Nebraska Sesquicentennial Ornaments

These ornaments were commissioned by First Lady Susanne Shore to decorate the official state Christmas tree. Artists from across Nebraska created ornaments in traditional, contemporary and abstract styles to represent Nebraska's natural, cultural, and agricultural heritage. The ornaments are displayed on the Christmas tree in the Capitol rotunda each year.

County Lines

Diane Ogden
Lincoln, NE



There are 93 counties across the state of Nebraska with seemingly invisible lines dividing one from another. That is until one sees a highway marker or takes a look at a road map, which resembles a patchwork quilt delineating a diversity of shapes and sizes of countries.

This design celebrates the many distinctive and varied cultures represented in Nebraska, reflecting shared traditions and languages. Embracing all resident individuals fosters a sense of unity and respect, ultimately bringing down invisible walls of separation.

Country Sleigh Ride

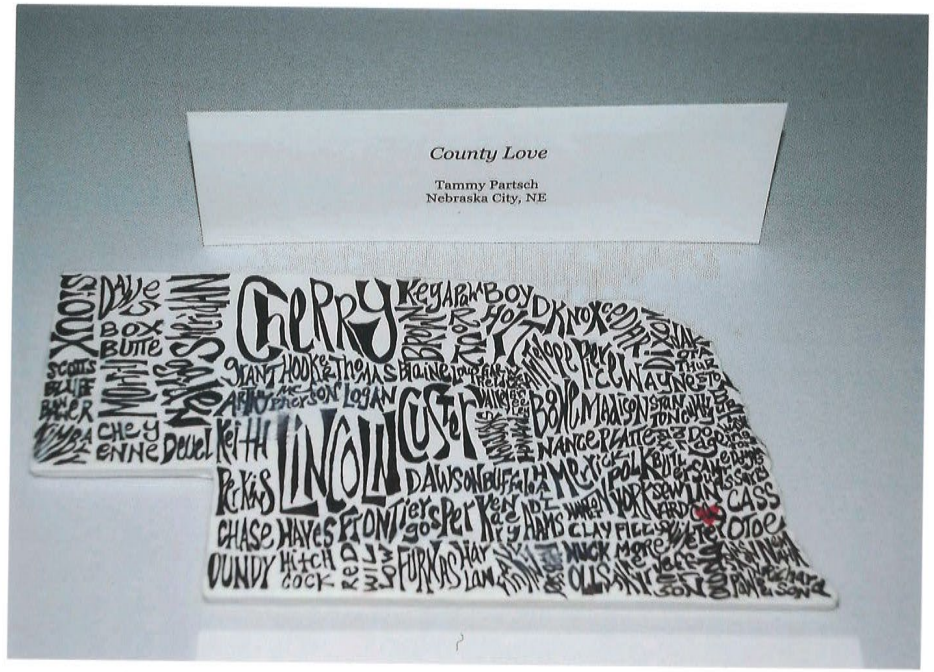
Patrick Gauthier
Lincoln, NE



Imagine you are on a sled riding across a snow-covered field on Christmas Eve. A Christmas tree and pretty wrapped packages are in the back of the sled being delivered to friends and relatives. In the distance, Christmas hymns can be heard from the country church. The church is lit up, serving as a beacon to worshippers celebrating Christmas, the birth of Jesus Christ.

County Love

Tammy Partsch
Nebraska City, NE



Combining my love of words and my interest in the use of space, I have named all of Nebraska's counties in their assigned places, elongating, shrinking and twisting the letter to fill that space. A red heart indicates the capital city of Lincoln.

County-wide Christmas

Ann Betka
Friend, NE



I love to piece fabrics and wanted to do something to represent all of the counties in Nebraska. Because it's for the state's Christmas tree, I chose mostly Christmas fabrics.

Crop Diversity

Diane Ogden
Lincoln, NE



Crop diversity is central to food security and has been defined as the variance in genetic and phenotypic characteristics of plants used in agriculture. Conserving crop diversity ensures food security, allows for adaptation to climate change, reduces environmental degradation, protects nutritional security, reduces poverty and ensures sustainable agriculture.

Czech Days, Wilbur NE

Julia Kappenman
Lincoln, NE



It's amazing to me how the United States is such a salad bowl of different cultures and ideas. You would think we would get lost in how the world works today; yet the city of Wilber, Nebraska, finds a way every year to make their culture shine for us all.

Deer Creek Norwegian Lutheran Church

Colleen Eubanks
Lincoln, NE



I have always been inspired by the peace and beauty of this little country church located along the banks of Deer Creek in Furnas County. Settlers, along with my ancestors, helped found the congregation in 1887, first meeting in homes and later in building the church. It still stands today, almost as a shrine to its early people and history.

For this ornament, I have chosen to paint a border using the Folk art style known as Norwegian Rosemaling, which means flower painting. I learned from expert teachers at the American Norwegian Museum in Decorah, Iowa, and later taught it to others in classes at Southeast Community College in Lincoln.

Diversity

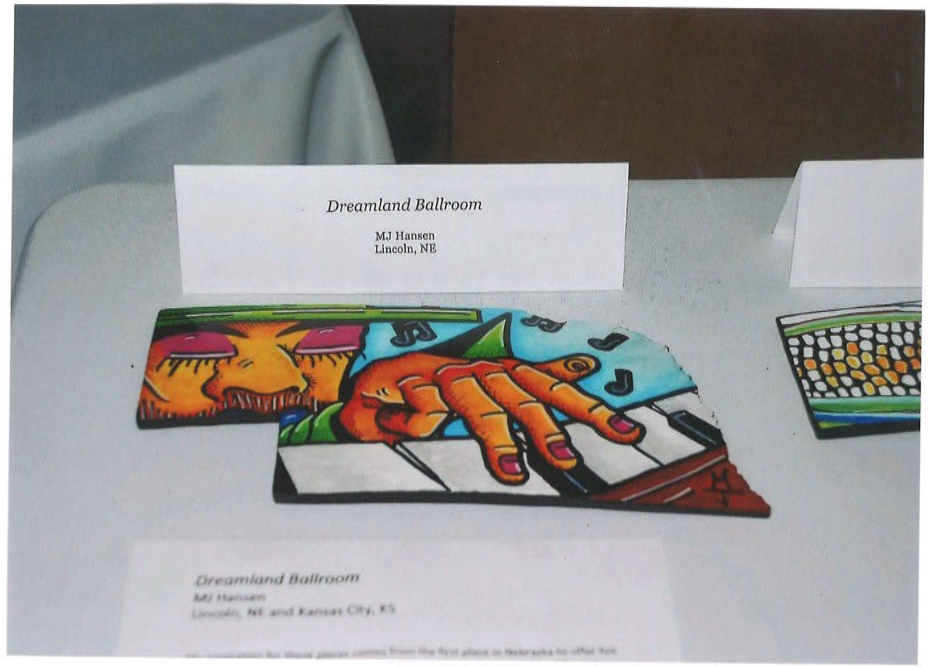
Olga R. Kanne Sanchez
Lincoln, NE



Our children bring hope for a better world.

Dreamland Ballroom

MJ Hansen
Lincoln, NE



My inspiration for this comes from the first place in Nebraska to offer live jazz music. That place was known as the Dreamland Ballroom and for over 40 years was located on the second floor of the historic Jewell building in North Omaha.

Many famous jazz and blues figures performed there, including Duke Ellington and Louis Armstrong. The Dreamland Ballroom was an important part of the cultural transmission and exchange of music and art before the years of television. This premier night club was open from 1923 to 1965 and allowed musicians, both national and local, to make a living by playing music.

Dreamland Ballroom (2nd)

MJ Hansen
Lincoln, NE



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Dueling Cranes

Tom Kerr
Omaha, NE



Nothing says Nebraska like the iconic image of sandhill cranes asserting their dominance in the soggy territory near the Platte River. They may not be around for the holidays per se, but they are always in our thoughts.

Eagle in the Pines

Valerie J. Oertli
Lincoln, NE



Eagles can be seen in Nebraska, often near water. Recently it has been reported that they are facing dire consequences from lead ammunition, so I chose to feature an eagle to gain further awareness of this danger.

Early Survival

Aakriti Agrawal
Lincoln, NE



I have depicted people coming together to take care of their land and their livestock. Early families would farm together to maintain livelihood and contribute to their community in the same way many Nebraska families do today. This included planting and harvesting crops (with wheat and corn shown here), raising cattle and feeding chickens. I also wanted to show another aspect of Nebraska history - homesteading. Many generations of pioneers established their home in Nebraska by building houses from resources found on the land. Here we can see a grandfather telling stories to his grandchildren, women gathering water from nearby wells, and men building houses with their hands.

My design features an Indian folk style called "Warli," an art form traditionally adorned on walls in India. Warli features scenes made entirely of geometric shapes and fine lines, depicting people and animals, farming, celebrating festivals and uniting in marriage. Combining traditional representations with modern ideas, I have worked for many years to revive a rich historical art form of my country. I feel that Warli brings a unique style to the story of Nebraska, as well as highlights the immigration and diversity that this state represents. For the last five years, I have called Nebraska home and find that the love and diversity here are truly humbling and always draw me back. I chose to give the ornament. background that is a white base with wisps of other colors to represent the vibrancy and diversity present in Nebraska.

Fertile Fields

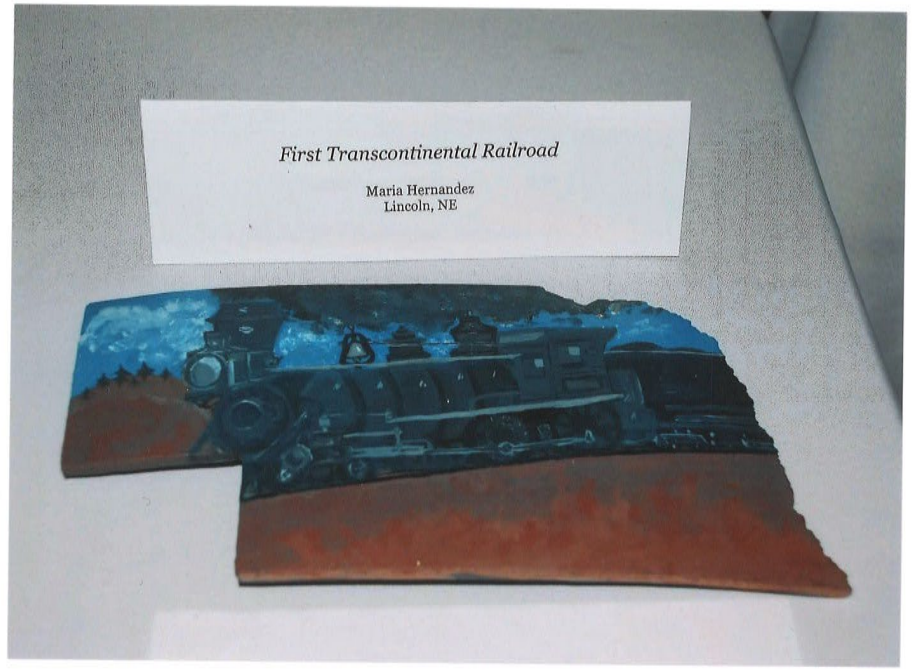
Amy Tomasevicz
Columbus, NE



The first thing that comes to mind for many hearing the word "Nebraska" is the amazing fertile farm ground that spreads across the state, with hay bales and red barns dotting the vast landscape.

First Transcontinental Railroad

Maria Hernandez
Lincoln, NE



I painted a train to represent the First Transcontinental Railroad. Established in the area located between Omaha, NE, and Council Bluffs, IA, the train route stretched west to California with Union Pacific building the longest stretch of the route across Nebraska through to Utah. I believe the building of the railroad played a huge role in how Nebraska, as well as the rest of the nation grew.

In 1862 and 1864, Congress passed acts that allowed for financing and grants to private companies that laid the tracks westward. The First Transcontinental Railroad connected the east with California, where gold had been discovered. The line was officially completed on May 10, 1869.

Flyover Mosaic - The Fabric of the Heartland

Caryl J. Bohn
Raymond, NE



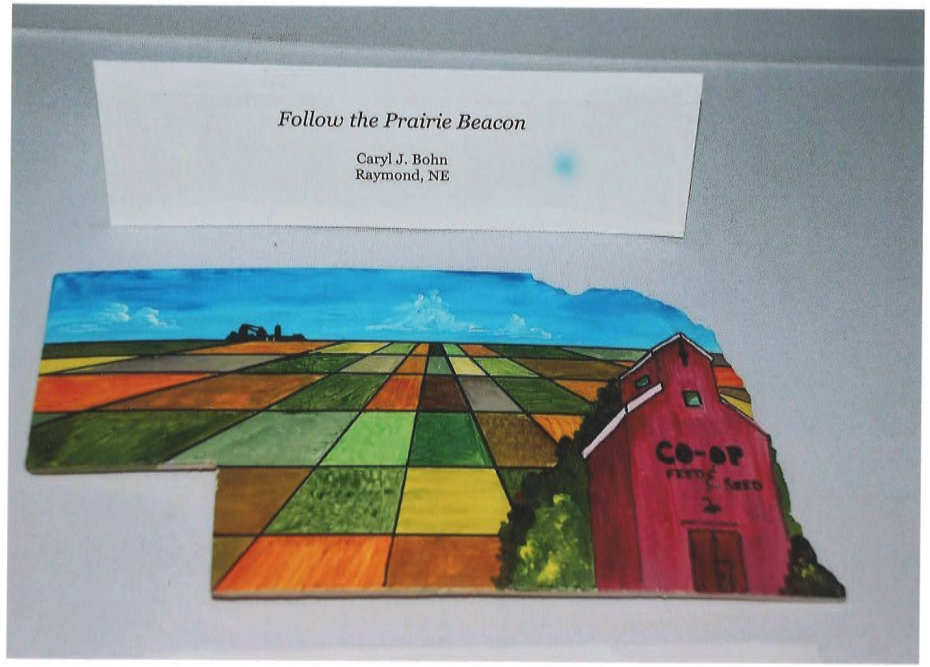
It's no secret that Nebraska is a flyover state. Many that have never been here simply think of the state as adding 40 minutes to their flight time. Those of us who are lucky enough to live here know better.

Looking out the window of an airplane on a clear day is mesmerizing. The patterns created by the great grid system of land sections, irrigation pivots, rivers and cities are amazing. Add in the endless color palette of crops and terrain and it is downright delicious to anyone with any artistic sensibility.

Quilting began as a utilitarian necessity and evolved into a fine art form and a showcase of needlecraft skills and creativity. It symbolizes the interaction and melding of cultures, languages, religions, beliefs, politics, heritage and personalities to crate a. unified whole.

Follow the Prairie Beacon

Caryl J. Bohn
Raymond, NE



I've spent every military assignment playing, "Where's this road go!" Back in "paper map days," it was a challenge, and only a few times did I get lost enough to have to stop for directions.

You'd think in the 21st century that the game wouldn't be possible anymore, due to GPS, cell phones, etc. But with cell signals vanishing on a whim and a general lack of paper maps anymore, you can still get plenty turned about! Thank goodness for the Nebraska grid road system.

One day while out exploring new sights, diners and tiny villages, I had no cell signal, no civilization in sight and almost no gas! That was the day I learned that grain elevators were beacons in a vast prairie ocean. They meant people, food, help and a co-op gas pump.

Golden Land

Noor Azeez
Lincoln, NE

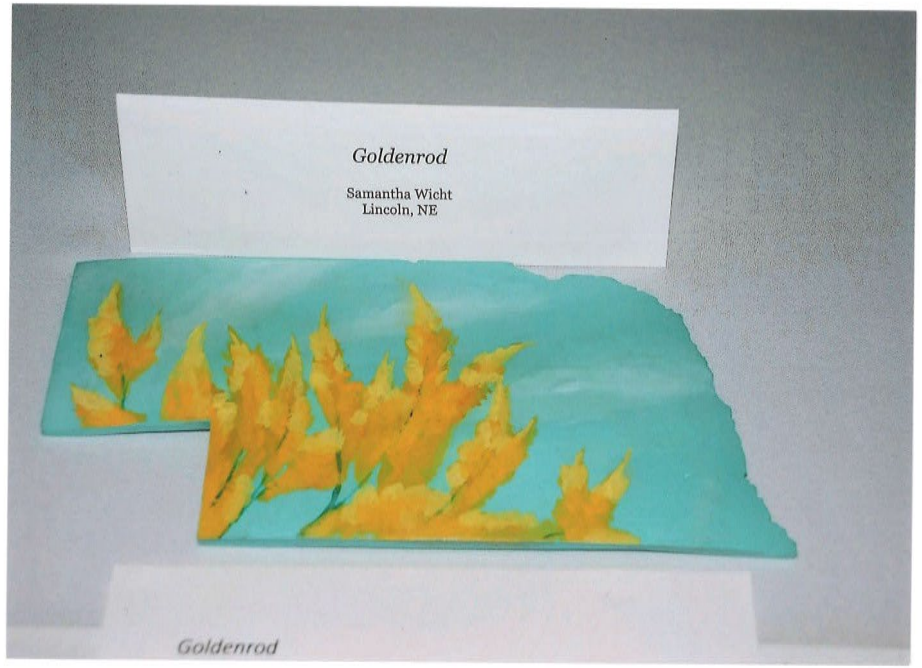


This ornament represents the sunrise in a Nebraska cornfield. In this priceless view, the grandfather is holding his grandson's hand and walking in the morning to show the little boy how beautiful the land is.

I love living on a farm and enjoy watching the corn fields while my husband is driving on the highway. My goal in the future is to plant a crop in our own fields.

Goldenrod

Samantha Wicht
Lincoln, NE



This design focuses on one important Nebraska image, something that was created by nature. My ornament captures the simple beauty of the goldenrod, an important symbol of Nebraska and our state's flower.

Gone Fishin'

Diane Ogden
Lincoln, NE



Since the beginning of time, fishing has provided nourishment and also has evolved into a way to relax and enjoy the great outdoors. Many Nebraskans love to fish. With hundreds of picturesque lakes and river spots about the state, there are unlimited possibilities to catch an extensive variety of fish.

(Additional information: Nebraska is home to over 100 species of fish. With 79,056 miles of river, the state has more miles of river than other. Immigrants started building dams, creating thousands of ponds, lakes and reservoirs. Many of these are regularly stocked with fish in order to enhance the fishing opportunities.)

Good News

Lynn Wilson
Lincoln, NE



I was inspired by the beloved Christmas passage in Luke 2:9,10 - "And the angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them…and they were terribly frightened. But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid, for I bring you good news of great joy…' "

Greetings from Hillside Farm

Rebecca Shacklett
Lincoln, NE



This ornament celebrates my grandmother, Dorothy Baar Schmiedling, whose farm was on the county-line between Lancaster and Seward counties in Nebraska. It was created to honor all the women who worked beside their husbands to make a living and a life. The fabric is Nebraska Goldenrod.

Growing through 4-H

Diane O'Neel
Friend, NE

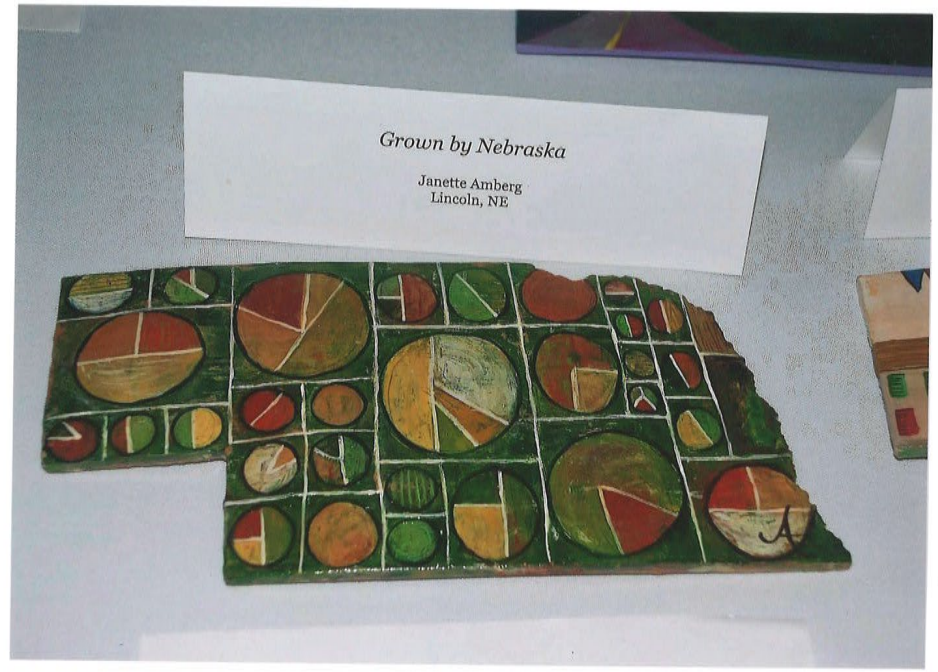


4-H was founded in 1902 and has become the nation's largest youth development organization. The mission of 4-H is simple: help young people and their families gain the skills needed to be proactive forces in their communities and develop ideas for a more innovative economy.

I have seen firsthand the important role 4-H has played in the youth of Nebraska, which in turn has grown our state. I have been involved in 4-H at some level since I was 8 years old and feel very strongly about the ongoing value and significance of the 4-H program.

Grown by Nebraska

Janette Amberg
Lincoln, NE



It seems like every Nebraskan is touched somehow from our state's agricultural heritage. I just love views from the air and have always loved crop circles; the colors are so grand it is so inspiring to me.

Harvest Moon

Brian Arp
Friend, NE



A harvest moon shines over a freshly harvested Nebraska field. The light of the moon reflects harshly off the field warming the earth on a cool night while a startled flock of birds fly off into the darkness.

Heartland Nebraska

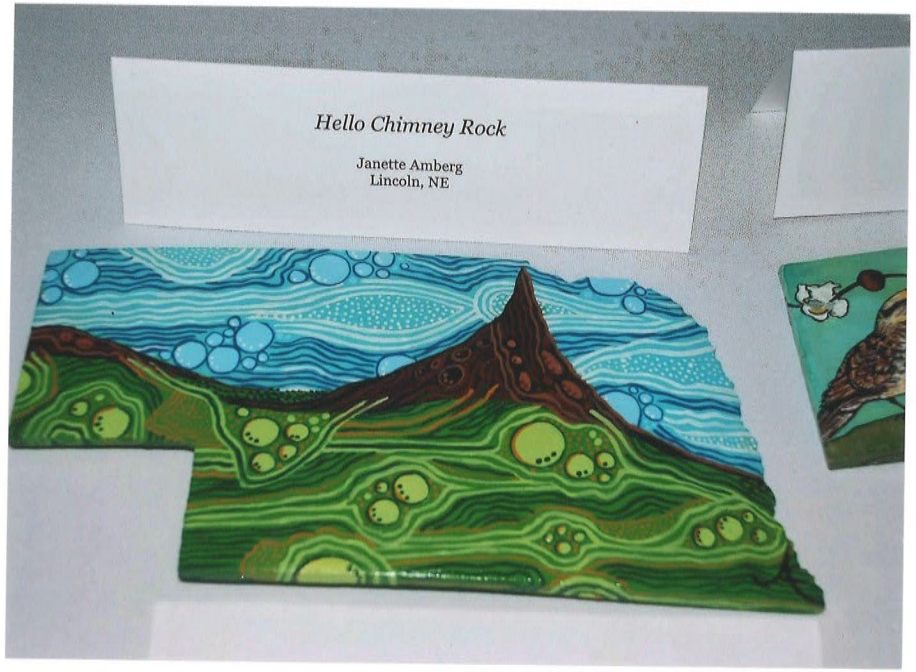
Helen Donlan
Lincoln, NE



This piece is designed utilizing the river topography of the state of Nebraska in its creation. It represents the ongoing importance of protecting Nebraska's natural resources.

Hello Chimney Rock

Janette Amberg
Lincoln, NE



A neighbor took her grandkids on a summer road trip vacation, and when I saw the picture she posted on social media, I was inspired by the beauty. I began to think about all the special moments that have been experienced by so many people, adoring Chimney Rock and the beauty that surrounds it.

Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium

Michelle Hrbek
Lincoln, NE



Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium is worthy of honoring. It's considered one of the best zoos in the nation, recently ranked number two by USA Today.

For me, however, it is much more. I worked my summers at the zoo as a teenager. I would either arrive before the crowds or stay after the gates had closed, preparing a concession stand or snow-cone cart for the next big day. I have great memories of wandering through parts of the complex and occasionally getting a sneak peek behind the scenes.

The images of animals seen on this ornament are currently on display at the zoo and were drawn from my observations.

Her Story Lives On

Janette Amberg
Lincoln, NE



Born in 1853 and awarded a Pulitzer Prize in 1923, Willa Cather is someone we can all look up to and hope to achieve such amazing things as she did. I chose to incorporate her novels in the background in combination with one of her book covers and a portrait.

Homestead National Monument

Sarah Wanek
Lincoln, NE



My design was inspired by my summer stay in Beatrice at the Homestead National Monument, where I was an Artist-in-Residence for two weeks. During my residence I was inspired by the beauty of the plains, the vastness of the sky, and the history of the homesteaders and their journey to find the American dream.

This piece depicts the Heritage Center in Beatrice, overlooking America's first homestead claimed through the Homestead Act. This place signifies a very important piece of Nebraska's history, and, through education and preservation, gives us a glimpse into the lives of the homesteaders who came before us.

Honey Bee

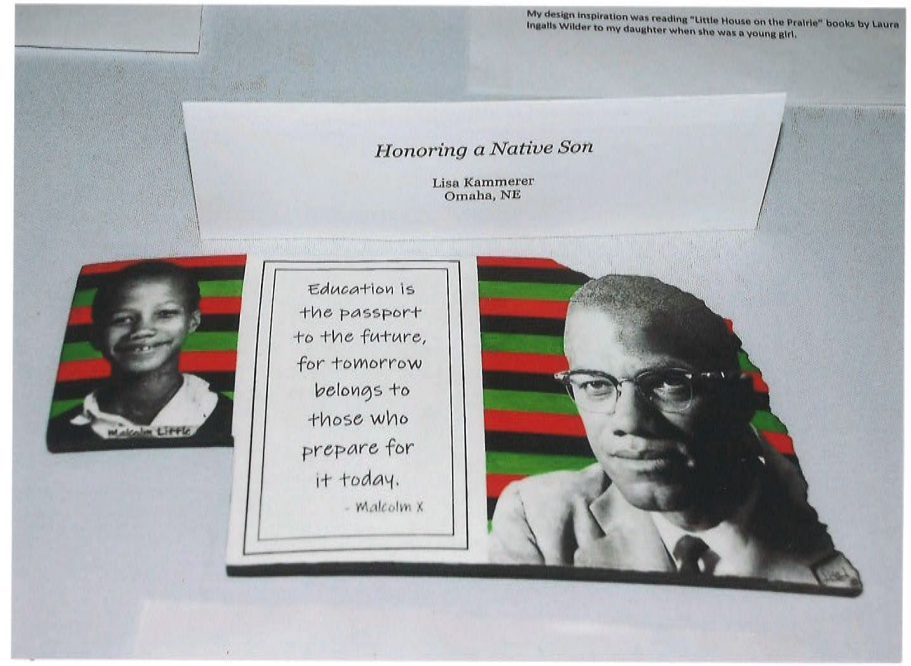
Carson Gose
Lincoln, NE



The Honeybee was designated as Nebraska's state insect in 1975. I think a lot of people are scared of bees because of their sting, but it's important to remind people of the beauty and good that these creatures can bring. As a state run by agriculture, these bees have a critical role.

Honoring Malcom X

Lisa Kammerer
Omaha, NE



As a teacher of young people of color who do not see themselves represented enough in the history of our state, the story of Malcom X and his connection to Nebraska are important. Facing the ugly reason his family moved away after his birth and celebrating the legacy of his civil rights leadership would help our children understand the racial divide in our cities and country.

This ornament presents the colors of the Black Liberation Flag because Malcom X was an advocate of Black Nationalism. The quote is chosen to inspire the children of Nebraska to make the most of their education, just as he did. The power and love of learning instilled in Malcom by his father and mother as he was growing up helped him to ultimately overcome the devastating loss of both his parents when he was just a boy. His natural intellect, passion for learning, and hard work propelled him to success as an influential minister and powerful proponent of civil rights.

Our State Fair - 150th

Caryl J. Bohn
Raymond, NE



Since its inception in 1868, the Nebraska State Fair rotated between Omaha, Nebraska City, Brownville and Lincoln, until it settled into its current home in Grand Island.

The motto of the fair, "Agriculture, Education, Families, Fun and Pride in Nebraska," can be found on the blue ribbon, a lofty goal of anyone who exhibits at the fair. The shiny copper windmill showcases the agricultural heritage of the fair, as well as the constant breeze the state is blessed with.

Also represented are crops, livestock, produce and home-skills, all of which are highlights of the community-based skills and talents of the residents of the state. The iconic hot air balloon was made famous in the Wizard of Oz. While the dear professor may have been blown to the Emerald City, he started his journey at the State Fair in Omaha.

Outstanding in their Field

Amy Tomasevicz
Columbus, NE



The many livestock visible in the fields of Nebraska are evidence of the important rule of the cattle industry in our state's present economy. It is difficult to drive anywhere in Nebraska for any length of time without seeing cattle in pastures. Their presence dates back to the early days of settlement of our state, and they played a major part in bringing settlers here to ranch and farm.

Peace and Hope

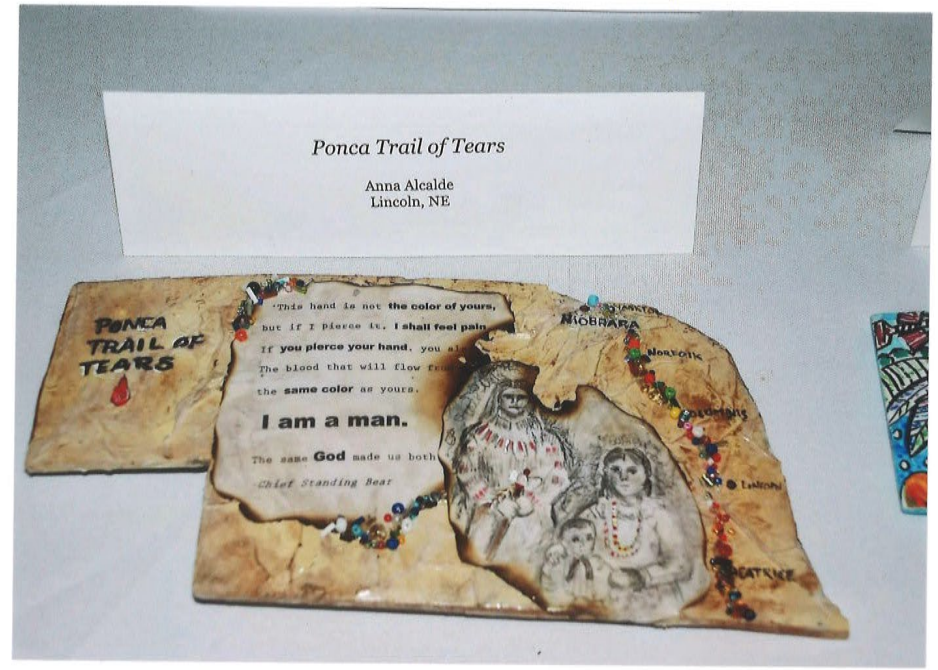
Elizabeth Wells
Elkhorn, NE



Nebraskans are a faith-filled, and I believe, tolerant people. While our beliefs are diverse, Christian churches were some of the first to be built in our cities and rise across the plains. Traditionally inspired, this piece draws on the idea of the peace we seek and the renewed hope each Christmas season that we will find that peace.

Ponca Trail of Tears

Anna Alcalde
Lincoln, NE



The Ponca Indian Tribe had been relocated from their beloved Niobrara River Valley to the harsh plains of Oklahoma. Chief Standing Bear and a small band of Poncas had set off on a six-hundred mile walk back to Nebraska to return the body of his only son to their traditional burial ground. After much resistance, he found unlikely allies in Nebraska.

Ponca Chief Standing Bear challenged decades of Indian policy in 1879, when he stood in a federal courthouse in Omaha, Nebraska, and demanded to be recognized as a person by the US government. Chief Standing Bear's memorable courthouse statement, "I am a man," is applicable to current times and still resonates in my soul today.

The Ponca and many Native American Indians endured numerous obstacles and hatred to return to a land that was once their own. This is part of the Nebraska heritage we must never forget, lest we repeat our ignorant prejudice against any other nationality that isn't representative of the majority.

Prairie Candelabra

Linda Lacy
Ashby, NE



Prairie Christmas

Patrick Gauthier
Lincoln, NE



The wide open plains are harsh with plenty of snow and high speed winds on a cold winter day. The Christmas tree by the fireplace and its decorations of strung popcorn, cranberries, paper rings or tinsel will make the hearth appear happy and abundant. Maybe hot chocolate and cookies add joy to preparations for the special Christmas day when Jesus Christ our Savior was born. Also stay fast asleep because in the morning there may be a peppermint stick in your stocking and a present under the tree.

Prairie Sod House

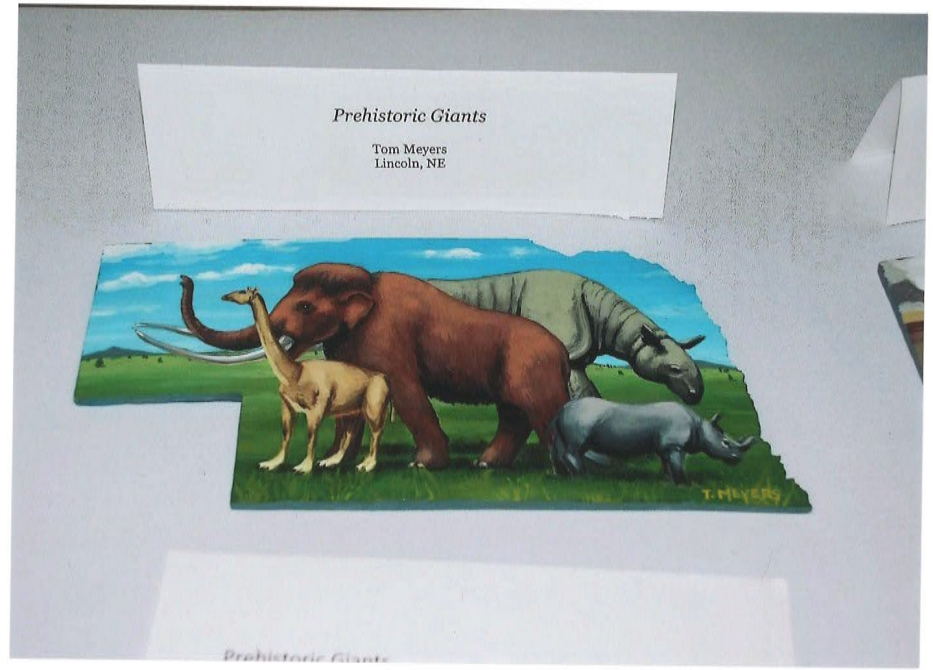
Ann Weideman-Lehman
Lincoln, NE



My design inspiration was reading Little House on the Prairie books by Laura Ingalls Wilder to my daughter when she was a young girl.

Prehistoric Giants

Tom Meyers
Lincoln, NE



Famous mammals from our fossil record, including the largest ever land animal, the baluchitherium.

Red Horse over Omaha

Robert Klein Engler
Omaha, NE



My design incorporates Plaines Indian designs. As a result, I hope to unite the present with the past.

Riverboat

Greg Holdren
Friend, NE



Nebraska is known for its rivers, instrumental in its history and even governing its shape. The riverboats must have been an amazing sight as they supplied the trappers, settlers and miners steaming up the Missouri.

Sacred Medicine Shield

Dee Paxton
Lincoln, NE



This piece brings together my native heritage, faith in God and love for my home state of Nebraska. The ornament features the Sacred Winds' Medicine Wheel Shield. The Sacred Winds UMC Church is made up of people from all tribes of this region, especially Nebraska, that comprise the body of Christ, the Oyate of Sacred Winds.

The four quadrants represent the four directions: the hoop is representative of the Sacred Hoop of the Nations - the Kingdom of Heaven and the colors (red, yellow, black and white) of the diversity of races in the world. Each of the seven eagle feathers holds a spiritual value for the diverse tribes that comprise Sacred Winds' congregation. Overall, the work represents our love for Christ and His message of Love for all peoples.

Mitakuye Oyasin (We are all relatives).

Sandhill Cranes

Tammy Miller
Milford, NE



The migration of the Sandhill Cranes flying across our beautiful state in an amazing event!

I wanted to capture the regal look of these birds. They congregate in massive numbers to rest and refuel, drawing the attention of naturalists, ornithologist and wonderstruck spectators. They are amusingly social birds and have a wide range of vocalizations which they use to communicate with each other. The early spring gathering of sandhills on the Platte River is a great wildlife spectacle. These large graceful cranes depend on key stopover sites, making them vulnerable to loss of habitat in the future. This migration event makes Nebraska a very special place.

Santa Sower

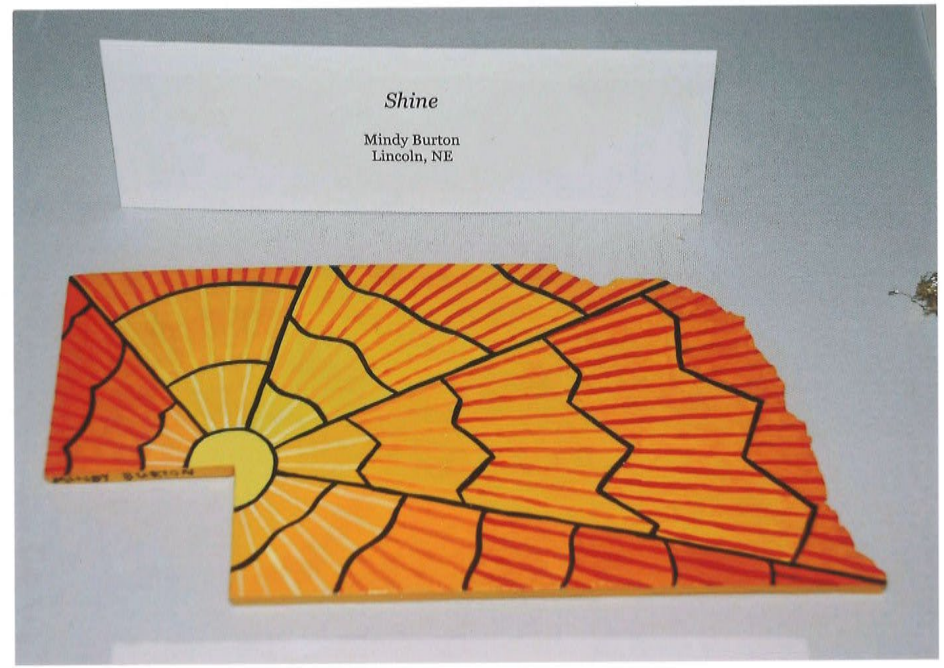
Tom Kerr
Omaha, NE



The Sower is one of the more powerful images of our state! What happens if Lee Lawrie's statue atop the Nebraska State Capitol Building takes on a more holiday-themed appearance? We gat a Santa Sower complete with candy cane.

Shine

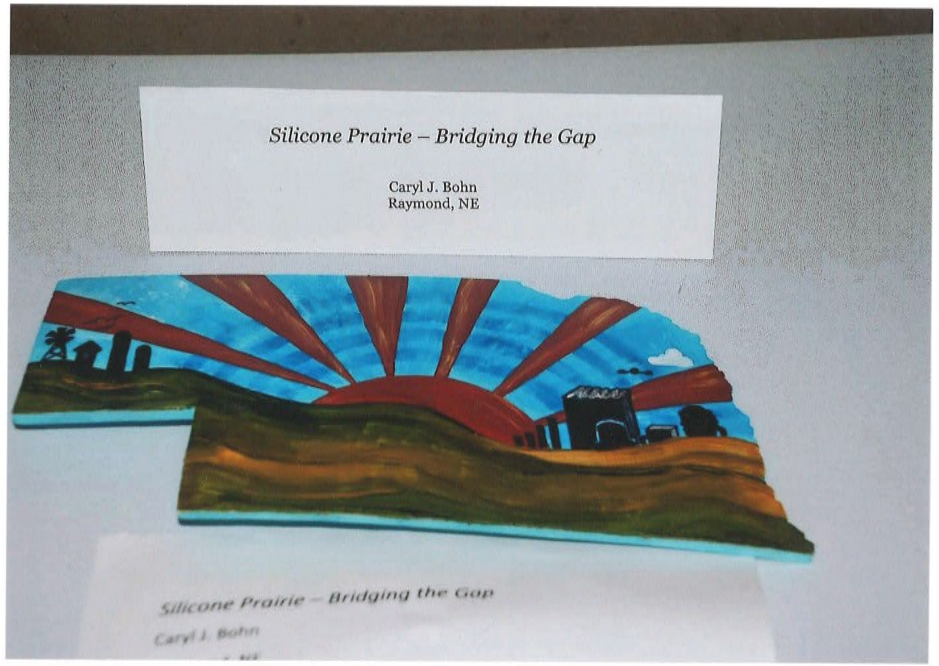
Mindy Burton
Lincoln, NE



This ornament represents the Nebraska way of life. People in this state shine with glowing personalities, bright and positive outlooks, and radiating achievements. I cannot imagine life anywhere else without the abundant luster visible in our Nebraska sky.

Silicone Prairie - Bridging the Gap

Caryl J. Bohn
Raymond, NE



Home to an up-and-coming technological revolution and industry business, Nebraska is quickly becoming a sought-after destination for technology-based businesses as well as research and innovation for the country and the world.

Seen as a mainly agricultural flyover state, the progression into the future cannot be denied. In fact, the integration of technology into the agricultural field is also expanding as younger tech-savvy farmers take over and older generation farmers are looking for ways to more efficiently run farms and ranches with less hands.

Silver Christmas

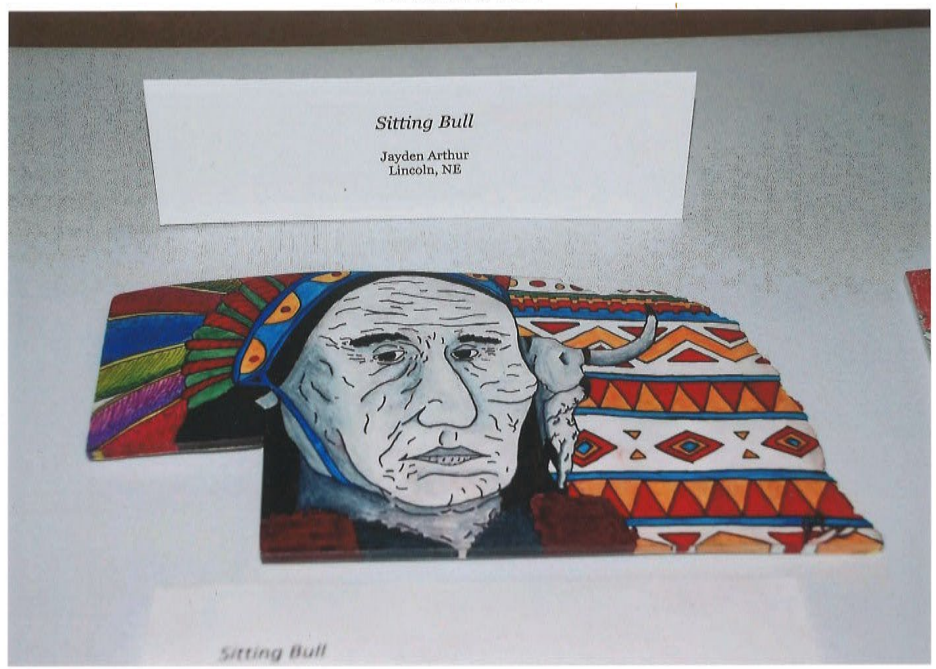
Danny Jenkins
Lincoln, NE



When I think of Christmas, my mental image always includes snow - great heaping mounds of it or just a fresh light dusting. I wanted to give a new take on a white Christmas with aluminum snowflakes that would really stand out from a white background.

Sitting Bull

Jayden Arthur
Lincoln, NE



I drew Sitting bull and a bull skull, on top of a Native American design pattern. I chose these items to represent early life in Nebraska, to showcase Native American culture, to help inform people that Europeans weren't here first.

Sitting Bull did have a connection to Nebraska. Later in life, he developed a relationship to Buffalo Bill Cody and traveled with him as part of Buffalo Bill's Wild West shows.

(Additional information: Sitting Bull was a Lakota chief and holy man. His courage as a leader and warrior was legendary. He battled against American expansion into the Great Plains and fought to protect his people's land. His refusal to take his people to the Sioux reservation led to the Battle of Little Bighorn, during which the Sioux and Cheyenne proved victorious over Custer's Seventh Calvary. After, he and his people fled to Canada.

With his people on the brink of starvation, Sitting Bull returned and surrendered to US forces. He later traveled with Buffalo Bill Cody's Nebraska-based show. In 1890, he was killed by US and Indian agents at Standing Rock reservation in present-day South Dakota.)

Sod House, Chardron NE

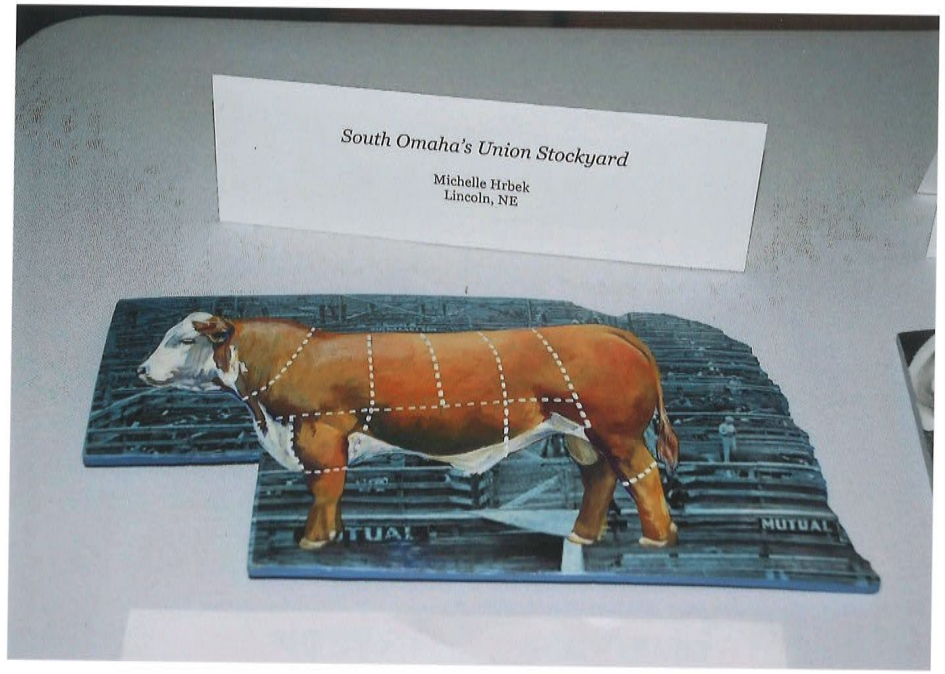
Julia Kappenman
Lincoln, NE



Sod houses are just one of the ways that the prairie was tamed - innovation at its best. No trees to build houses? Build them out of the dirt - and it worked.

South Omaha's Union Stockyards

Michelle Hrbek
Lincoln, NE

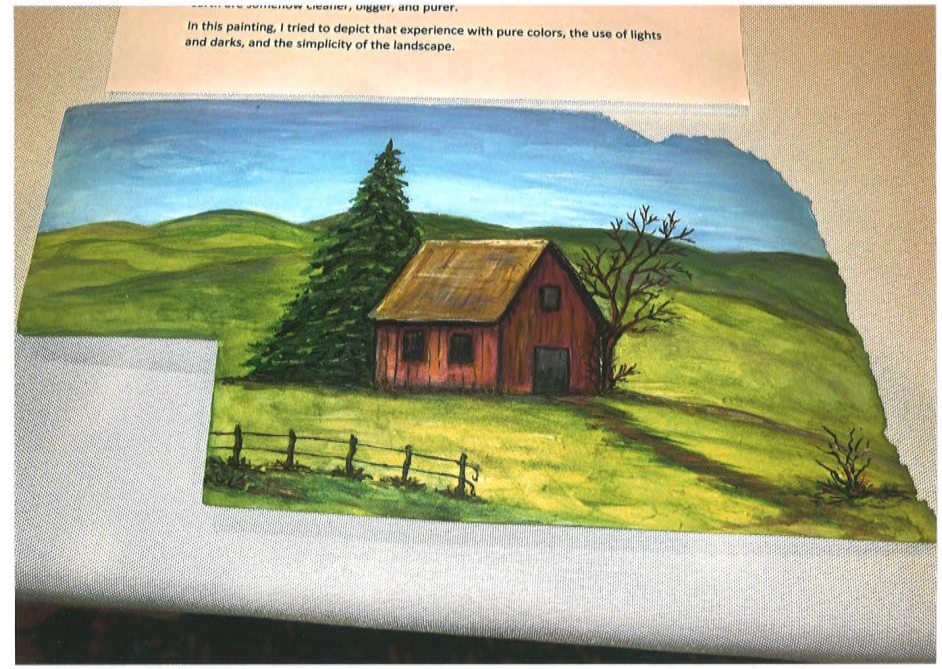


This piece pays tribute to the formation of the Omaha stockyards and the impact it had on the community. Established in the 1880s, immigrants from Europe came to Omaha to work hard jobs and search of a better life. Immigrants from Italy, Germany, Ireland, Poland, Czechoslovakia and elsewhere originally came to South Omaha and built ethnic neighborhoods. My great-grandparents were among those immigrants, and my grandparents met at a stockyard-sponsored dance.

It eventually became the largest livestock center in the world and held that title until the 1960s. Omaha's beef industry continues today, albeit with smaller independent meat packers. Immigrants continue to work many of those jobs; now, however, they come from Mexico, Sudan, Somalia, Asia and Laos.

Springtime in the Sandhills

Teresa Wilson
Lincoln, NE

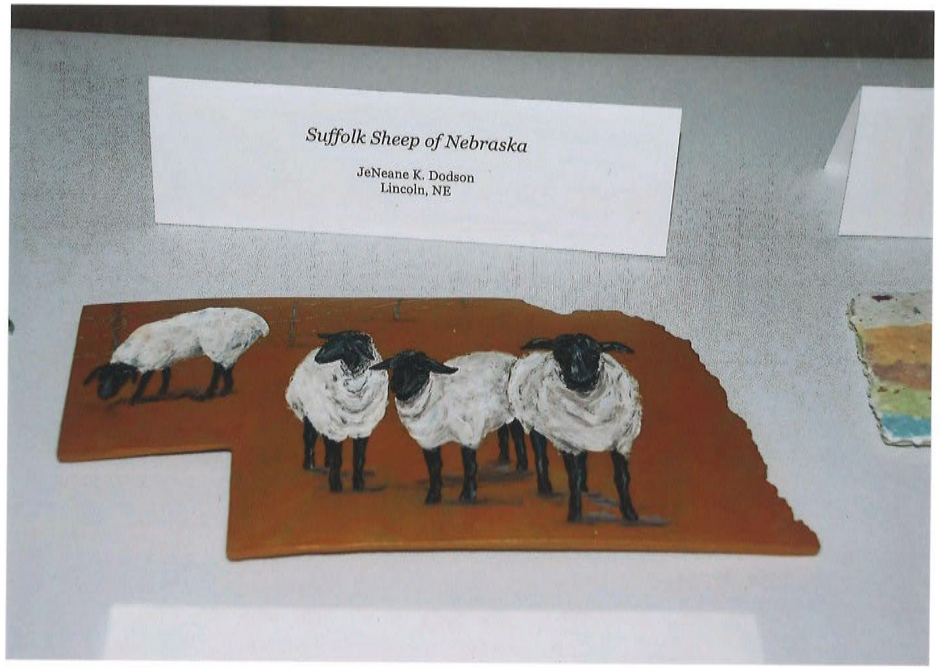


Some of the greatest memories in my life have come from the years that I spent in the Sandhills of Nebraska. Nature is all around you, and the air, water, sky and earth are somehow cleaner, bigger and purer.

In this painting, I tried to depict that experience with pure colors, the use of light and dark, and the simplicity of the landscape.

Suffolk Sheet of Nebraska

JeNeane K. Dodson
Lincoln, NE



My favorite subject to paint … sheep.

Summer Time in Nebraska

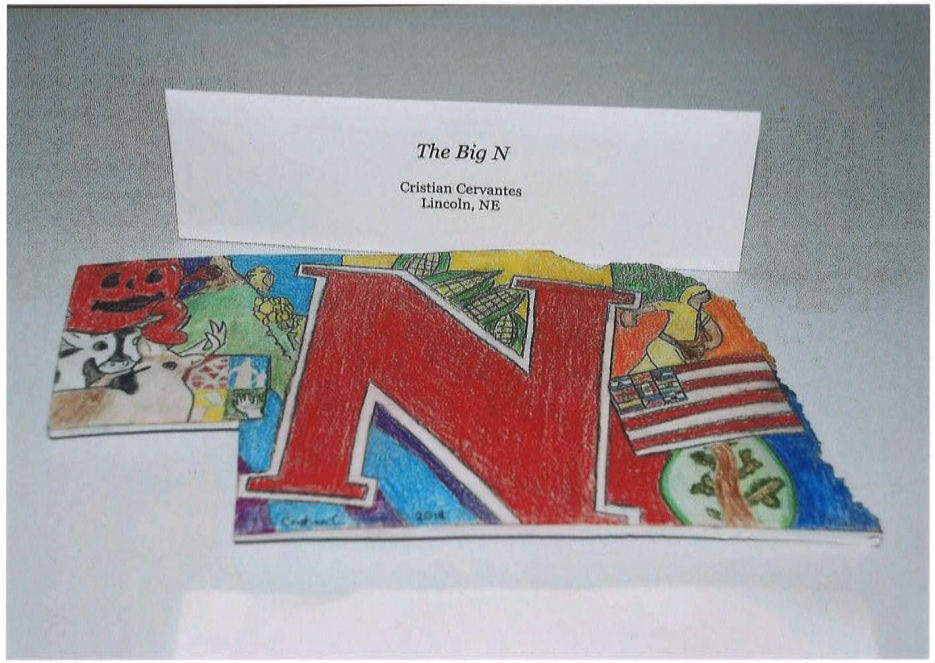
Valery Wachter
Lincoln, NE



One of Nebraska's wild flowers is the Black-eye Susan. It is in its full glory in August, a beautiful golden hue that mirrors the summer sun and foretells the colors of fall. Monarchs stop and add their shades of gold as they make Nebraska a place to stop on their fall migration journey.

The Big N

Cristain Cervantes
Lincoln, NE



I decided to go with a collage showing what people think of when they think of Nebraska. It was drawn to look like a notebook that a student would have, in particular, one with a colorful and playful design on the front cover. Some of the notable items that can be seen are the Kool-Aid Man, the US flag with other flags within, a goldrenod flower, Chimney Rock, the Henry Doorly Zoo & Aquarium log and the Golden Sower.

The Christmas of the Phonograph Records

Kristi Koser
Lincoln, NE

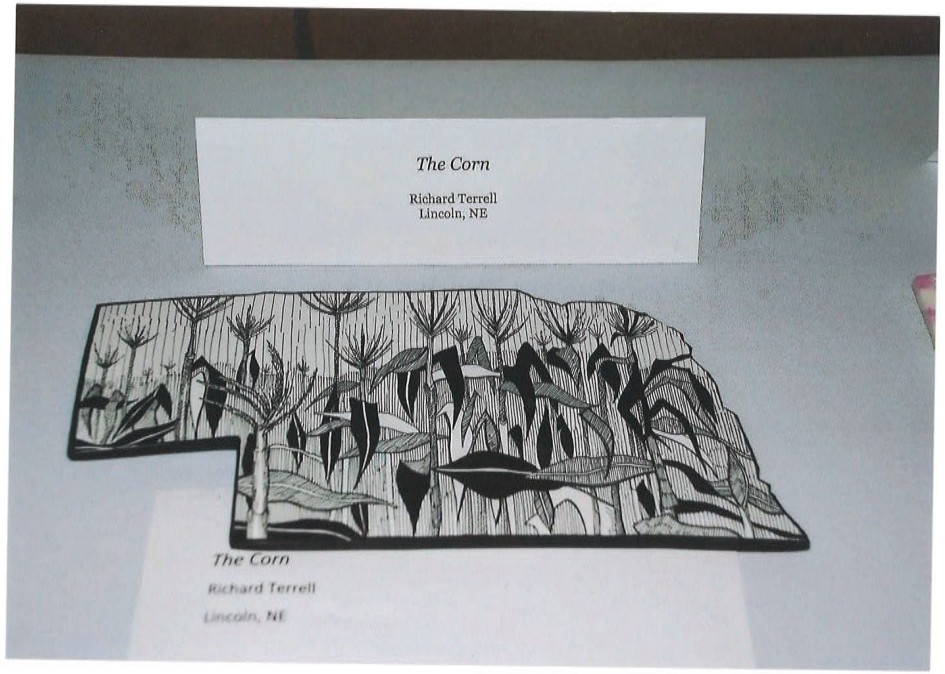


This design is to honor Mari Sandoz and her short story, “The Christmas of the Phonograph Records: A Recollection,” that was first published in 1966. Her father “Old Jules” states that music was for everyone. The newly purchased phonograph helped friends and family get into the holiday spirit with dancing and feasting to the music of over a hundred records,

Sandoz has left a legacy to all Nebraskans through her more than twenty books written extensively about pioneer life and the Plains Indians.

The Corn

Richard Terrell
Lincoln, NE

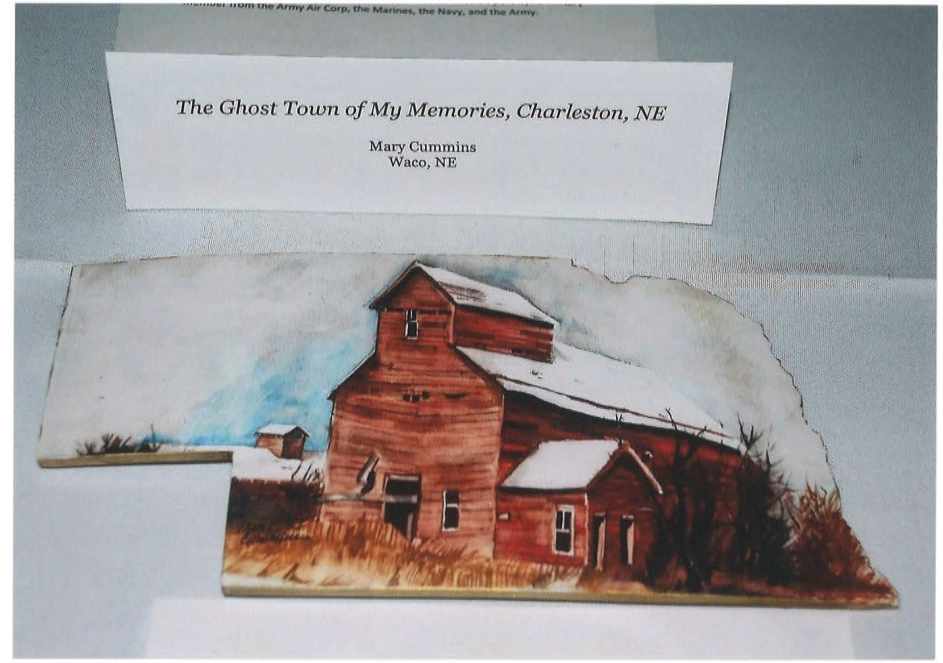


I live in a state where corn is BIG! So I decided to draw symbols of corn and fill the entire state shape with the design.

I photographed a small stand of corn planted in the garden area of Eastmont Towers, where my wife and I live. The corn was planted by a neighboring resident named Marvin. I don't know if the image does justice to Marvin's corn in any realistic sense, but I hope it conveys and effectively symbolizes the statewide presence of this important crop.

The Ghost Town of My Memories, Charleston NE

Mary Cummins
Waco, NE



Charleston was founded in 1887 in York County and was the ghost town of my memories. My great-grandfather owned this grain elevator that was run with ropes. I took photos for this painting, walking through the snow to get to this elevator, the giant corn crib, the Chicago & Northwestern depot and the area my mother's family called home for generations. The next day a bulldozer dug a hole and began pushing this prairie pioneer history and my family saga into the ground.

The Haymarket at Night

Brian Arp
Friend, NE



A night scene of the historic Haymarket warmed by the glow of the city lights in the darkness of a cold night. A couple in love wander through the night to their destination.

The Home of Arbor Day

Carson Gose
Lincoln, NE



Trees are so important to our existence, and I think Nebraska should be proud to have founded Arbor Day. Traveling through Nebraska, there's nothing more beautiful than the blue skies and green fields where so many trees are standing. We have such an important role to play in the midst of climate change, and I think Nebraska does a great job nurturing this beautiful resource.

The Hunt

Gisele Oseka
Lincoln, NE



My inspiration fro this piece was from my dad, who learned to hunt and fish with my grandfather in the Sandhills area, sometimes finding arrowheads and other tools during their trips. The rabbit pelt represents trapping which was used for survival by people living on the plains.

The Land Belongs to the Future

Tammy Miller
Milford, NE



Willa Cather was an American writer who achieve recognition for her novels of frontier life on the Great Plains. When I moved to Nebraska eleven years ago, I decided to read her novel O Pioneers! I was impressed that as a female writer she was firmly established as a major American author, receiving the Pulitzer Prize in 1923.

Drawing from her childhood in Nebraska, Cather brought to national consciousness the beauty and vastness of the Western Plains. I like to imagine what it was like to live along on the Plains. I am also thankful for those pioneers who paved the way for me.

The Old Red Barn

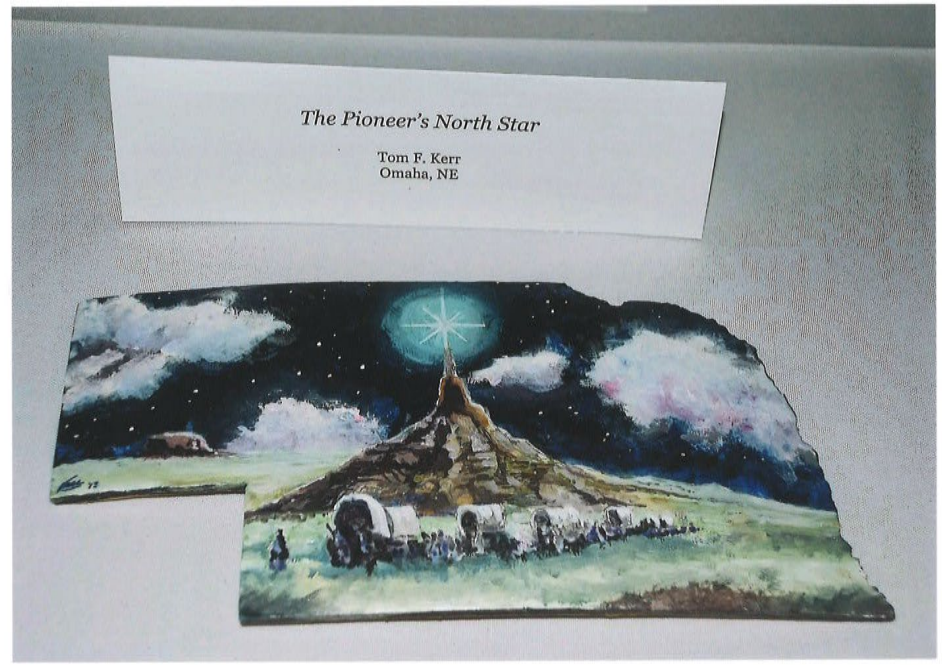
Patrick Gauthier
Lincoln, NE



There are few sights as pretty as an old red barn in the winter with a big green wreath on the front of it. The big red barn, I'm sure, houses cows and horses and plenty of hat and straw to last through the winter. Also driving down a country road and seeing a beautiful pheasant take flight from the covering in the ditch is a sight to behold. I'm sure it will scour the field for any remnants of the Fall harvest in the corn fields. Be alert because where there is one, there must be others. We can only hope so.

The Pioneer's North Star

Tom Kerr
Omaha, NE



Chimney Rock was one of the landmarks the pioneers used to chart their progress across the state as they headed west towards the Rockies. It must have been reassuring to see its silhouette as wagon trains headed west along the Oregon Trail.

This piece of art portrays Chimney Rock as a guiding star - a beacon of light for hopeful travelers.

The Platte River

Chris Dibbern
Lincoln, NE



Crossing the Platte River:
A Ship in harbor is safe, but that is not what ships are built for.
- John Sheen

I have been a wanderer among distant fields. I have sailed down mighty rivers.
- Percy B. Shelly

The Pony Express

Julia Kappenman
Lincoln, NE



The West was won in many ways. One of those ways was the communication that the Pony Express brought to a new and barren land.

The Rodeo

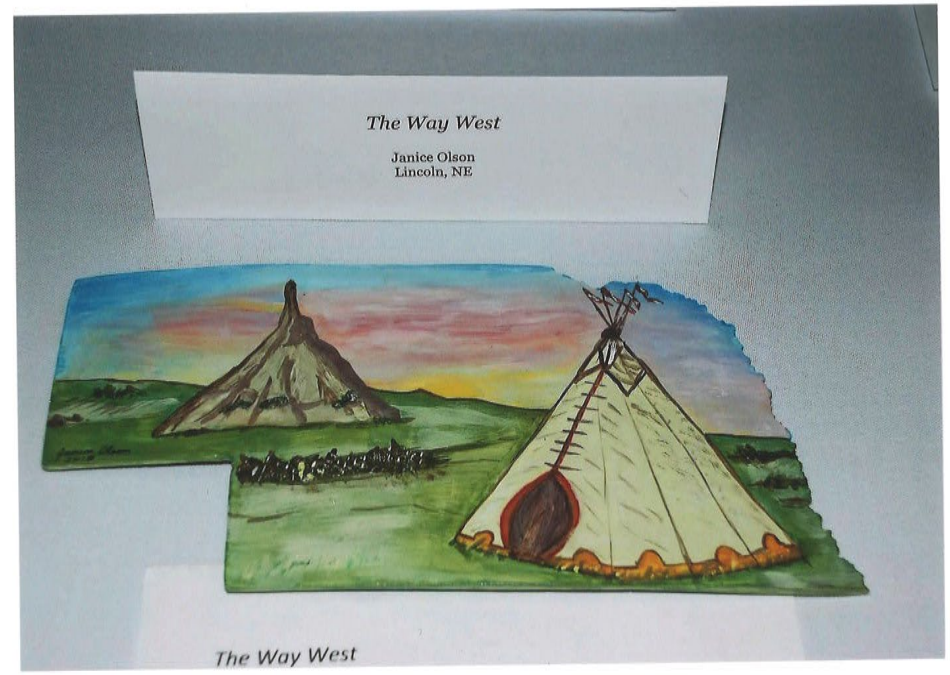
Gisele Oseka
Lincoln, NE



My country cousins from Hemingford, NE, competed in rodeo events, bringing home plenty of blue ribbons.

The Way West

Janice Olson
Lincoln, NE



I try to imagine the arduous journey my great-grandparents took from Sweden to Nebraska as pioneers.

I took a photo of Chimney Rock with a tepee in the foreground as I felt they embodied the history of Nebraska. The tepee represents Native Americans, the first Nebraskans who worked the land and hunted to make a life for themselves. Chimney Rock, tall, sturdy and strong, is an important landmark to both the Indians and pioneers.

Time Worn

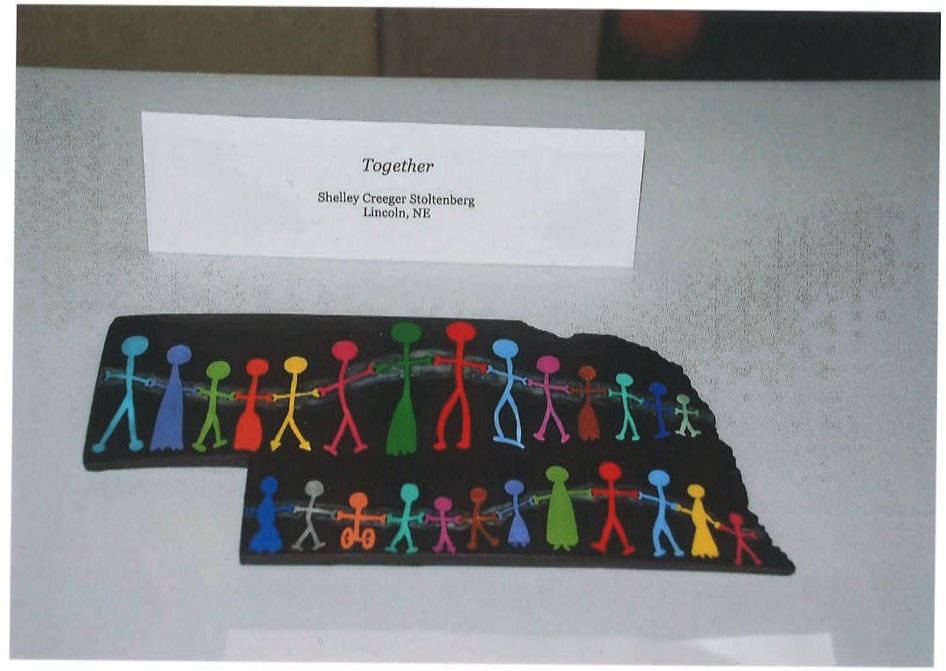
Lynn Bowder
Lincoln, NE



As a recently retired art teacher, the feeling I had at the end of my career reflects something of a personal metaphor. The image on the ornament depicts an old school building of the past, still standing strong though weathered over time. It evokes a feeling of dedication and steadfastness with years of experience ingrained in the cracks of its walls. With this ornament, I honor the many wonderful, dedicated teachers and retired teachers we have in the state of Nebraska.

Together

Shelley Stoltenberg
Lincoln, NE



Nebraska has been welcoming immigrants since the 1800s and continues to do so today. It is the diversity of our citizens that makes Nebraska wonderful. The ingenuity, cultural traditions, foods, arts, science and customs from across the globe blend here in the middle of the nation to create a state that is innovative yet stable. When the people of Nebraska work together, we all become stronger. The health and vibrancy of Nebraska communities is a direct reflection of honoring diversity.

Two Sides of Nebraska

Layne Haba
Hastings, NE



When thinking about Nebraska, I wanted to depict its two sides - the agricultural side and the growing modern side. I chose to use the notorious "Nebraska N" between the two to signify unity between all of the different sides of Nebraska.

U.S. Air Force

Makayla Winningham,
Lincoln, NE



This piece is designed to show our appreciation of the military, the Air Force in particular. I chose to represent the Air Force because I wanted to highlight Offutt Air Force Base in Omaha. I also have a lot of family in various branches of the military and I am in the AFJROTC program at Lincoln Northeast High School.

Water Towers

Tom Meyers
Lincoln, NE



A tribute to our small towns as well as to our fresh water aquifer.

Welcome Home

Gillian Jenkins
Lincoln, NE



I was inspired by the very familiar roadway signs at the edges of our state, welcoming those who are passing through and those who are passing through and those who call Nebraska home.

Where the Buffalo Roamed

Michelle Hrbek
Lincoln, NE



The Nebraska State Historical Society estimates that in the nineteenth century buffalo counts in the Great Plains ranged from 60 to 125 million. This design honors the herds that roamed freely and the one county paying tribute to their existence.

White-tail Deer at Platte River in Winter

Darlene Jansen
Lincoln, NE



I feel privileged to have grown up on a farm in Nebraska experiencing "The Good Life" - clean air, beautiful nature, and the change of the seasons - my inspiration for this art work.

Winters could be a challenge, but mostly mild compared to the harsh winters we had experienced in South Dakota the few years we lived there. As a child, I lived in Platte County just a few miles from the Platte River, our state river. Quite frequently we would see our official state mammal, the White-tailed Deer. In the wintertime I remember the beautiful snow coming down softly, covering the autumn grasses, bare trees and accenting the evergreens that I still enjoy seeing today.

Windmills of Nebraska

Ann Betka
Friend, NE



A time when the old windmills were depended upon by Nebraska farmers for water inspired me to piece and quilt this ornament.

Winter Morning

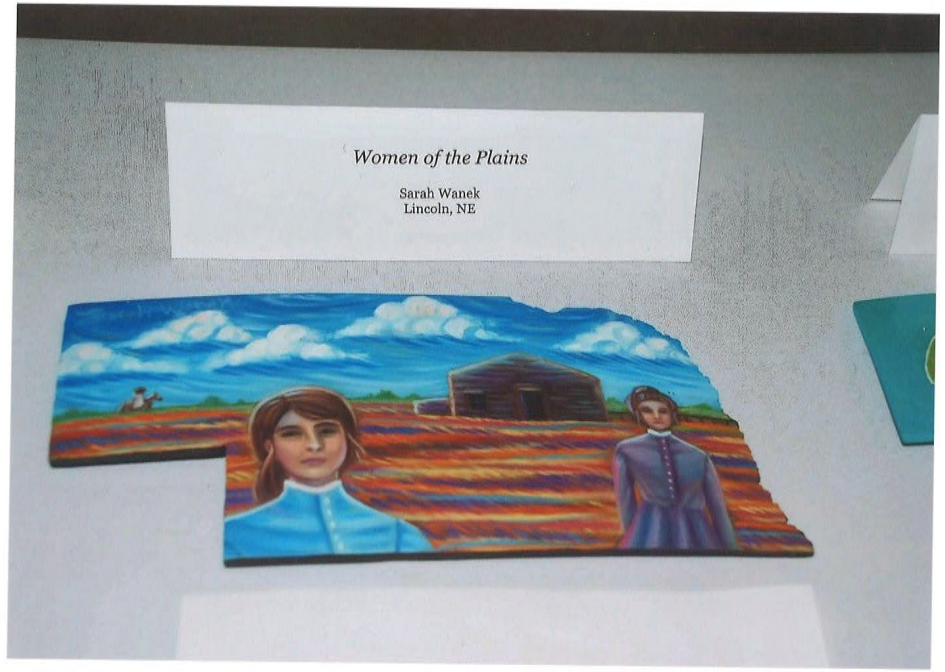
Linda Stephen
Lincoln, NE



Evergreen trees and rolling hills of Nebraska on an early winter morning.

Women of the Plains

Sarah Wanek
Lincoln, NE



My designed was inspired by my summer stay at the Beatrice at the Homestead National Monument, where I was an Artist-in-Residence for two weeks. During my residency I was inspired by the beauty of the plains, the vastness of the sky, and the history of the homesteaders and their journey to find the American dream.

I have painted women homesteaders out on the plains. The Homestead Act was very ahed of its time, in that it allowed women to own their own land and have every right to it as men did. women couldn't even vote yet.

Wood River Market

Patrick Gauthier
Lincoln, NE



Wood River is a small country community where a person can walk down the street and meet a friend or wave a friendly hello across the street. The town has all of the makings of a wonderful Christmas celebration. The market is open and shoppers are buying food for a glorious meal or buying a gift for a friend from the antique store. The Union Pacific is lit and in service transporting friends and relatives for the holidays. There is room at the inn, where coffee an be had with friends or one can settle in for a good night's rest from a busy day in Wood River.

Wyuka, The State's Cemetery

Michelle Hrbek
Lincoln, NE



This work is directly inspired by the beauty of Wyuka Cemetery and its historical importance to the state. The cemetery and park were established by Nebraska's legislature in 1869 as a "State Cemetery." The scenic, park-like grounds contain winding paths, trees, flowers, as well as being a resting place for many prominent and notorious Nebraskans. This image of an angel is drawn from one of the many beautiful sculpture that can be found on-side. The small painting on the back of the ornament is taken from the chapel's stained glass window.

You're Special

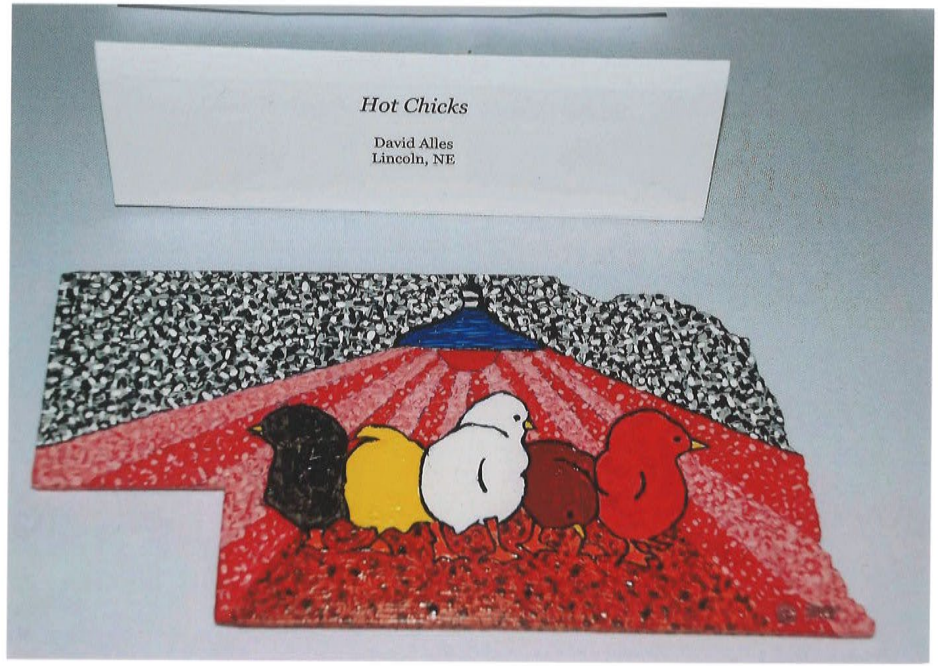
Tala Jenkins
Lincoln, NE



I made this because in Nebraska it does not matter what you look like - you are special.

Hot Chicks

David Alles
Lincoln, NE



Being a native Nebraskan, my inspiration for this project reflects on our family roots in farming: We are Farm Strong, well diversified in agriculture throughout the state. To me, the greatest gift of Nebraska is food and our dedication to produce and deliver some of the best food to the world.

I Remember the One Room Country School

Linda Lacy
Ashby, NE



As a Nebraska Arts Council Artist in Residence, the artist spent 25 years traveling to rural schools, providing art workshops for elementary schools. Often they painted the one room school houses. The students were very proud of their schools.

Linda is a child of an immigrant family from Switzerland who homesteaded in Platte County. She attended one of these schools, as did her father and other family members. This ornament is a replica of an actual painting done by the artist with the district number of her childhood school.

Indian Center Pow Wow

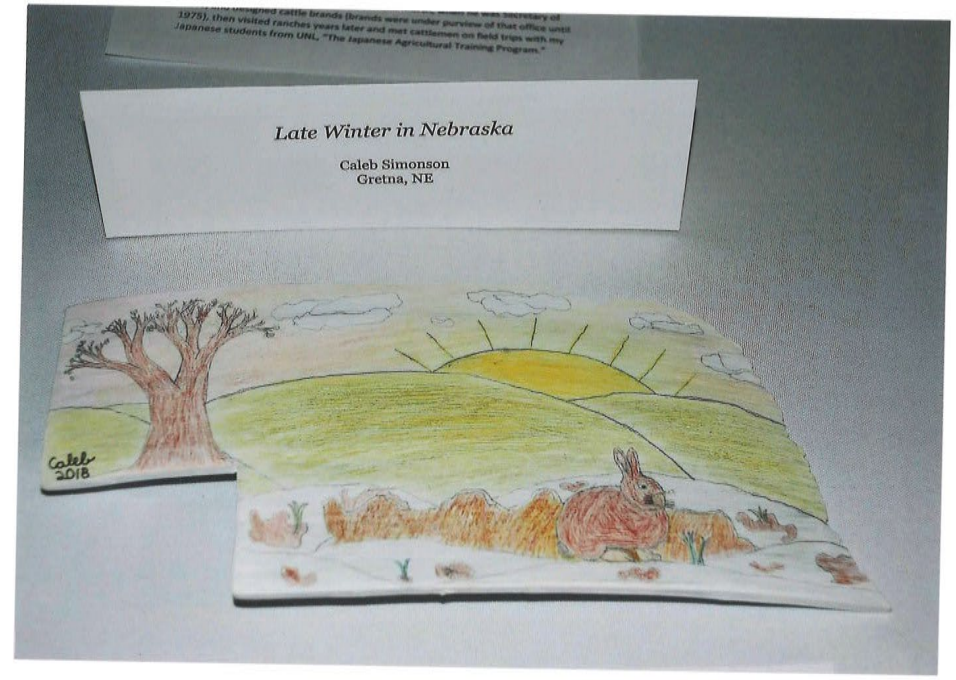
Julia Kappenman
Lincoln, NE



I love different cultures, including those abroad in Europe or in Asia, but especially in North America. There are so many different cultures with so much color and movement and beauty. The Native Americans of this land mesmerize me with their beautiful dance, rhythm and regalia.

Late Winter in Nebraska

Caleb Simonson
Gretna, NE



My inspiration for this ornament was from a book that had photos of Nebraska. I added some other details such as the hills, tree and sunset.

Let There Be Peace on Earth

Delores Ruzicka
Verdigre, NE

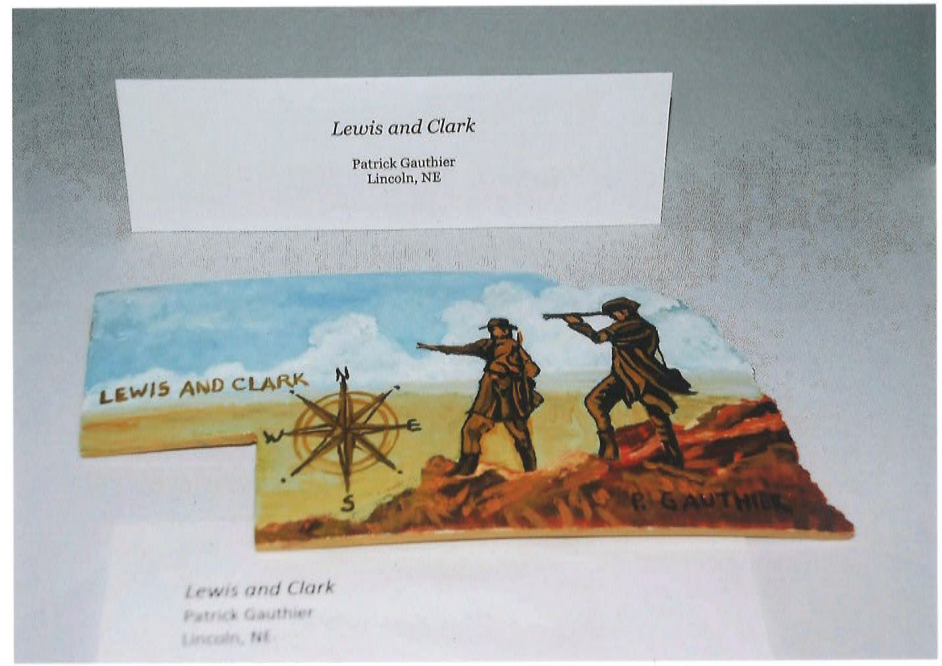


We are proud Nebraska farmers. Our grandsons are now the seventh generation to farm this homesteaded land that has been in our family for 148 years.

There is a peace that comes with watching the windmill. The constant whirling motion of the blades, the whisper of the wind, the pumping of the water, a gentle peace. May mankind enjoy the peace of the Lord and the peace that nature provides

Lewis and Clark

Patrick Gauthier
Lincoln, NE



The Lewis and Clark Expedition began in 1804, when President Thomas Jefferson tasked Meriweather Lewis with exploring lands west of the Mississippi River that comprised the Louisiana Purchase, including parts of Nebraska. Lewis chose William Clark as his co-leader for the mission. The excursion lasted over two years; along the way they confronted harsh weather, unforgiving terrain, treacherous waters, injuries, starvation, disease and both friendly and hostile Native Americans. Nevertheless, the approximately 8,000-mile journey was deemed a huge success and provided new geographic, ecological and social information about previously uncharted areas of North America.

Light Sower

Gillian Jenkins
Lincoln, NE



I've always wondered what the Capitol would look like strung up with Christmas lights. I liked the idea that the seed sower exchanges his seeds for strings of lights during the winter, and maybe one December night he strung them all up while Lincoln was sleeping.

Lone Buffalo

David Dorsey
Valentine, NE



I am very fortunate to live within minutes of the Niobrara National Wildlife Refuge near Valentine. I find myself there often, taking in not only the natural beauty of this place but also observing what I think is one of the most amazing animals we are fortunate to have here in Nebraska: the American bison, or as we commonly call them, buffalo. I have watched them in every season and they never cease to amaze me. What wonderful animals, still surviving after countless generations.

Louisville SRA, NE

Noor Azeez
Lincoln, NE



This painting represents the beautiful view of Louisville SRA, in Nebraska. After seeing a photo taken by Karen Kader, I was inspired to paint the scene, as it represents the beauty of Nebraska. It is a beautiful place to encourage Nebraskans to take care of and visit.

Mari Sandoz and Crazy Horse

Lila Rose Vamosi
Omaha, NE



I was inspired by an old photo of Mari Sandoz and envisioned her sitting in front of a scene of buffalo grazing on the Sandhills to represent the books of her Great Plains series. Beside her is a biography she wrote (that proved she was ahead of her time) called Crazy Horse: The Strange Man of the Oglalas, writing within the Lakota world-view, using Lakota concepts and metaphors, even replicating Lakota patters of speech. Some critics consider this to be her greatest work. Alongside the monumental book is a fountain pen writing on pages of the biography.

Merry Christmas from Friend, Nebraska

Greg Holdren
Friend, NE



This house is our family home, a gathering place at Christmas time. All are welcome as they are all over the community with the usual small town openness. Nebraska at its finest!

Midwestern Sky

Corrine Gernhart
Lincoln, NE



To me there are few colors as vibrant as the rich blues, oranges, reds and yellows seen in the Midwestern sky. As a child, I remember watching a sunrise or sunset on the farm and thinking, "I hope I never forget this one." While those perfect images in my mind always seem to fade, watching the sky come alive with cover never gets old and always leaves me in awe. I'm grateful to live in the Midwest and can't imagine living anywhere else.

Migration

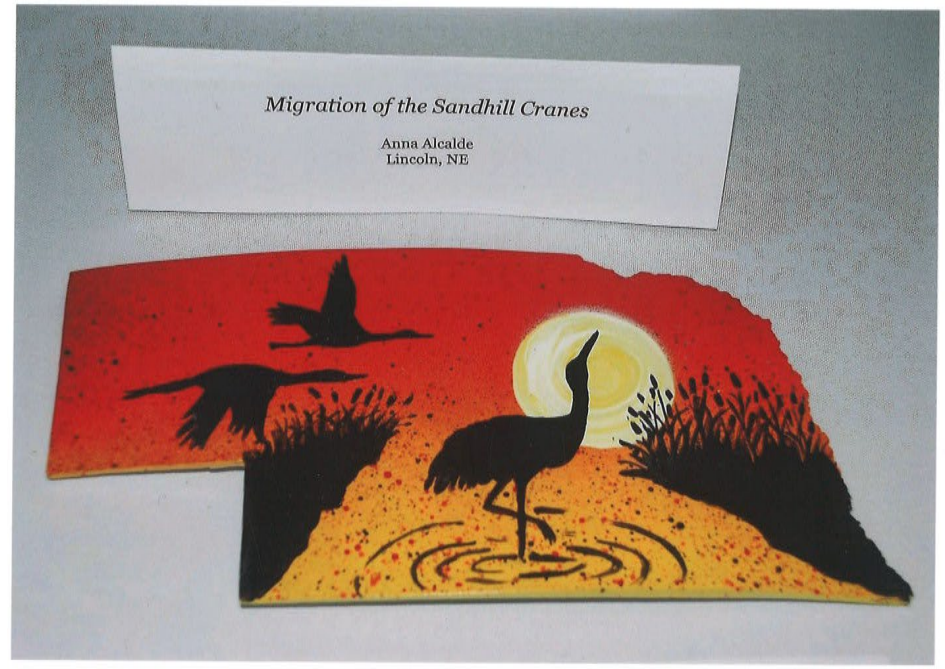
Gisele Oseka
Lincoln, NE



In years past, we often headed west on I-80 to visit family. In the spring, we drove by fields dotted with cranes and snow geese. My bird is neither one, but a combination of the two.

Migration of the Sandhills Cranes

Anna Alcalde
Lincoln, NE



Nebraskans look forward to the return of the migrating Sandhill Cranes. How beautiful is the sunrise with millions of birds settling on the sand bars of Nebraska?

Mitain Inspires Me

Suzanne Yelkin
Walton, NE



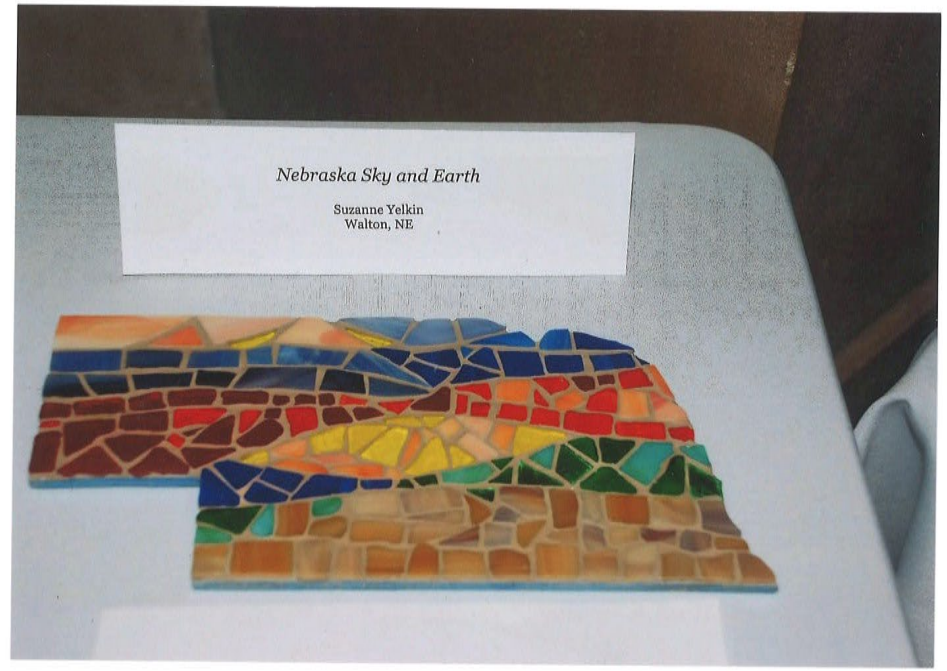
Mitain (Metahne) was the daughter of Onpatonga (Black Elk), chief of the Omaha tribe during Nebraska's territorial days. She married Manuel Lisa, a prominent fur trader, businessman, and US sub-agent for all tribes in the region. Fort Lisa, an early trading post and enclave in the Omaha area, was named after him.

While she and her young son were outside the fort, they were attacked by a band of Sioux warriors. She was badly wounded but fled to the fort and saved her son from harm. Her injuries plagued her for the rest of her life.

Mitain is pictured in the center holding her son. Drops of blood on her dress signify her injuries. I have surrounded her with images of women of various ages and backgrounds. Our women are strong advocates for their own families and the good of society at large. Elements of sky, flowers and rivers complete the piece and tie it to Nebraska's rich natural history.

Mosaic Nebraska, Sky & Earth

Suzanne Yelkin
Walton, NE

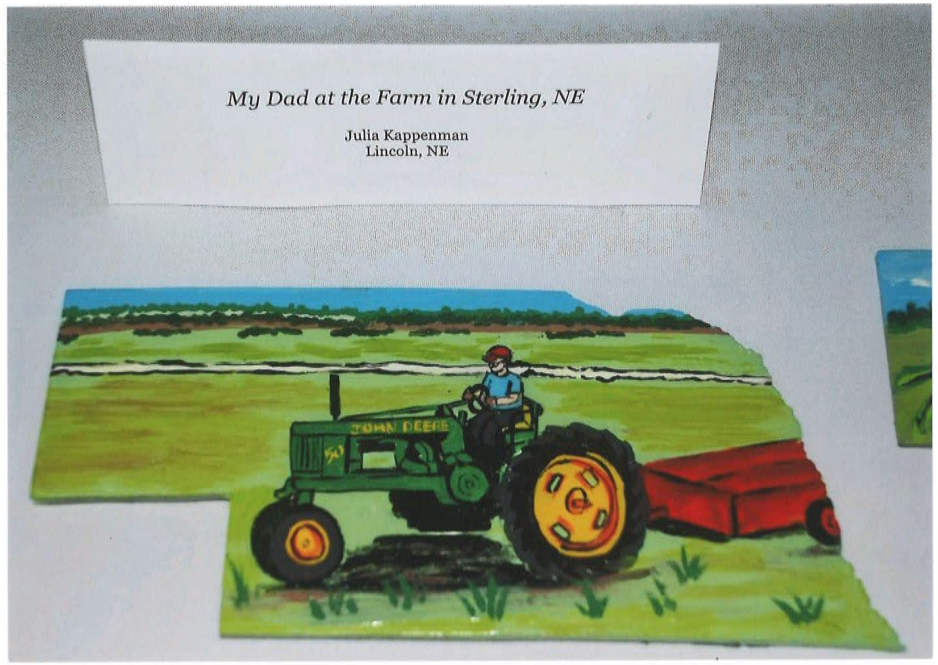


Other states have nothing on Nebraska when it come to beautiful skies. Whether it is a sunrise for the early riser or sunset for most of us, we love to take a moment to enjoy the panorama. A Nebraska sky is reds, purples, blues, greens, oranges, yellows and all hues in between, from pale to intense. In this piece, the undulating movement of the glass tiles shows that the sky is continuously changing, even as we watch.

Variation of color in individual tile pieces pleases the eye and stimulates the mind. Similarly, Nebraskans themselves are not static. We are people who imaging new accomplishments as we look upward. We are innovative. We are also people solidly grounded in the land and green fields. We are practical. With that heritage, we can expect a great future in the state we call home.

My Dad at Our Farm in Sterling, NE

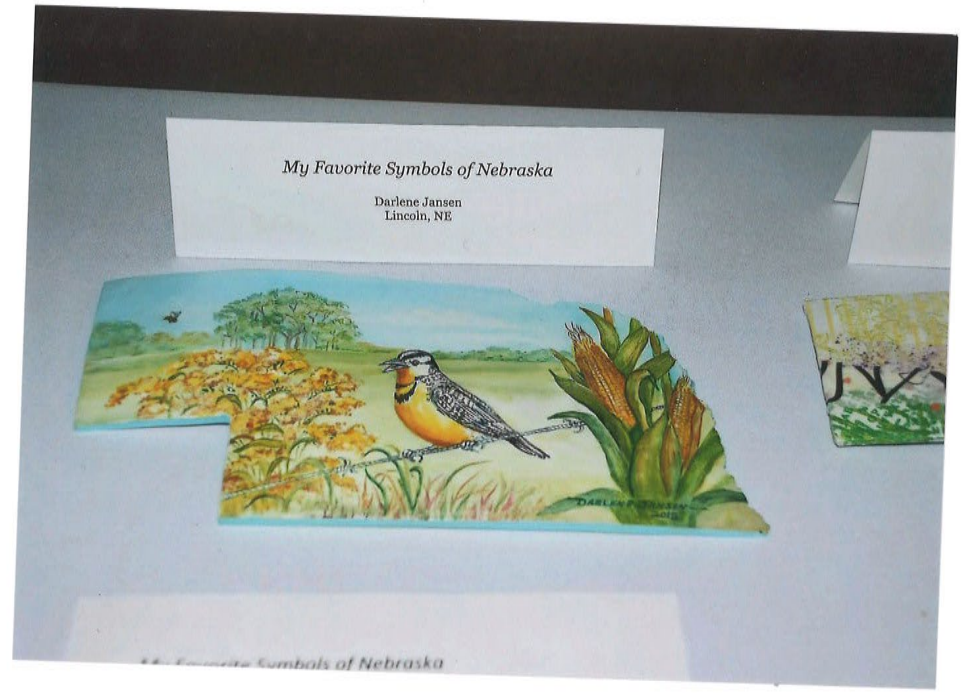
Julia Kappenman
Lincoln, NE



Our farm in Sterling has always been very special to me. It was a place we went to visit our grandparents, learn the ways of nature and were free to explore. This design is based on a photograph of my father working on the farm, so it has great meaning for me.

My Favorite Symbols of Nebraska

Darlene Jansen
Lincoln, NE



My inspiration for this art work are the memories of the Nebraska rural area where I grew up. I remember the beautiful sound of the colorful Western Meadowlark, our state bird, which was quite commonly seen along the countryside. The Goldenrod, our state flower, added a bright accent to the ditches and pastures that also included the Little Bluestem, our state grass. We enjoyed a small treehouse in a tall majestic Cottonwood Tree, our state tree. I remember my father and grandfather in their bee gear gathering honey from our state insect, the honey bee. Last but not least, my parents raised wonderful crops of corn, which is our namesake - The Cornhusker State.

Nature's Festive Elegance

Liz Shea-McCoy
Lincoln, NE



Nebraska is just one of 14 other states which has designated the white-tailed deer as its state mammal. The white-tailed deer is an animal of power with the ability to run up to 40 miles per hour, jump a 9-foot fence and swim 13 miles per hour. This design depicts its incredible beauty and graceful elegance.

Nebraska - A Patchwork of History

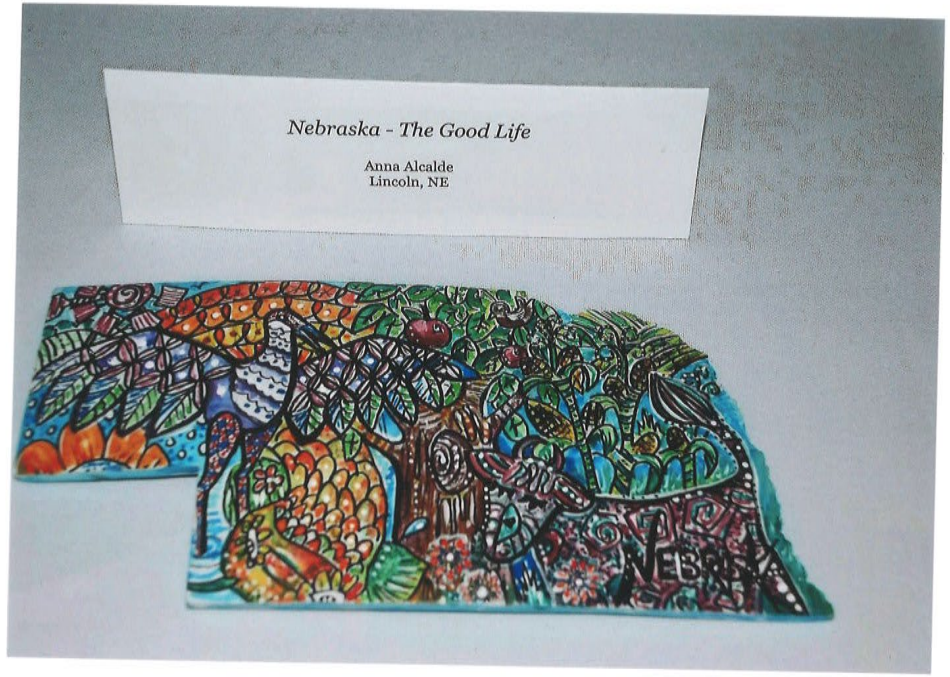
Margaret Smith
Lincoln, NE



The quilt of Nebraska represents all the different women who made a home for their families in Nebraska. From pioneer to modern times, women have used quilting as a creative outlet for practical and artistic reasons. The blue and gold colors chosen represent the colors of the state flag, as well as the golden grains and blue skies of Nebraska. The beauty of the prairie is represented by the flowering panels in the design.

Nebraska - The Good Life

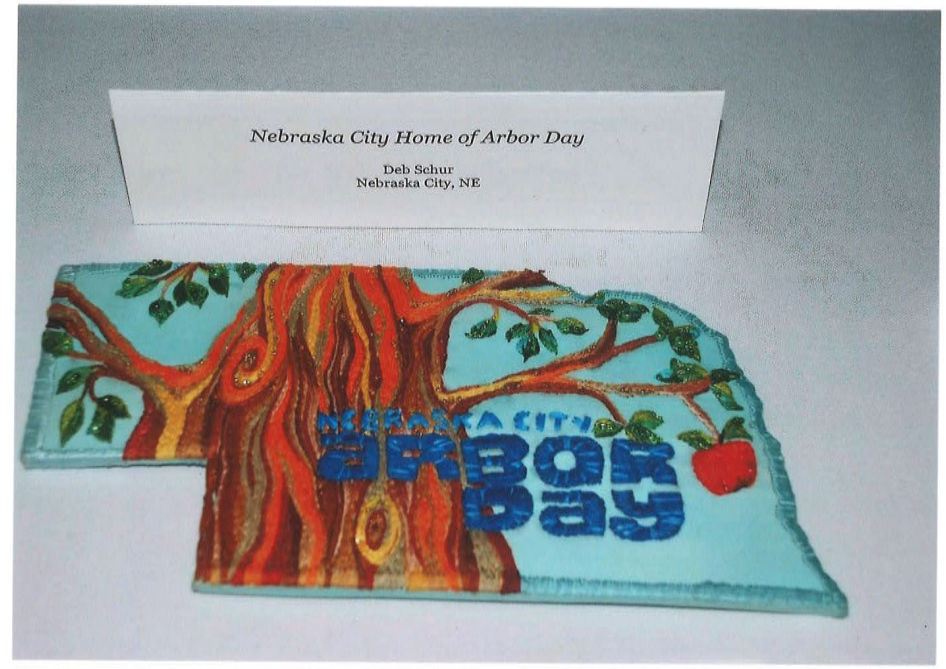
Anna Alcalde
Lincoln, NE



This colorful swirl of all things "Nebraska" fills my senses with important agricultural icons, as well as the great memories I have from my Grandpa and Grandma Reynolds' farm located by the Niobrara River. I can still smell the country air, taste a sun-kissed red apple fresh from the tree, and savor the brisk tug of a musty catfish on a line in the river. Some things can never be forgotten as a true Nebraskan.

Nebraska City, Home of Arbor Day

Deb Schur
Nebraska City, NE



My ornament honors Arbor Day and Nebraska City. I am new to Nebraska City and love my sweet city, the home of Arbor Day. I love the reverence and respect given to our beautiful trees.

Nebraska Corn

Diane Gabelhouse
Lincoln, NE



Corn is iconic in the state of Nebraska. It is an important crop for our farmers; it is a summer treat at family picnics; and it provides a nickname for Nebraskans.

Nebraska Good Life

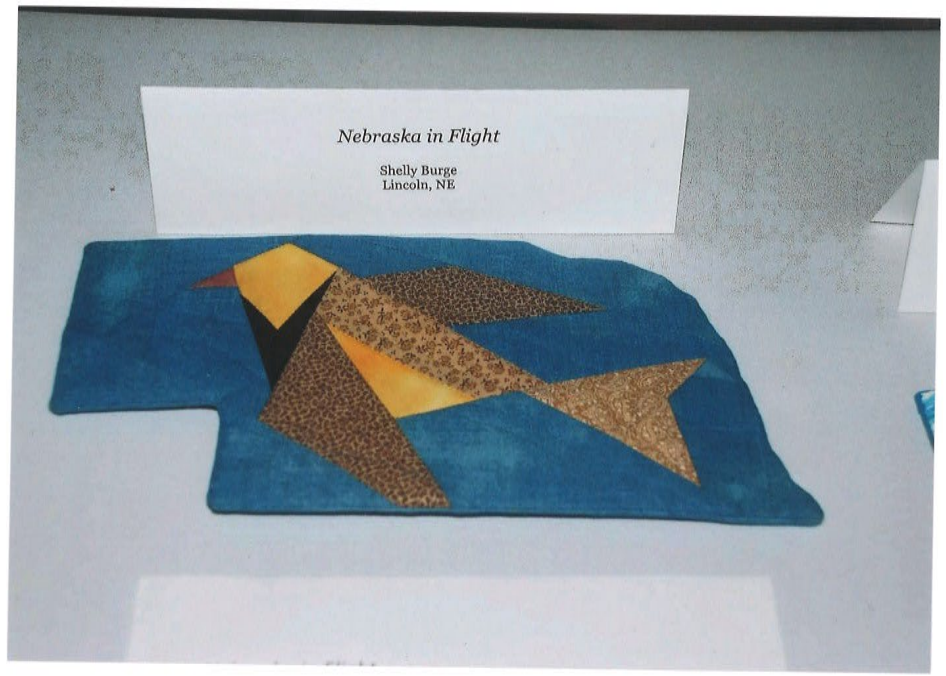
Helen Donlan
Lincoln, NE



This ornament is designed to emphasize not only the natural resources of Nebraska, but also the importance of agriculture to the citizens and the overall economy of the state of Nebraska.

Nebraska in Flight

Shelly Burge
Lincoln, NE

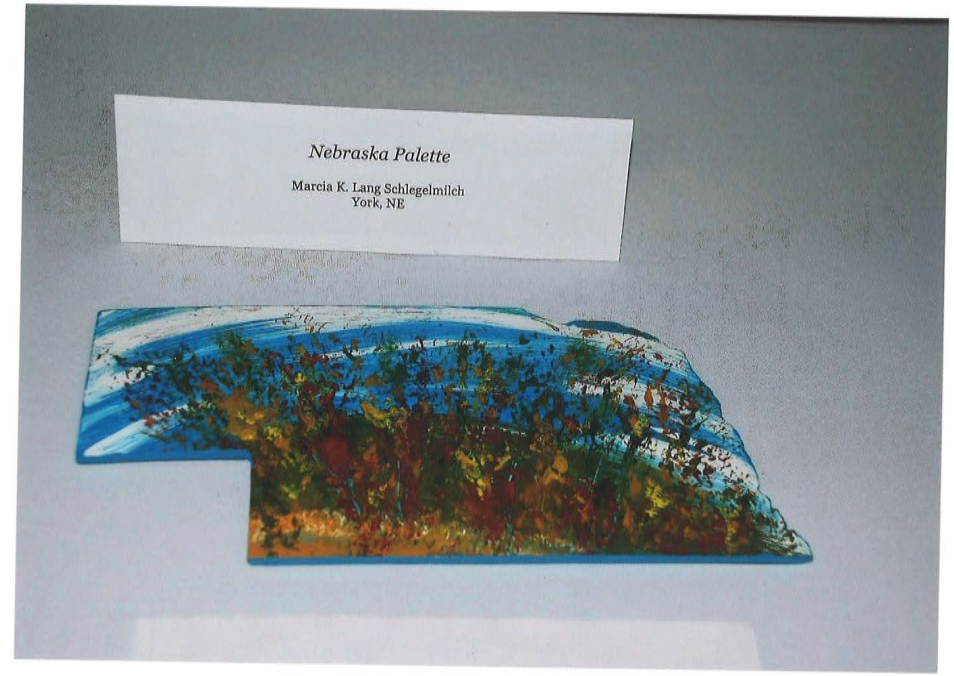


I have used meadowlarks, the Nebraska state bird, as the inspiration in many of my quilts, including the one that hangs in the lower level of the Nebraska Governor's mansion. I drafted this somewhat abstract quilt block design of the meadowlark in flight with the distinctive black V and the splash of yellow against a background of a clear blue Nebraska sky.

As I was creating this small quilt for the ornament, I was reminded of the pioneer women that made quilts to keep their families warm but also to add beauty and color to their homes.

Nebraska Palette

Marcia K. Lang Schlegelmilch
York, NE



As a resident of rural Nebraska who commutes daily to Lincoln, I spend lots of time on the road, watching the world go by. I've always enjoyed season, and this work is meant to capture the deep greens of summer, the golds and crimson red of sumac in the fall and the browns of winter as they burst from the prairie.

Native grasses, corn leaves, cedar branches, soybean stalks and goldenrod served as brushes for this painting.

Nebraska Style Christmas

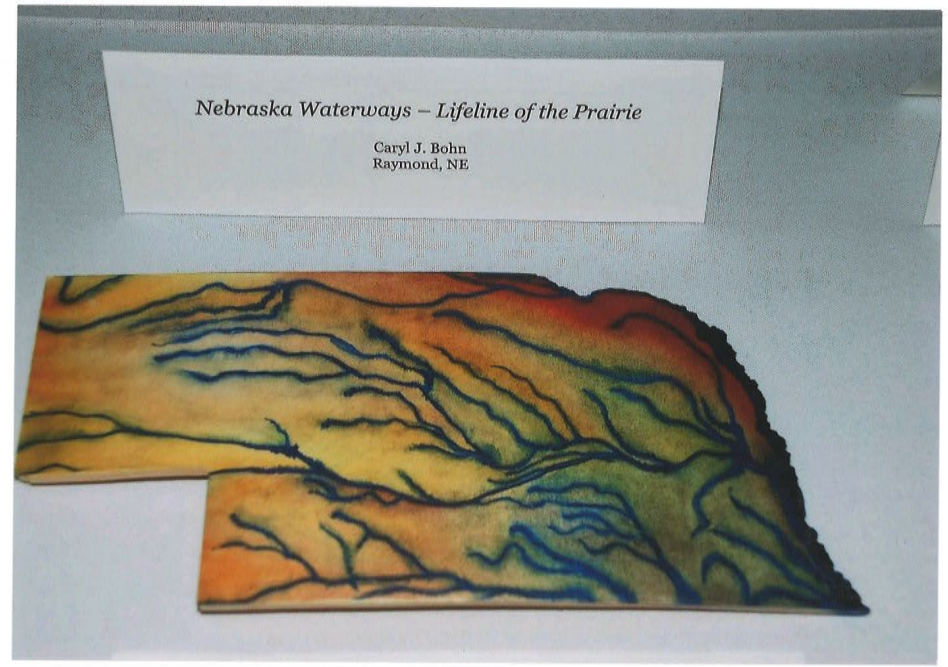
Janette Amberg
Lincoln, NE



When I think of Christmas, I think of the old family tradition of stringing popcorn and cranberries which made our tree look so festive. I tied in our state flower (goldenrod) and state bird (meadowlark) to give it that extra special Nebraska Christmas flair.

Nebraska Waterways - Lifeline of the Prairie

Caryl J. Bohn
Raymond, NE



Water is life. It is also the common element in the history of the state. Not only did the Great Inland Sea determine the topography, but as it retreated it created over time the water system we know today, a system that not only determined the flora and fauna but also helped and hindered migration and travels of the Native and setter population.

Through flood, drought, storms, grasshopper plagues, irrigation, well systems, aquifers, the planning and placement of cities and industry, and the success or failure of crops, the commonality is water. Its importance is undeniable.

Nebraska Wildflowers

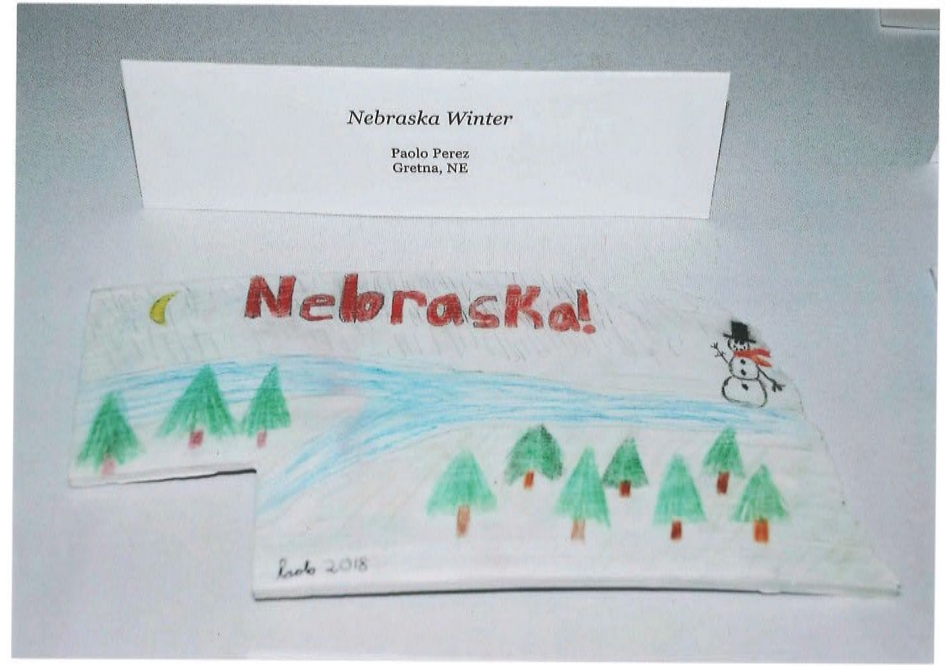
Valery Wachter
Lincoln, NE



Nebraska wildflowers were the subject of one of the hearts for the state's 150th celebration. I did a lot of research for that project and fell in love with the many flowers I found that are native to Nebraska and which would have been here 150 years ago. I am a gardener and realized for the first time that some of the flowers I have in my garden are these heritage flowers and that they have this amazing historical connection to the past. The ones I chose to paint for this ornament are (left to right); Wood Lily, Tiny Bluet, Goldenrod, Prairie Rose, Turk's Cap Lily and New England Aster.

Nebraska Winter

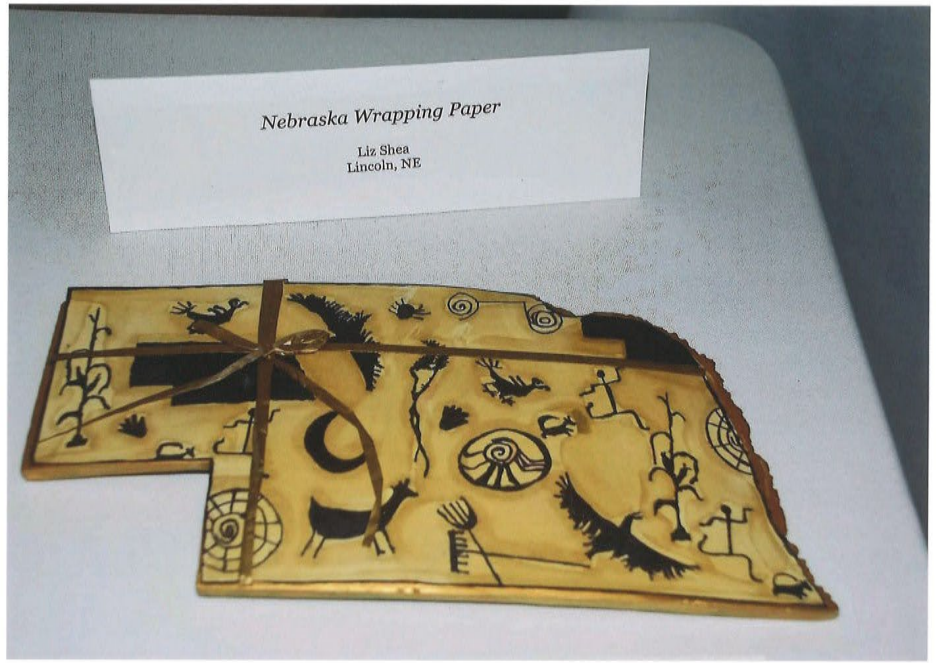
Paolo Perez
Gretna, NE



My ornament was inspired when my dad and I went camping near the Platte River. It started to snow and we built a snowman. I hope you enjoy my ornament.

Nebraska Wrapping Paper

Liz Shea-McCoy
Lincoln, NE



Since the primitive times human beings have had the desire to create, utilizing the sides of cliffs or walls of caves as their canvas and 'art' supplies they could find in their environment (feathers, rocks, berries, etc). They created paintings and carvings as art and as a way to record events and communicate with others.

These designs depict images and icons of importance in the daily lives of Nebraskans.

Nebraska's Holiday Express

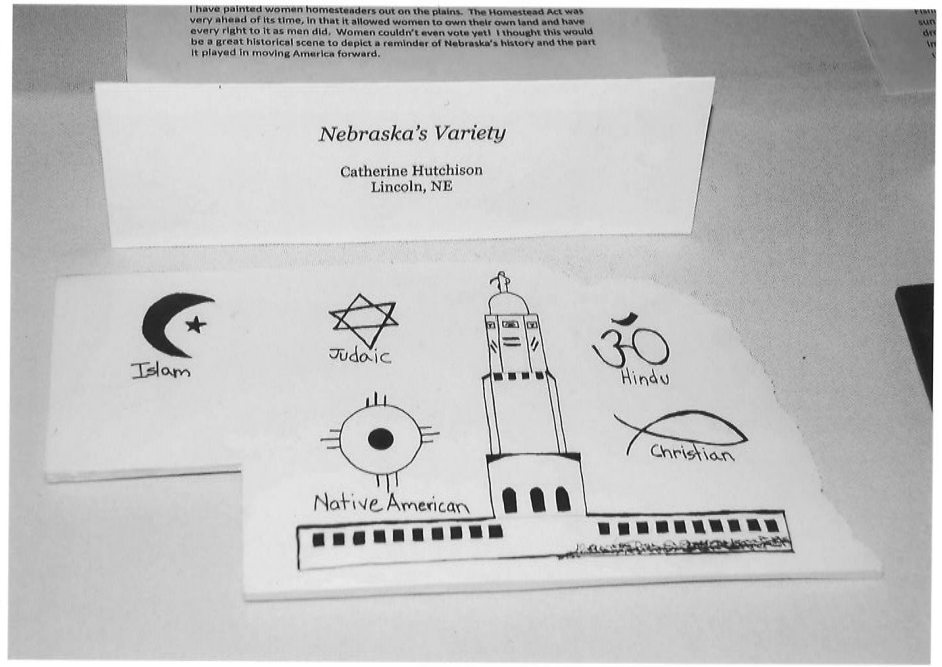
Liz Shea-McCoy
Lincoln, NE



The railroads played a central role in the settlement of Nebraska. The railroad companies had been given large land grants and were eager to locate settlers upon the land as soon as possible, creating a steady outflow of farm products and a steady inflow of manufactured items purchased by the farmers. The railroad facilitated and accelerated both the settlement and development of the Great Plains.

Nebraska's Variety

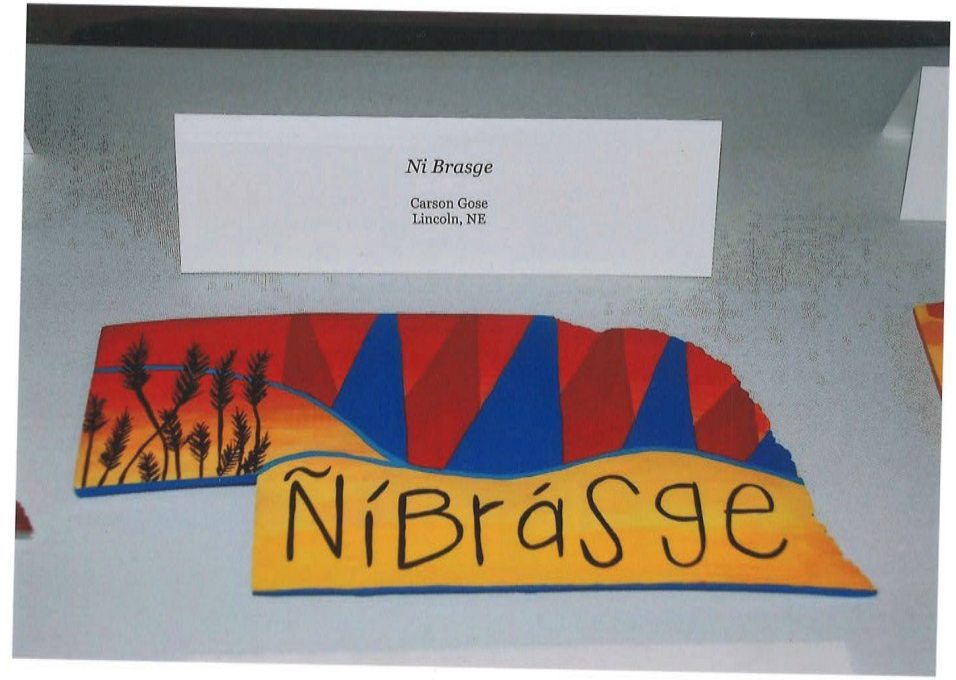
Catherine Hutchinson
Lincoln, NE



People from out of state don't realize the diversity of peoples and religions represented in Nebraska. We're all lucky to be Nebraskans.

Ni Brasge

Carson Gose
Lincoln, NE



Nebraska got its name from the archaic Otoe words "Ni Brasge," meaning "flat water." This piece is all about the beauty of Nebraska - its sunsets, the Platte River, the grasslands. This piece is also inspired by the Nebraska state Capitol and its many features; the blue and red triangles can be found on its ceiling. A beautiful capital to go with a beautiful state with a beautiful name.

O Willa

Julie Smith
Lincoln, NE



Remembered for her depictions of pioneer life in Nebraska, Willa Cather established a reputation for giving breath to the landscape of her fiction. Set on the Nebraska prairie where Willa Cather (1873-1947) grew up, the powerful early novel O Pioneer! tells the story of the young Alexandra Bergson, whose dying father leaves her in charge of the family and the lands they have struggled to farm. In Alexandra's long flight to survive and succeed, O Pioneer! relates an important chapter in the history of the American frontier. In her absorbing narrative, she displays the storytelling skills that have made her one of the most admired masters of the American novel.

No Place Like Nebraska

Olivia Cupp-Whiteman
Eagle, NE



The animals, barn and field in my design represent Nebraska's agriculture. The cottonwood tree and sunflowers represent Nebraska's plants. These are what make Nebraska great!

Old Church Road

Jeri Brainard
Lincoln, NE



As you travel the back roads,
You will find quaint churches.
Representative of Nebraska values,
Then and now. 2018

Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo & Aquarium

Lila Rose Vamosi
Omaha, NE



I was inspired by key exhibits of the Henry Doorly Zoo: the Desert Dome, the Lied Jungle, and the Suzanne and Walter Scott Aquarium. Animals featured represent the Asian Highlands, African Grasslands, Alaskan Adventure, Gorilla Valley, Kingdoms of the Night, and Bernice Grewcock Butterfly & Insect Pavilion. The Skyfari and Train are also represented as important features of the zoo.

Open Road Sunset

Samantha Wicht
Lincoln, NE



One of the most beautiful things about Nebraska are our sunsets. Nebraska is a very flat place; we don't have mountains, we don't really have forests and we don't really have deserts. But what we do have are some of the most beautiful sunsets in the country.

This design was inspired by a sunset I saw one night a few months ago. The natural beauty of a sunset is something to appreciate for its everyday uniqueness and the fact that only nature can create it.

Original Sod Buster

Tom Meyers
Lincoln, NE



Classic subject matter - a tribute to the first settlers and their labor.

Cherry County Magnificence

David Dorsey
Valentine, NE

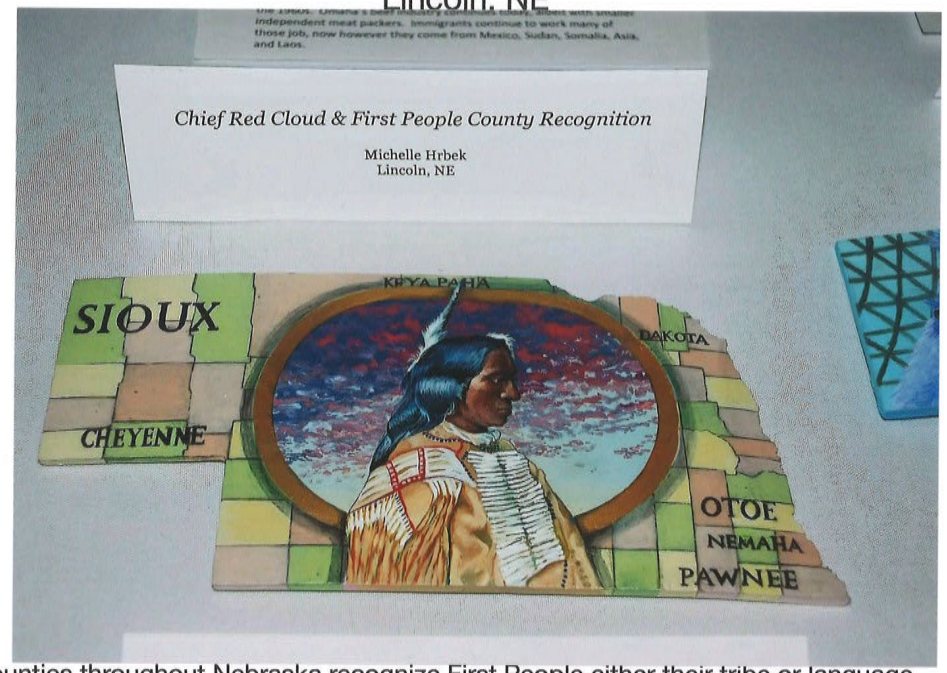


The Sandhills of Nebraska have been my home for all of my life. I grew up on a ranch in Rock County and currently live in Cherry County. The importance of the western way of life is very important to me.

Nothing speaks more about this amazing part of the state than the cattle industry and the horses that are such an integral part of each ranch. The good ranch horses of each cowboy and his family are part of everyday life. This ranching legacy is alive and well in Cherry County, Nebraska.

Chief Red Cloud and the First People County Recognition

Michelle Hrbek
Lincoln, NE



Counties throughout Nebraska recognize First People either their tribe or language. This design features Chief Red Cloud, a leader who fought to save his people's land.

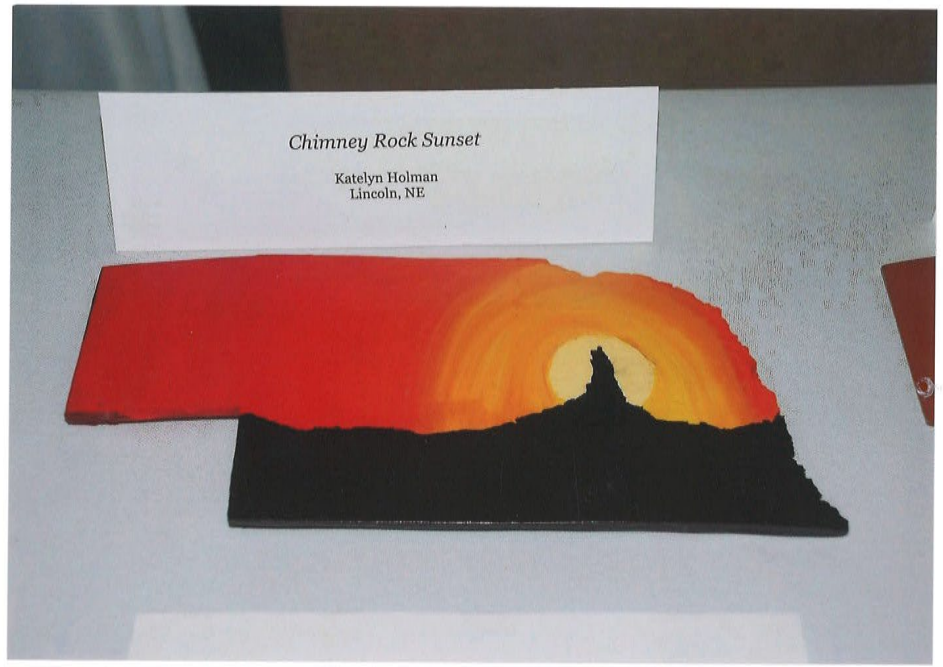
Recognized for his leadership of the Oglala Lakota, he challenged the US Army in their quest to conquer the western territories and led the Fetterman Massacre, one of the greatest military assaults prior to the Battle of Bighorn.

He proved such a successful leader and warrior that the US government agreed to the Fort Laramie Treaty, which led to their abandoning forts along the Bozeman Trail. Later in his life, he lobbied in Washington D.C. for Native American rights and spoke on behalf of Native Peoples, working to preserve their lands and improve their lives.

Chief Red Cloud was born near the community we now call North Platte.

Chimney Rock Sunset

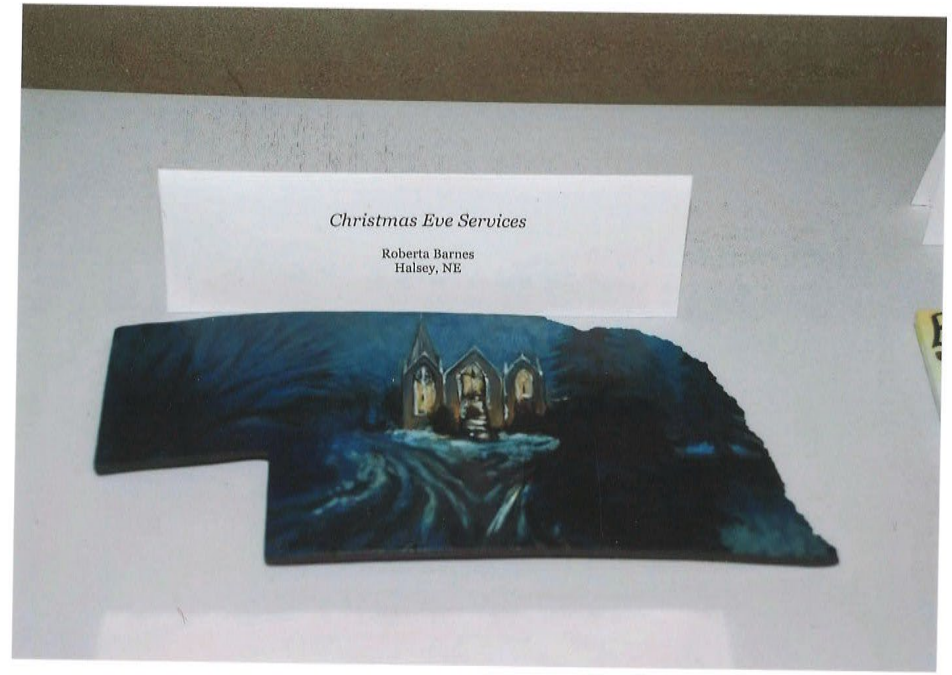
Katelyn Holman
Lincoln, NE



This design is meaningful to me because Chimney Rock has been a big piece of history and represents Nebraska.

Christmas Eve Services

Roberta Barnes
Halsey, NE



Growing up north of Columbus, I attended Christ Lutheran School. Every Christmas Eve was met with excitement. We celebrated the birth of Christ through our Christmas program, when we would sing hymns and recite Bible verses. I remember how nervous and excited I was for the night. The "reward" for the evening performance was a big bag filled with an apple and orange, ribbon candy, chocolate and peanuts.

The drive to church during the Christmas Season was beautiful. Coming around the corner, we would see the church all lit - everything seemed to be glowing.

Christmas in the Sandhills

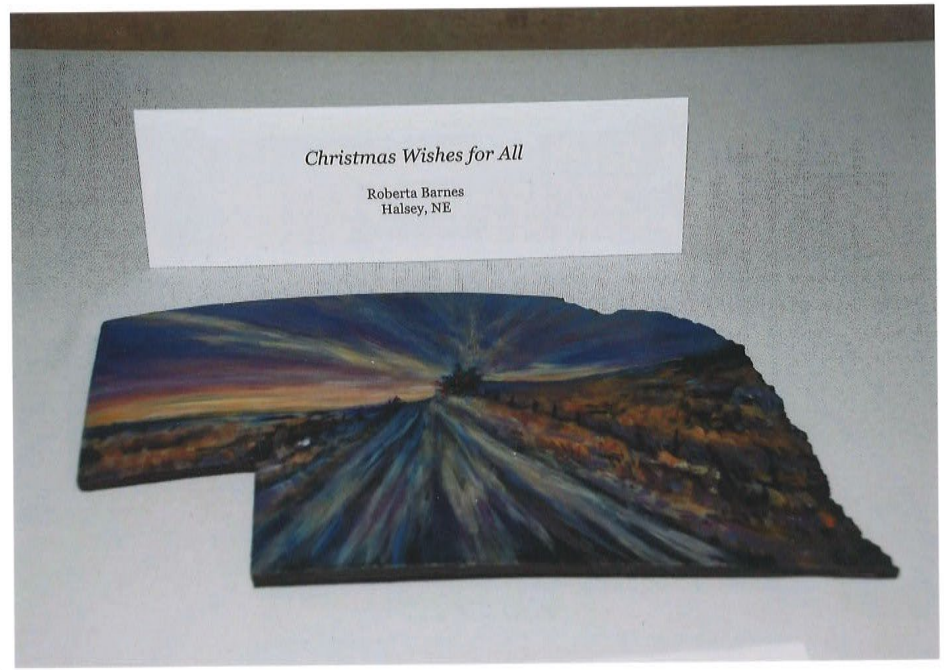
Joan Buckles
Merriman, NE



As the "Star of the East" shines from heaven above, a blanket of snow covers the Sandhills, and the windmill stands quiet. Peace fills the valley. The cowboy, astride his favorite horse, views the star. Merry Christmas from Cherry County.

Christmas Wishes for All

Roberta Barnes
Halsey, NE



I used to teach K-12 Art at Stapleton. During the Christmas season, there used to be a Christmas surprise along Highway 83 - a lonely cedar tree would be decorated with red ornaments as if to wish a Merry Christmas to all the travelers.

Cornhead Santa

Tom Kerr
Omaha, NE



While Father Christmas can't outwardly show his preference for any country, state or province, even the most casual observer has to admit that Santa has an affinity for Nebraska. Just look at his suit. Doesn't it just scream scarlet and cream? This piece of art finally blows the lid off of Santa's true preference - the state of Nebraska!

Cornhuskers: A Cornfield with the Sandhills in the Background

Chris Dibbern
Lincoln, NE



There are three things which make a nation great and prosperous - a fertile soil, busy workshops and easy conveyance for men and commodities.
- Francis Bacon

Cottonwood Leaves

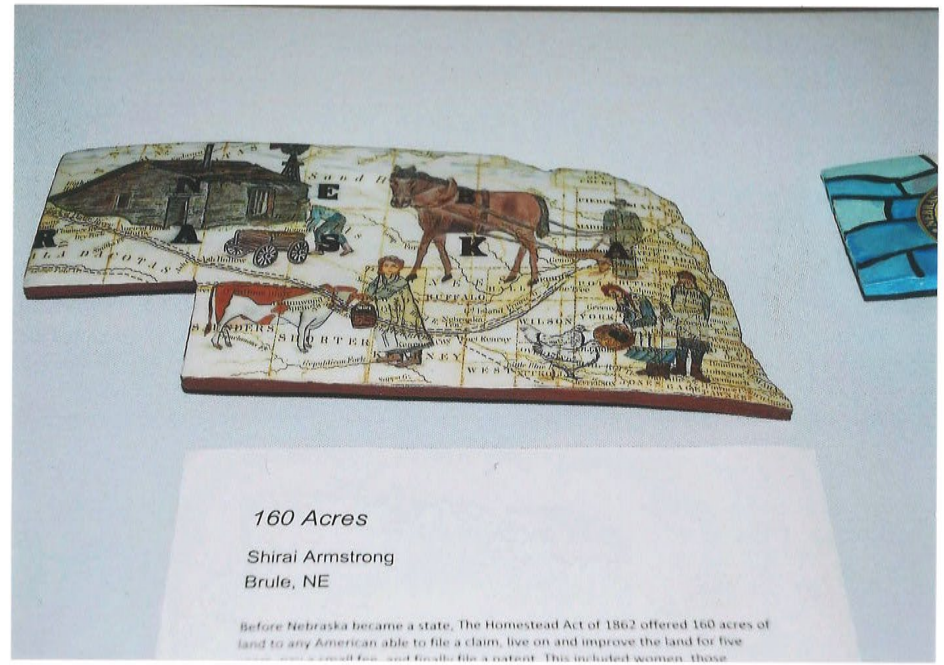
Diane and Atley Gabelhouse
Lincoln, NE



The cottonwood tree became Nebraska's state tree in 1972, replacing the American elm. This fast-growing tree reaches impressive sizes and provides shade and "snow" in June. My five-year-old granddaughter Atley and I painted leaves in layers of color, from spring and summer greens to fall yellows and onto winter browns.

160 Acres

Shirai Armstrong
Brule, NE



Before Nebraska became a state, The Homestead Act of 1862 offered 160 acres of land to any American able to file a claim, live on and improve the land for five years, pay a small fee, and finally file a patent. This included women, those intending to become a citizen, and freed slaves.

This ornament was inspired by John H. Armstrong. In April 1864, he, along with his and his wife's family, left Illinois, traveling by boat to Kansas and by oxen to Nebraska. Due to unrest in the area his family had to return to Kansas where his mother-in-law ultimately died. John and his family were finally able to return to their homestead in 1866. John H. Armstrong's 160 acres was located in Jones County, now Jefferson County. It was seven miles north and three and one-half miles east of the current Fairbury, Nebraska, where he is buried. His son Ranzo homesteaded in Webster County in 1873. Many of John's descendants remain Nebraskans and are scattered throughout the state to this day.

1930s Nebraska Ranch Family

Valerie J. Oertli
Lincoln, NE



Painting depicts my mother and her sisters and brother. Their ranch was ten miles north of Rushville.

A Golden Heritage

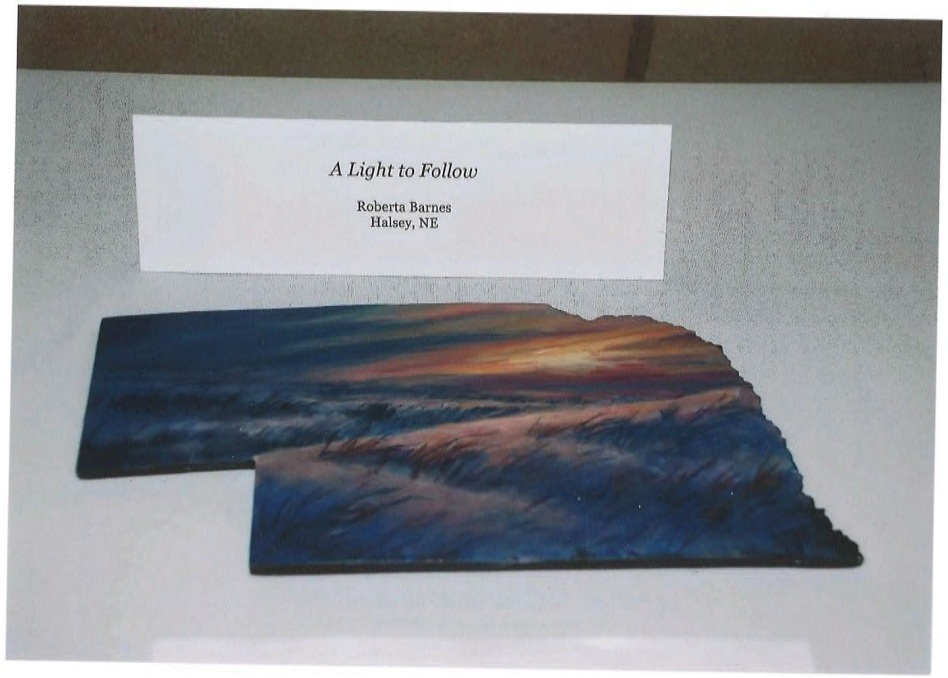
Evalyn Melgoza
Lincoln, NE



This ornament is about my great-grandparents' family farm and represents everything that is beautiful about Nebraska: the beautiful horizons, cornfields and, of course, sunflowers. My grandmother Ruth was raised on the that farm with nine siblings and tells stories about walking the fields and hunting sunflowers to escape her annoying brothers and sisters. Because of my grandparents' stories about growing up on the farm, sunflowers have become my favorite part of the Nebraska landscape.

A Light to Follow

Roberta Barnes
Halsey, NE



When my husband I were first married, we lived in an isolated part of the Sandhills. The Sandhills in the winter are at once threatening and exhilarating. This snowy Sandhills scene reminds me how the Wisemen followed the Star of the East trusting God to find the baby Jesus. Jesus still directs our path telling us He is the Way, the Truth and the Light. Sandhills Winders an at times seem lonely and desolate. But we too can follow the Star, the Light.

A Rural Nebraska Holiday

Liz Shea-McCoy
Lincoln, NE



This peaceful folk art scene depicts a country barn with a touch of Christmas and a deep appreciation for the multitude of benefits enjoyed by those who live in rural Nebraska. The barn, trees and wreath are welcoming symbols of the holiday season.

A Sandhills Icon

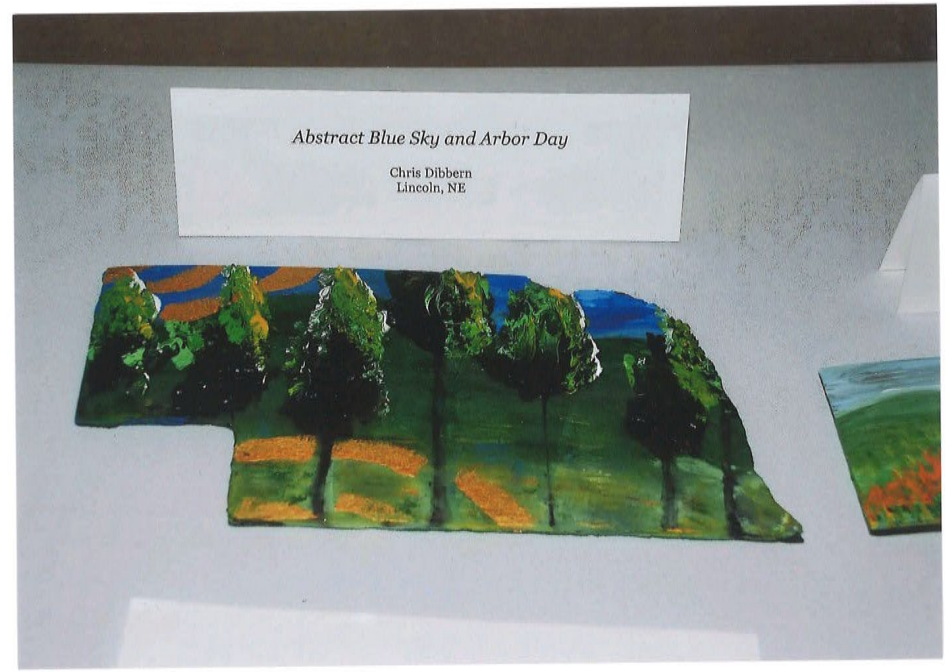
Don and Diane Gabelhouse
Lincoln, NE



The long-billed curlew, the largest of all shorebirds, is native to the Nebraska Sandhills and, according to many in the birding community, would be a better state bird for Nebraska than the Western meadowlark. This ornament features a life-size bust of a long-billed curlew. It is carved of wood (tupelo), painted with acrylics and attached to the ornament, which was painted to depict a Sandhills landscape. A ribbon drapes down from the curlew's bill and is attached to a small heart-shaped ornament, in honor of Valentine, NE.

Abstact Blue Sky and Arbor Day

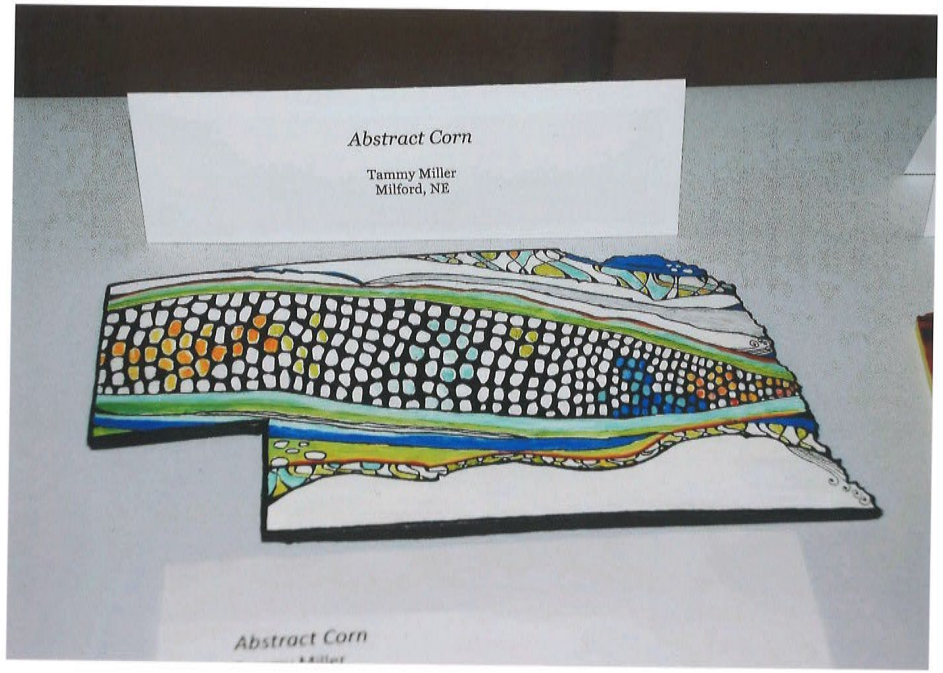
Chris Dibbern
Lincoln, NE



A tree that affords thee shade, do not order it to be cut down.
- Arabian Proverb

Abstract Corn

Tammy Miller
Milford, NE



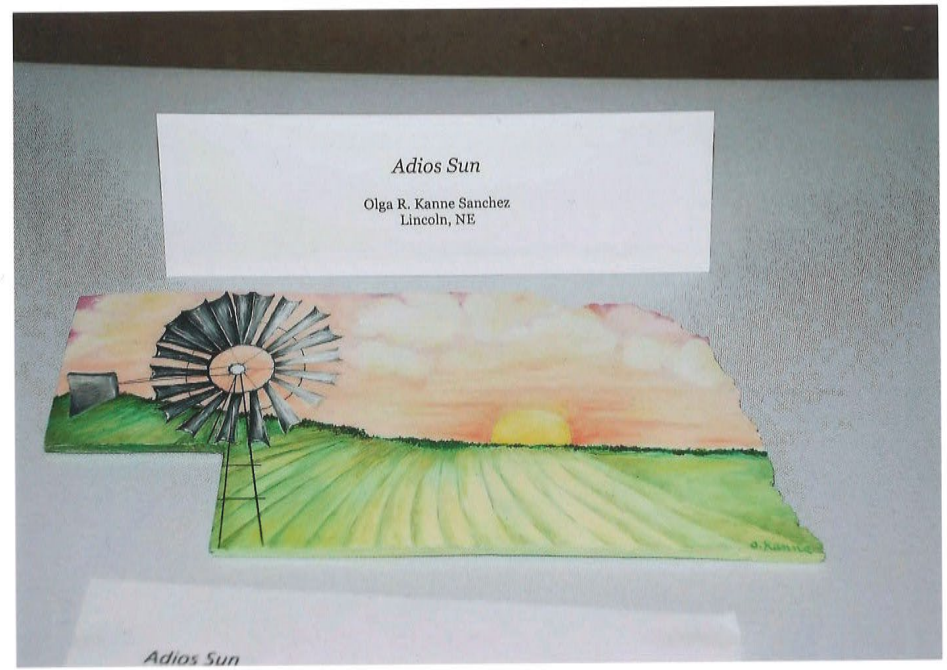
Nebraska's corn and the Platte River inspired my design, with the abstract image of corn spanning the state and blue representing the Platte River.

As I travel along Interstate 80, I look at the endless rows of corn. Naturally, we are known as the "Cornhusker State." Kernels of corn are actually beautiful and have an interesting texture and pattern. My hope is to give the viewer a fresh look at an ear of corn and its importance to our state.

The Platte River also runs along parts of Interstate 80. This beautiful waterway is a major river, flowing 310 miles in the state of Nebraska and over 1,050 miles from its origins in Colorado and Wyoming. The name "Nebraska" is based on an Otoe Indian word meaning "flat water."

Adios Sun

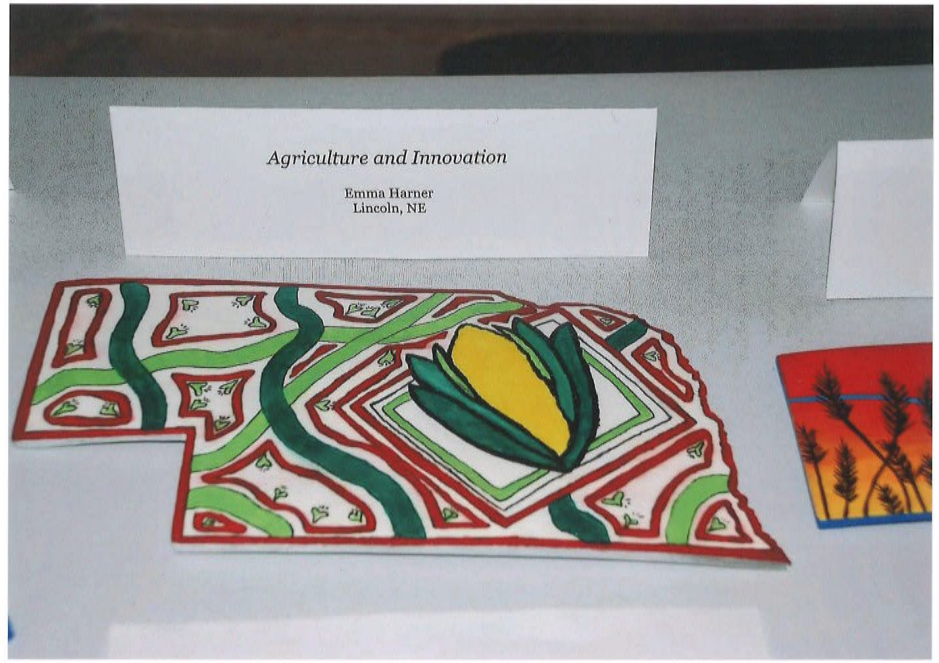
Olga R. Kanne Sanchez
Lincoln, NE



Our picturesque sunsets

Agriculture and Innovation

Emma Harner
Lincoln, NE

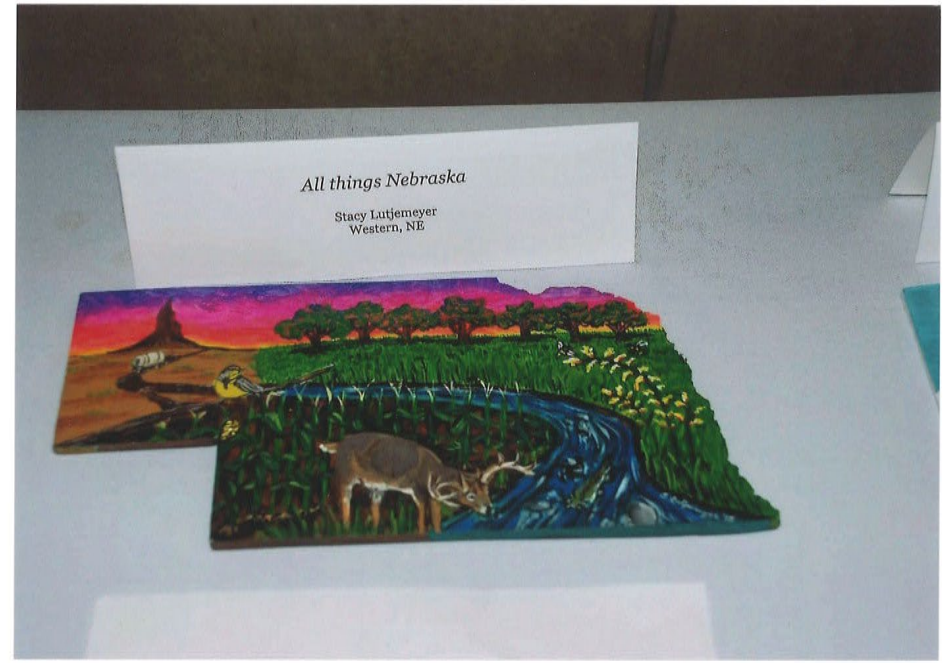


This design is inspired by Nebraska's rich history of agriculture, as well as its relatively newfound innovation scene emerging in the more urban areas of our state.

The ornament attempts to merge these two concepts with the use of corn and other small plants surrounded by a somewhat more angular design among some other curvy lines. When I think about Nebraska and what makes it such a lovely state, I think about all the history we have and how it is being incorporated into new, innovative centers popping up mostly in eastern Nebraska.

All Things Nebraska

Stacy Lutjemeyer
Western, NE

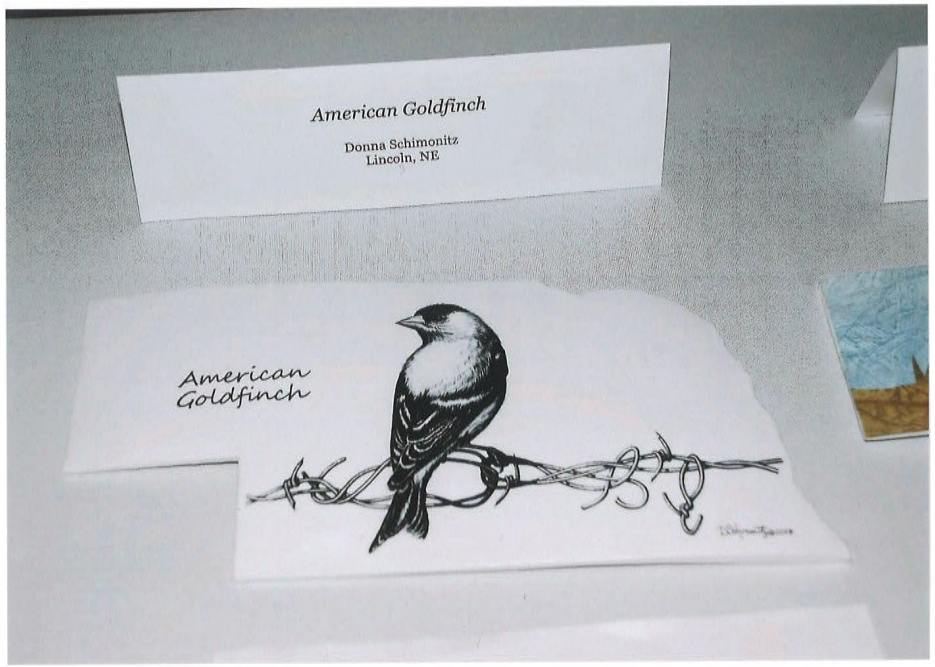


I used all of the beautiful colors visible in Nebraska's landscape and incorporated our state's symbols - Chimney Rock, the Oregon Trail, a beautiful sunset, a row of cottonwoods, a meadowlark, a cornfield, a white-tail deer, a channel catfish, goldenrod, honeybees, and little bluestem grass.

I love being able to look out my back window and see all that our land has to offer. What great nature and sunsets we have!

American Goldfinch

Donna Schimonitz
Lincoln, NE



American goldfinches have gathered at our bird feeder in the winter, filling every dining portal. Seeing these birds brought back memories of the first time I visited Fort Robinson years ago. Several dozen of the bright lemon and black males, dressed in their courtship best, swarmed a watering hole after a late spring rain.

The gnarled twisted lines of barbed wire created airy loops that danced across the field. This goldfinch selected a sturdy area to rest, clear of the line's biting tips.

Apple of Our Eye

Tammy Partsch
Nebraska City, NE



September 2018 marked the 50th Annual AppleJack Festival in Nebraska City, though orchard life has been a strong boon to southeast Nebraska for a hundred years. Every fall, AppleJack draws tens of thousands of visitors to Nebraska City for the harvest celebration. USA Today ranked AppleJack third on its list of Top Ten Fall Harvest Festivals in the US in 2015!

The swirling colors of red, yellow and green around the outside represent all different varieties of apples - there are over 2,000 grown in the world today! In the center, you can see the star-shaped cluster of seeds that you find when you cut into an apple horizontally, something that is common to every apple, no matter the variety.

Arbor Day

Margot Ricketts
Omaha, NE



My family has ties to Nebraska City - my grandparents both grew up there and it's my dad's birthplace. I have memories of visiting my Great Grandmother Volkmer and walking in the Applejack Days Parade when my dad was running for Senate and Governor. I've always loved the city, with the beautiful homes and historic buildings, especially Arbor Day Lodge.

I wanted to highlight Arbor Day because I appreciate the impact it has made on our state and the world. I feel like it is a gift that Nebraska has given to everyone. This vintage stamp, produced in 1932 in commemoration of Arbor Day's 60th anniversary, is a perfect representation for Arbor Day. It reminds me of a time when I was young and we celebrated at school by planting our own tree.

Archie

Carson Gose
Lincoln, NE



This design is inspired by both the sculpture outside of Morrill Hall and the fossil Archie on display inside the museum. He is one of the tallest mammoths on exhibit in the world. It's a tradition in Nebraska to walk past the structure outside the museum and tap his foot for good luck. Archie is a reminder of how precious and miraculous life really is.

Backyard Sunflowers

Diane Ogden
Lincoln, NE



One of my fondest memories was enjoying the sunflowers that my mother planted every spring in our backyard. Beautiful and easy to grow, her love of this annual tradition instilled a deep and lasting memory in my heart. My mother, like the vibrancy of the sunflowers' yellow petals, brightened my life and instilled enduring memories of happiness.

Bacon makers

Diane O'Neel
Friend, NE

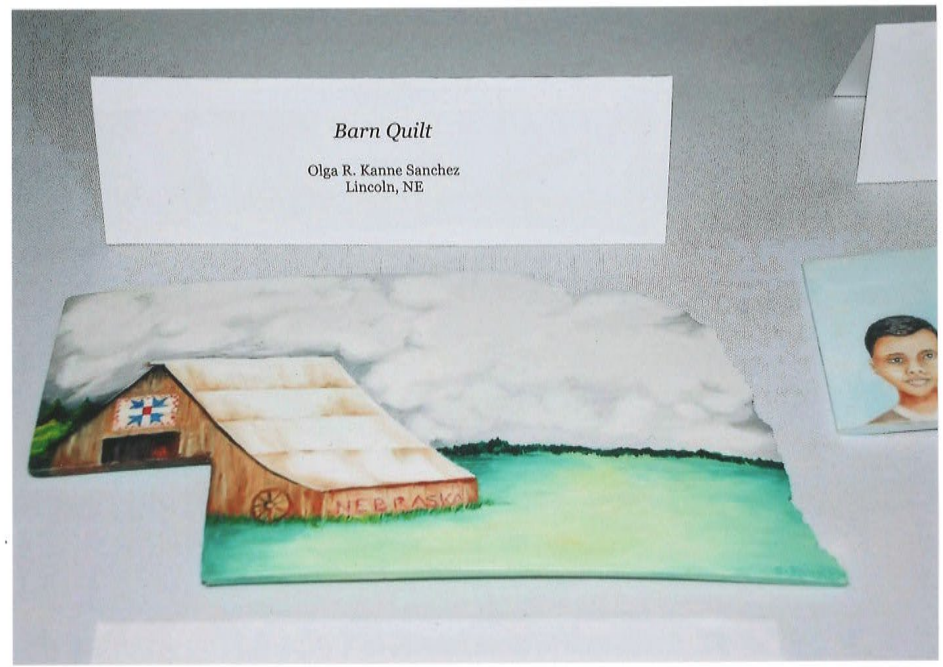


Who doesn't love bacon?

This little piggie went to market, raised on Nebraska-raised corn and soybeans. Nebraska farmers make Nebraska the 6th largest state in pork production in the US. Nebraska is also #1 in red meat production. One pig who is looking to the West because Nebraska counts on exports to Asia and Japan. Other major importers of Nebraska's meat are Mexico and Canada.

Barn Quilt

Olga R. Kanne Sanchez
Lincoln, NE



For all my quilting friends.

(Additional Information: Barn quilts rose to prominence in the mid-1800s as barn decorations, especially in Pennsylvania. Immigrants started painting their buildings and then decorating them with their own motifs and designs, showing pride in their barn building.

In the 2000s, barn quilts reemerged and today people use them not only for decoration but also to tell about themselves, their families and their heritage. Many communities have organized and supported the barn quilts as large public arts projects.)

Beautiful Corn of Nebraska

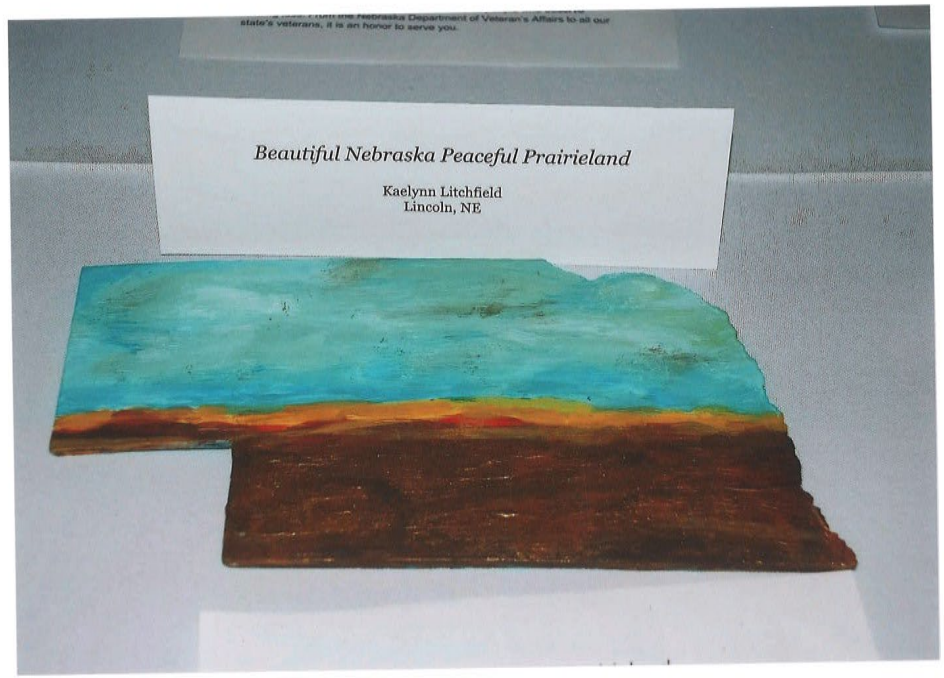
Alaina Jenkins
Bellevue, NE



I have created the corn landscape of Nebraska. Many people say that Nebraska is just a "pass-over" state. But in my eyes, I think the natural view of corn, trees, grass and flowers are beautiful.

Beautiful Nebraska, Peaceful Prairieland

Kaelynn Litchfield
Lincoln, NE



The abstract painted landscape, in vibrant colors and techniques

Big Red Nebraska Barn

Chris Dibbern
Lincoln, NE



FARM, what a city man dreams of at 5pm, never at 5am.
- Anonymous

Bison by Lakeshore

Valerie J. Oertli
Lincoln, NE



I chose to paint bison because of the their history of roaming the plains. Now there is a resurgence of interest in bison at various sites in Nebraska.

Blanketing the State with the Quilt of Love

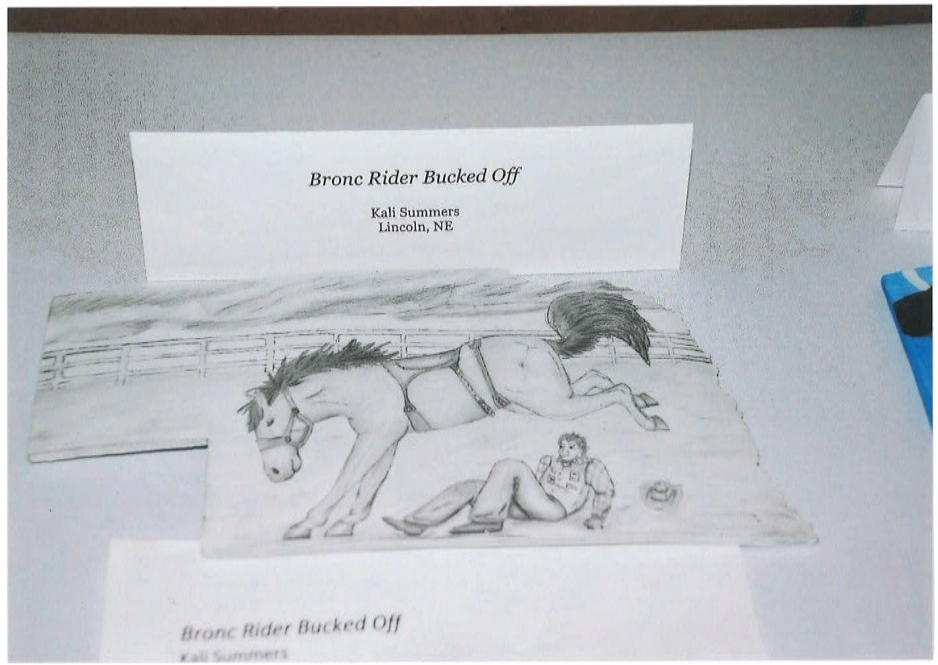
JoLynn Brown, Susan Eddy Ledder & Sharon O'Neal
Lincoln, NE



This design was inspired by the Swede capital of Nebraska, Stromsburg, and its Swedish Festival. We researched Swedish designs and incorporated them into a quilt pattern.

Bronc Rider Bucked Off

Kali Summers
Lincoln, NE



I designed this from my memories of my old town Atkinson and the history of rodeos in Nebraska as a whole. Living in Atkinson, you didn't have to travel far to find a rodeo. When they are in town, it was an event full of excitement and skill.

At a rodeo, people show off their beautiful horses and strong cattle; they sell delicious food that they grew; and they exhibit their courage through riding broncos and barrel racing.

Buffalo Bill's Wild West

Lila Rose Vamosi
Omaha, NE



I was inspired by an old photo of Buffalo Bill that I thought would really stand out. The script chosen was inspired by an old Buffalo Bill flyer. I also added a small representation of one of his sculptures, with him riding his beloved horse, Brigham.

Canteen Miracle

Shirai Armstrong
Brule, NE



From 1941 until 1946 the North Platte Canteen volunteers worked to support World War II American troops by meeting every train and feeding every traveling soldier. In order to accomplish the goal of their mission, volunteers and area citizens sacrificed their own ration stamps, saved extra produce from their farms, and donated supplies from their own families to prepare food for the military men and women stopping in town.

This ornament depicts the original Union Pacific Depot in North Platte which was the site of the Canteen. It features Rae Wilson who originally wrote to a local newspaper proposing the idea for the volunteer effort. It also portrays a military member from the Army Air Corp, the Marines, the Navy, and the Army.

Capital Skyline

Samantha Wicht
Lincoln, NE

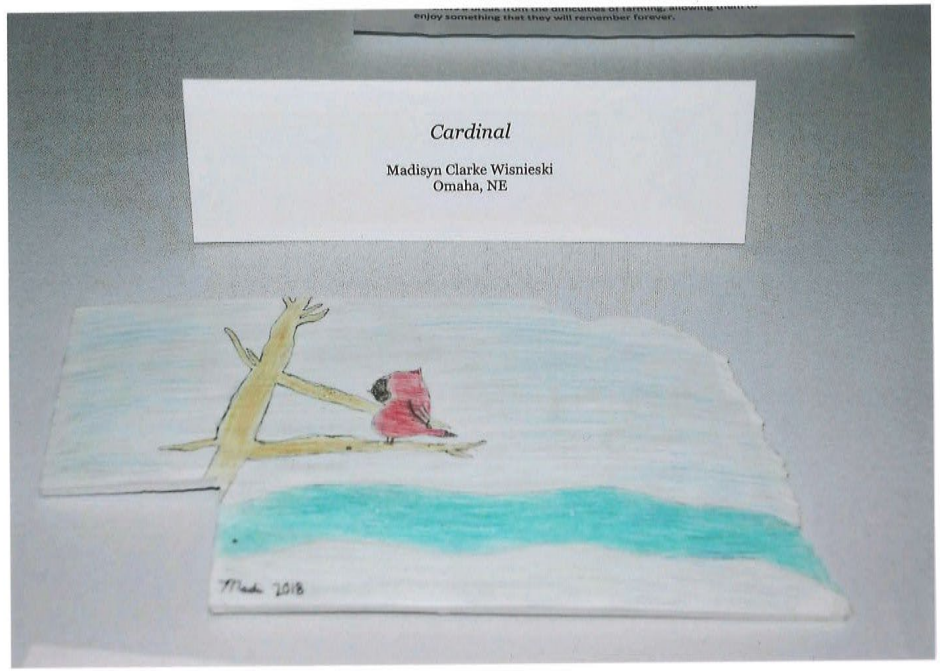


My design was inspired by the magnificent Nebraska sunsets and the Capital city's unique skyline. The distinctive shape and impressive height of the Nebraska State Capitol building creates a precious city skyline in comparison to other skylines throughout the country.

Lincoln's unique skyline is highlighted by a vibrant sunset enhancing its majestic beauty.

Cardinal

Madisyn Wisnieski
Omaha, NE



My inspiration for this ornament came from all we learned in Nebraska history this year from the Nebraska Magazine that we looked at.

Cardinals

Greg Holdren
Friend, NE



This work was inspired by the sight and sound of cardinals - always the first to proclaim spring from the tops of the high trees, flying in flashes of scarlet amidst the green of summer, and gathering in groups during winter to be the brightest color in a muted landscape.

Carhenge

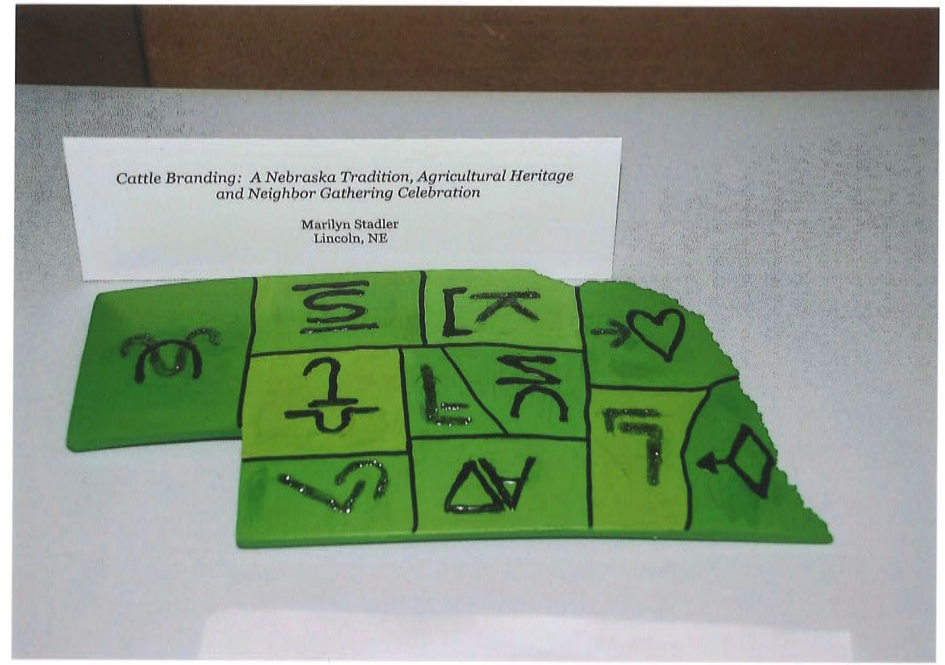
Diane and Tyson Gabelhous
Lincoln, NE



This popular tourist attraction is located north of Alliance, and is a replica of Stonehenge in England. It was built by Jim Reinders in 1987 to honor his father. On a painted background representing the area landscape, my seven-year-old grandson Tyson and I painted "Micromachines" stone grey and placed them into the painted Fimo clay foreground.

Cattle Branding: A Nebraska Tradition

Marilyn Stadler
Lincoln, NE



This ornament depicts typical cattle brand designs in Nebraska. Ranchers and farmers in our state register brands through the Brand Committee. Brands are selected or designed to identify ownership of cattle and to prevent confusion with neighboring animals due to similarities of brand. Some designs are family heirlooms going back several generations.

In 1856, the territorial legislature began requiring livestock owners to record their brands with the county register of deeds. The first statewide branding recording began in 1899.

Brands are applied with a hot iron that burns the hair of the animal, leaving an impression of the design. Each spring, in the Sandhills and other cattle areas of Nebraska, neighbors congregate at their respective ranches to help one another with the branding. They celebrate at the end of the day with picnics and camaraderie.

Celebrating Diversity

Aakriti Agrawal
Lincoln, NE



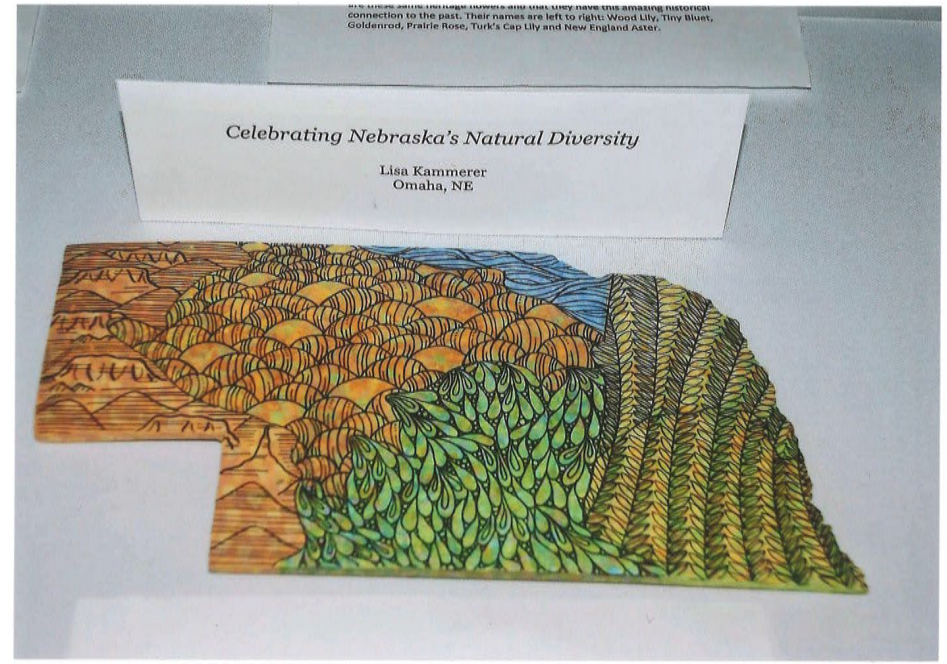
I wanted to show a line of people coming together and joining hands in dance. Nebraskans work hard but also play hard. I think community is an important aspect of life in the state and wanted to showcase the togetherness that this state boasts through showing celebrations. In traditional Warli paintings, the musical instruments featured are traditional, but I chose to incorporate modern elements like a grand piano to show the combination of traditional and contemporary styles in Nebraska.

Warli is an Indian folk style art form traditionally adorned on walls in India. Warli features scenes made entirely of geometric shapes and fine lines, depicting people and animals, farming, celebrating festivals and uniting in marriage.

Combining traditional representations with modern ideas, I have worked for many years to revive a rich historical art form of my country. I feel that Warli brings a unique style to the story of Nebraska, as well as highlights the immigration and diversity that this state represents. For the last five years, I have called Nebraska home and find that the love and diversity here are truly humbling and always draws me back.

Celebrating Nebraska's Natural Diversity

Lisa Kammerer
Omaha, NE



My family and I have always enjoyed traveling around our beautiful state and discovering landscapes that are new to us. Nebraska is a treasure trove of natural wonders, from the hills and buttes of the panhandle to the sea of Sandhills, the rushing Niobrara, and our rich agricultural heritage. Below the surface, the Ogallala aquifer collecting rain water and snow melt is perhaps Nebraska's greatest marvel. Each of these is represented in the colors and outlines of this ornament.

Nebraska Sunset and Sailboat

Kim Fitzekam-Szelag
Lincoln, NE



Three themes drive this piece: Nebraska sunsets, Nebraska lakes, and a love of sailing on those lakes. Nowhere has the same vivid colors found in a Nebraska sunset - or sunrise for that matter.