned the importance of identifying a problem before trying to solve it and experimented with a number of visual languages. In those four short years, McKeown discovered the excitement of exploring the creative process. Those explorations led him to Sedona where he and his wife Deanne established three galleries. Now, in semi-retirement, he works in wood, metal, and semi-precious stones to create collectible knives and walking sticks.

"As a proud member of the Sedona Arts Center, I commend this organization on its past achievements and know that the coming years will bring even more awareness to the value of the arts in our community." • [mckeowngalleries.com](http://mckeowngalleries.com)



## Traveling back in time with Ron Schneider

We owe a huge debt of gratitude to the remarkable artists who transport us to the fiercely independent and heroic lives of early Western cowboy culture. Authentic, historic, and educational, the three-dimensional scenes captured in burnished bronze inspire and wow us. The world-class bronze artists engage in deep research and are precise in their life-like interpretations. So too is Ron Schneider, a self-taught SAC gallery artist and a chronicler of a different kind of Western scene—native ruins in 3D, rotating miniature dioramas that are astonishing in their originality and interpretation.

Ron, retired after a successful engineering career, began fashioning scaled-down wall art depicting old windows, doors, and barn facades in authentic and realistic detail. After moving to Sedona from Scottsdale with his wife in 1998, he took one of his small wall hangings to SAC. It was a Santa Fe window with faded shutters and cracked adobe. "It sold in two days for \$58, and I thought, I have a new career!" laughs Ron.

Soon after Ron became intrigued and mystified by the abandoned kivas and indigenous dwellings scattered throughout the Southwest. He discovered in historical records of the late 1800's that cowboys riding deep into desolate canyons to find stray cattle came upon many abandon dwellings. Digging further and curating meticulous notes—purchasing every book at protected public sites he visited for historical accuracy—Ron set out to bring to life in minute detail and through his own interpretations, what these mysterious places revealed.

Over the years through lots of experimentation Ron has developed a systematic approach to his captivating and beautiful pieces. He'll tell you he is not a radical environmentalist, but he does use as much discarded or found wood to create the all-important cliff-like backdrops. Manzanita, pinion pine, and cedar are favorites. The more they look like stone the better.

Placing them on a swivel base allows for maximum efficiency in his sculpting and viewing. Next he fashions his stones with a powdered cement that he finds works perfectly after years of experimentation. "I developed a pattern for the stonework. Then I mold it, let it air dry, strip it, snip it, and cut and shape it into the dwellings. Finding that product made a huge difference," Ron exclaims. Tacky glue lets him work quickly as he builds his kivas and ruins.

"As I build a new piece, I have to tell myself when to stop, remembering that these representations were found in disrepair... fallen walls where rock and stone piled up as they would after a wall collapsed," he explains. Today the mystery remains as to what happened to the indigenous tribes that abandoned their dwellings in the late 1300's. "From an interest point of view the ruins are just fascinating to me—how they ever built them without tools and fasteners and how they've lasted all these years." Maybe we will never know. Thankfully Ron gives us a glimpse into a window of time in a collectible piece of art.

When Ron volunteers Monday afternoons at the SAC gallery, visitors tell him he should charge thousands for his stunning dioramas. That's not likely to happen, and his pieces are extremely reasonable. For Ron, he will tell you humbly, that to have a piece of his art in a person's home is his greatest joy.

*Gallery artist profiles continue on next page*



## DEANNE McKEOWN

Deanne McKeown finds inspiration for her sculpture in wildlife and the varied cultures of the West, frequently utilizing her work as an opportunity to make humorous or social commentary. She is drawn to interesting associations. The animal characters in her work are frequently metaphors for human thought and behavior. She often incorporates found objects—sometimes they are the beginning of an idea, and sometimes they find their way into a work during the process.

"I am proud to have been a member of the Sedona Arts Center for thirty of their sixty years and trust this fine organization will continue to bring even more cultural enrichment to our community."

● [mckeowngalleries.com](http://mckeowngalleries.com)



Elaine Belvin's interest in photography was sparked by the beautiful landscapes she saw while hiking in the American Southwest. After a long career in Information Technology, photography is now her focus and hiking gives her access to remarkable sites.

## ELAINE BELVIN

Elaine brings a combination of artistic and technological skills to her images. She uses the camera as a tool to create works of art that capture an expression, a mood, a natural geometry, an exceptional quality of light, or a striking color palette. Her portfolio includes nature, wildlife, and vintage images from the American Southwest, Africa, and other travel destinations.

● [www.elainebelvin.com](http://www.elainebelvin.com)



## BILL BELVIN

Bill Belvin specializes in creating richly detailed images of the American Southwest wilderness. He loves capturing the patterns and symmetries present in sandstone and sharing the results with others.

Bill is the creator/author of a website which has had over one million visits from 207 countries. The website contains more than 1,000 images of The Wave and surrounding region, as well as travel directions, maps, ephemeris data, and shooting tips. You will also find depth-of-field tools and articles on shooting at night as well as photographing hot air balloons. ● [www.thewave.info](http://www.thewave.info)



## Elevating the fine art of batik with Lydia Dillon-Sutton

Batik is a centuries-old art form using hot beeswax and special dyes to paint on fabric. Their mostly free-form, expressive colorful designs are enjoyed on fabrics and clothing around the world. Batik as figurative fine art, however, is quite another thing. This multi-step, complex form of artistic expression is only practiced by a few intrepid artists in the Southwest these days and Lydia Dillon-Sutton is one of them. After forty-plus years she has taken the batik form to a high octave of beauty, skill and accomplishment.

Native Southwestern culture, galloping horses and other animals are authentically represented in Lydia's stunning work. Known especially for her depictions of young Indian women in traditional dress, often performing tribal dances, her pieces are remarkably detailed. Lydia's use of line creates dynamic movement and complements textured earthen hues that contrast with rich turquoises, greens and gold.

Lydia's creative process often begins as an adventure with her professional photographer husband. Off they will go to spend time in Montana, for example, at the annual gathering—sometimes up to 1000 teepees—of the Crow tribe. "The Crow are gorgeous people physically and very welcoming. They love to share their culture," she reflects. Photos are taken of the dancers and their sacred movements. Working from photographs, Lydia decides what she wants to glean from that experience that will end

up in her work. "I may take a robe or a shawl from one dancer, or boots with different color combinations from another," she explains. So her paintings convey the essence of her subjects as a composite of her experience with them.

Lydia will also tell you depicting motion is challenging in a somewhat unpredictable art form. And it has particular significance for her. When she was seven she found herself bedridden in the hospital with rheumatic fever and had to learn to walk again. "Now the older I get the more my figures move. I still draw a new nude figure first and then I drape the clothes accordingly. So if you look at my paintings you're able to see a knee under a skirt and you'll know a hip is there, or a wrist, or an elbow under a shawl, even if you can't see it; it's implied and you can understand it." If her dancers have fringed garments they swish in the paintings, their dancing mid-steps perfectly articulated.

To get to a finished piece is arduous to say the least, sometimes comprising thirty steps or more. Unlike stretched canvas, the fabric is loose. "Every color has to be thought through because of all the steps. I work from light to dark, starting with what I want to keep white. I put it into the lightest color dye and so everything, with the exception of what has the wax on it, will take that dye." Between each colored dye application is the bleach process that is used to take out the unwanted color areas, bringing the piece back to a neutral palette where the next color application starts over again!



Finally there is the crackle effect, the fine lines formed from the fabric folds that give batik its unique signature. "The crackle happens because the fabric moves with the beeswax on it." She intentionally controls where the lines appear. "And I work too hard to get these details into the piece to allow anything to interfere with the painting." Working hard, indeed, and collectors and visitors alike are grateful that her beautiful art graces the walls of the Sedona Arts Center's gallery where all can marvel at what she has so masterfully produced.

*Gallery artist profiles continue on next page*



Joan Roberts creates beautiful, one-of-a-kind, handcrafted fine art jewelry. Her work reflects thoughtful passion inspired by nature's glorious red rock country of Sedona. Each piece is completely individual, made with a variety of jewelry media and techniques incorporating fine silver, gold, bronze, and the ancient practice of Kuem Boo.

A graduate of San Jose State University majoring in art education, Roberts has 38 years of teaching art to students and teachers, as classroom teacher, site administrator, and beginning teacher trainer. She continues to teach, introducing her methods and techniques of working with metal clay.

Joan is an active member of the Sedona Arts Center as an artist, volunteer, and member of the Board of Directors.

Red Rock Art Jewelry can be found in the Sedona Arts Center Gallery and online at [RedRockArtJewelry.com](http://RedRockArtJewelry.com)

## JOAN ROBERTS





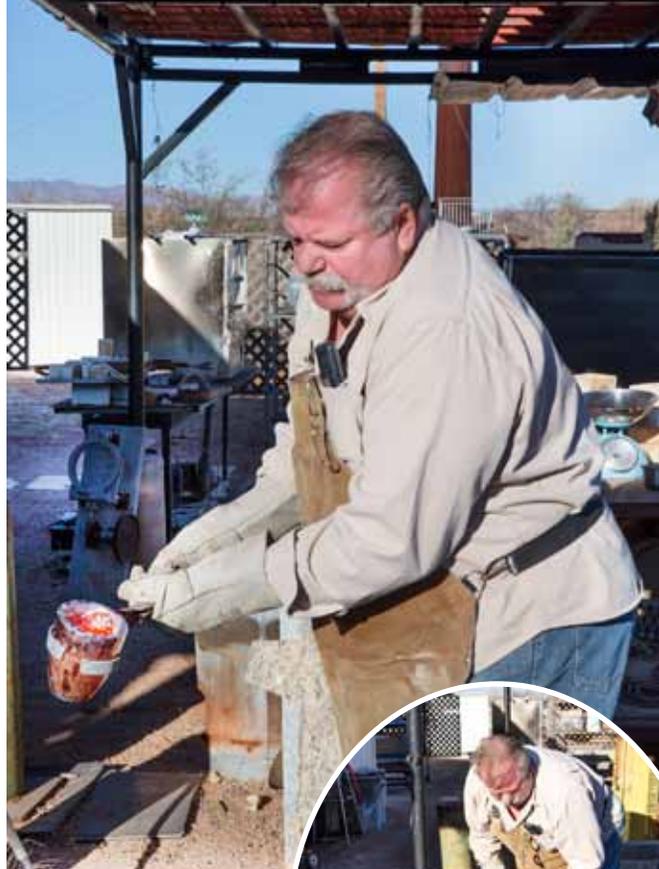
## CHRISTIE PALMER

Neither truly realistic, surreal or abstract, Christie Palmer's acrylic landscapes are anomalies in the world of landscape painting. Graced with enigmatic shapes, a fusion of drama and serenity, and an intuitively expert use of color, her work reflects her singular observation of the world.

Palmer's atypical use of acrylic on paper stems from studying water media at the University of New Hampshire where she was encouraged to reject the "ultra-real and the mundane" in favor of expressing what is distinctly original. Using acrylics much like watercolor and layering infinite variegated washes, her methods achieve a richness of color that can't be created with just one stroke. Palmer paints from the heart, her daily studio hours becoming a meditation as she creates images that exist in her mind's eye.

Palmer's paintings have been awarded in juried shows in the Chicago area, Southern California and Sedona, including multiple "Best of Show" awards. In private collections throughout the U.S. and abroad, her paintings are recognized by their clean lines, flawless technique, and the peacefulness they radiate.

● [cpalmerart.com](http://cpalmerart.com)



## Merging the elements of nature with Karl Williams

Drizzling red-hot liquid copper onto a cold marble slab is really cool. That it sets up fast, turns grey and is seemingly flash frozen in lacy patterns with holes and drips and blobs intact and still delicately fused together is astonishing. And then, weeks later, to see the copper in its brilliance fashioned to the base of a sensuous pottery vase with elegant rattan handles bent and held in place through perfectly positioned holes in the vase is just plain amazing. Welcome to the world of metalworker and potter, Karl Williams, artist and gallery regular!

It took a lot of years for Karl to be comfortable enough to call himself an artist. Being self conscious about that word seems to be a rite of passage for all artists. And in Karl's case, the SAC school was just the catalyst that took him there.

Karl's life is a journey of the hands. First and foremost he builds things, has for decades, fabricating just about anything without hesitation. Welding, fitting plumbing, metalsmithing, long haul truck driving, and even a stint as a teacher (he has a BA in religious studies) is the story of a zigzag life of scrappy, bootstrapping entrepreneurship, and always working with his hands.

Running through his childhood was his art, even if hidden and deeply personal. As a teenager and before retreating to drawing, art was a refuge protecting him from a sometimes-crazy world. If there is a theme in Karl's life, he sums it up like this: "Any time I'm in a place and don't know what to do next... I do my art." With deep appreciation and emotion he attributes the core of any success as an artist to his wife, who on a number of occasions when things got rough, would say in her steadfast certainty: "return to your art."

When Karl found himself living in Rimrock, then Cornville, having built a full-on computerized metal fabricating shop working with 20 huge sheets of steel a week for a local Sedona art enterprise and starting to lose his eyesight, he decided he needed a change. Two cataract surgeries later it was time to get back to the art.

That's when Karl decided to venture into ceramics. He had seen splashed copper at an art fair and had a notion to combine splashed copper with tall ceramic vases. Can't be that hard, he mused, and being an action kind of guy, he thought he'd be well on his way making vases in short order. He laughs about this now and tells some great stories about the infinite patience of his teacher, Dennis Ott. "After a few weeks I was so proud of myself I made something that stood 8 inches tall. I didn't know what it was but there it was!" After unsuccessfully wrangling a five pound chunk of clay that flew off his wheel destroying a neighbor's pot, Karl humbly slowed down and learned to throw differently. Karl in quiet gratitude for his teacher says, "I really appreciated his patience. Dennis doesn't tell you he's teaching you...he just does!"

Next move? "One day I'm in going to be in that gallery he exclaimed, as he stood in the SAC parking lot looking to the upper gallery space. Six months later he was juried in and has been showing in the gallery ever since. That was seven years ago. Karl is quick to give credit to others who have helped him on his artistic unfolding. And in his humility and caring he has succeeded quite well in the art of living too.



## CHERYL WAALE



Paintings with a fresh perspective are Cheryl Waale's niche. As she was transitioning from the corporate world, Waale returned to her lifelong love of paint, and she hasn't looked back.

"I knew from the start I wanted to create paintings that caused you to stop and look," reflects Waale. Through independent study with artists she admires, fearless experimentation, and a lot of brush mileage, she has developed a recognizable style—turning ordinary subjects into extraordinary works comprised of many layers of color and texture. "I've been told my paintings appear to have layers of stories embedded in them." The results take the 2D medium to a whole new level.

Waale teaches her techniques in her Sedona, AZ and Edmonds, WA studios. Her works are in private collections throughout North America and Europe, and along with being a gallery artist at the Sedona Art Center Gallery since 2012, she is represented by galleries in Oregon and Washington states. ● [cherylwaale.com](http://cherylwaale.com)