

The High Desert

# PALETTE

Oct. 2021, Vol. 2, No. 2

**EXCLUSIVE**

Life's Cadence  
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COWKIDS**

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STEPHEN  
GLASS

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## WELCOME TO *The High Desert Palette*

Welcome to *The High Desert Palette*! In our first year's nine issues, we brought work from local artists to these pages to share – from painters to blacksmiths; writers to culinary artists; photographers to musicians – and we've barely made a dent in the list of talented creatives in the area.

Art is meant to be shared: every page will share something intriguing and creative, and every issue is something that you can share with others after you've read it.

You can share with us your knowledge about more artists and creatives, so that our future issues will bring their work to the fore and for writers, share your writing in these pages.

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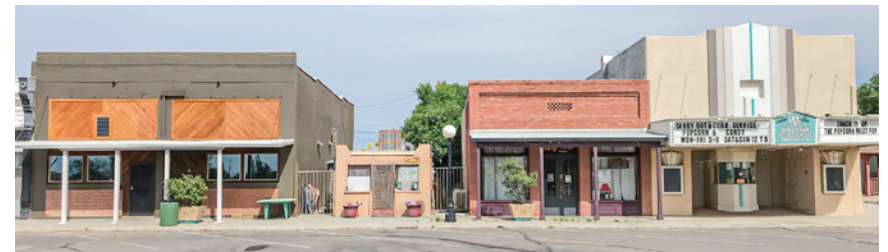
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### On the Cover -

Stephen Lee

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## IGOR GLENN

### The Jazz Cowboy

By Joshua Allred

Coat hangers, bungee cords, and clock springs. What may seem like a strange and unrelated list of

items is, to Igor Glenn, a small part of a recipe for home-made foot percussion and an element of his performance as a one-man band that makes him unique.

Igor's act as a one-man band stays true to the words in that he supplies the music of a larger

group with just himself and his homemade instruments. "There are some one-man bands out there that have electronic tracks that they're playing to. I do it all myself. So what you see is what you get."

**“ I like to do things that create what I call post card images of America.”**

In his explanation of his musical style, he referenced an affinity for his home and the music he grew up with. "Stylistically I like to think of myself as covering the music I grew up with in the deep south, mostly centered around New Orleans and extending all the way to Nashville and Muscle Shoals Alabama, and on over sweeping through the west."

"I like to do things that create what I call post card images of America."

He took this sentiment with him throughout his music career, recalling a seven piece showband he had performed with. "We typified music of the cowboys and music of New Orleans. Or as we'd sometimes say, 'If Roy Rogers and The Sons of the Pioneers had teamed up with Louis Armstrong and his band - that's what we'd sound like.' As a one-man band I'm still working a lot of that Repertoire." Igor's stage name, Igor the Jazz Cowboy, reflects that musical fusion.

### A Knack for Music

Igor's introduction and exposure to music came at a young age in

the form of acappella singing in church and a church supported school. "Both the church and the school featured acapella singing.

So I learned to sing all four parts at a very early age - of a quartet style music." It was there that he discovered an interest and aptitude for music,

"I started school when I was five years old and by the time I was six years old I knew around 100 hymns by heart. So I had a knack for memorizing music and then a knack for singing harmony parts."

He continued his musical journey at 16 when his dad bought him a string bass that he taught himself to play. "I taught myself to play that well enough that eventually I got a scholarship at ASU and played as the principal bass player in the ASU symphony."

### The Community Spirit

Igor's advice for aspiring musicians leans into the realm of practicality and getting an audience to have an enjoyable experience. "Start with some songs that the audience knows well and try not to get too esoteric; not get too hung up on 'oh I'm writing original songs and therefore that's what I should do."

He even continues to use cover songs as a big part of his own concert material, relying on enjoyable classics to engage his



audience. "Cover song has come to be a bad term, but I don't see it that way. I see taking a song that's well known and finding an innovative way to do it as a real key to success. It has been for me. It's a foot in the door!"

More than practical advice, Igor has found music as a shared experience to be rewarding. "I enjoy the interaction. I particularly like singalongs." He believes that familiar music and singalongs can invite a special kind of community spirit.

He reminisced on his performances stateside, internationally, and during his

time at the Musical Instrument Museum where the shared experience of music invited that special sense of community. "If I had to say what I like best about music it would be the interaction with the audience. It's the community spirit that comes out of that. And that's hard to come by. A lot of people think 'oh, I'm not good enough to participate,' but everybody can sing along. Everybody can make an attempt. Everybody can mouth the words. When that happens then we all feel like we're in this together." He needs that. We need that feeling."

**"A lot of people think 'oh, I'm not good enough to participate,' but everybody can sing along. Everybody can make an attempt. Everybody can mouth the words. When that happens then we all feel like we're in this together."**

See Igor Glenn perform live at The Palace of Art and Theater!



**IGOR THE JAZZ COWBOY**  
WILLCOX THEATER AND ARTS  
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## First Run Movies

Catch first run movies at our historic theater any day of the week with today's latest in comfort and digital technology!

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## Kids Art Club

Do you have a creative kid? Maybe a kid that would be interested in monthly artistic activities? Well this free art club is for them!

Oct. 8th



## Retro Rewind - The Lawless Frontier

Enjoy classic films, like The Lawless Frontier, on our big screen!

Oct. 8th



## Paint Night

Paint along with a talented instructor as she walks you through a step by step tutorial on how to paint.

Oct. 9th

## Live on Stage - Igor Glenn

Join us with Igor Glenn for his 4-octave voice which includes skilled yodeling and his story songs covering the U.S. borderlands from the Deep South to the Wild West.



Oct. 15th

## Jam Session

A group for adult musicians to meet and "jam" together for the purpose of entertainment and proficiency. - no electric amplified instruments and no drum kits.



Oct. 19th

## Smartmaker

Join instructor Paola for a STEM oriented workshop designed to get your gears turning!



Oct. 22nd

## Matinee My Way - The Curse of the Were-Rabbit

Enjoy a sensory friendly movie where the lights are turned up, sound turned down, and you are free to be yourself.



Oct. 29th

## Stained Glass Workshop

Join us to create your own simple stained glass artwork over the course of two Saturday afternoons.



Oct. 23rd & 30th



# DID YOU KNOW?

## The Value of Art Education

By Joshua Allred

Most would agree that the arts are a valuable facet of early education. In fact, based on an Americans for the Arts nationwide public opinion survey 88% of responses agree that the arts are part of a well rounded education! So what exactly are the arts good for?



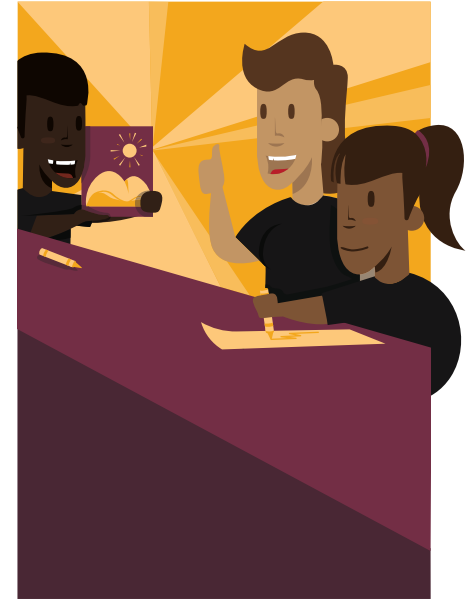
### A Positive School Environment

The arts, though not exclusively the case, are seen as fun and enjoyable. In a school setting where the stress of learning and performing well is real the arts can act as a buffer between productivity and burnout. Missouri saw increased attendance and decreased disciplinary rates in schools where arts participation was comparatively high.<sup>2</sup> New York schools experienced higher graduation rates where the arts were more accessible and resources abundant.<sup>3</sup>



### Social and Emotional Development

Arts also serve the purpose, especially in young children, of providing growth in areas not attainable in traditional school subjects such as math, reading, and science. Children participating in arts education proved to be more inclined to social cooperation, independence, and interaction. They also demonstrated increased emotional regulation in the ability to maintain anxiety and other strong feelings throughout school.<sup>4</sup>



### Success in the Workplace

While qualifications vary from job to job and no career path is identical, arts education can teach universal skills that are valued by employers. For example, visual arts can teach critical thinking in an environment where students must think about and observe the artwork of others and make decisions when creating their own. The development of creativity is of increasing importance in the workplace according to 97% of employers. 85% of employers seeking creative employees have trouble finding qualified applicants. Over 90% of superintendents agreed that creative writing, music, dramatic arts, and studio arts develop creativity in high school.<sup>5</sup>



The mentioned benefits of art education are only a small sampling of the impact it can have. The arts hold a relevant place in education because of the many ways they promote childhood development and growth. They provide relief and emotional outlet from the stresses of school life, teach unique lessons, and prepare young people for success in the life ahead of them.



Check out pg. 24 to learn about the Willcox Elementary School's new arts programs!

### Endnotes and Further Reading

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2. Scheuler, Leslie. *Arts Education Makes a Difference in Missouri Schools*, March 2010, 12–14. <https://www.missouriartscouncil.org/graphics/assets/documents/b657d9f1adfc.pdf>.
3. Israel, Douglas. *Staying in School: Arts Education and New York City High School Graduation Rates*, October 2009, 10–18. [http://www.creativenz.govt.nz/assets/ckeditor/attachments/1029/staying\\_in\\_school.pdf?1410234540](http://www.creativenz.govt.nz/assets/ckeditor/attachments/1029/staying_in_school.pdf?1410234540).
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# 2021-2022 SEASON OF LIVE EVENTS.

The 2021-2022 Season of Live Events is here! Prepare for classic country, fantastic guitar, finger-pickin', and fiddling-and so much more!



## Cindy Rae

Enjoy the classic country sounds of Willcox' own Cindy Rae in a solo act with her Dad's Gibson guitar

Sep. 17th



## Igor the Jazz Cowboy

Enjoy the "Jazz Cowboy" and his story songs that cover the U.S. borderlands from the Deep South to the Wild West.

Oct. 15th



## The Manhattan Dolls

Tap your feet to a swing-style female vocal trio with the sound of The Andrews Sisters!

Nov. 19th



## Sahnas Brothers

Enjoy beautifully blended sounds of Greek culture and classical Spanish guitar!

Dec. 17th

## 'HEDY! The Life and Inventions of Hedy Lamarr'

Enjoy the one woman wonder, Heather Massie, in her performance of the play 'HEDY! The Life & Inventions of Hedy Lamarr'!



Jan 29th

## Carolyn Camp and Joe Baker

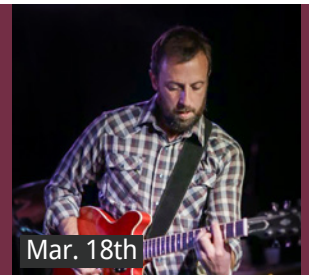
The fiddle/guitar duo trade off vocals, provide each other's harmonies and do a fair share of old-time fiddle instrumentals.



Feb. 18th

## J Scott Howard

Enjoy riveting, finger picked guitar, harmonica and vocal renditions of tunes ranging from Motown hits to Texas Troubadour classics.



Mar. 18th

## Sticks and Tones

Henry's piano and guitar combined with Maria's fervor on marimba, drums, world percussion, and water will carry you on a spirited voyage of heart and mind.



Apr. 30th

Learn more about our performers and their performances on our website at [willcoxtheater.com](http://willcoxtheater.com) and facebook page @willcoxtheaterandarts! Tickets are available for purchase on our website! Get yours today!



## STEPHEN LEE

### Life's Cadence

By Luke Kauffman

"My early youth was spent on horseback south of Flagstaff... I grew up around Navajos and Hopi people. There were still lumberjacks and cowboys," says Stephen E. Lee. Stephen, a San Simon native, has always found inspiration in the Western lifestyle.

Stephen's first exposure to Western art was at the age of

five, when his parents took him to watch the work of Hopi Kachina doll carvers.

"They were basically reproducing the imagery of the spiritual world," Stephen says. "I remember being around these carvers a time or two and thinking: this is special."

And it was special. Now the carvers he grew up watching have their pieces in museums. Stephen and his family also had the privilege of attending traditional Native American dances and were welcomed into Hopi homes for meals.

"That ancient tradition and being around people who see the world in a totally different way draws me in," Stephen says about these experiences. Further influences on a young Stephen came from various places.

"My mom and dad really liked art. They drug us to galleries and art shows. Being a little kid with a horse, I was always captivated by the cowboy image," says Stephen.

"Music on the radio as a little kid immediately caught my attention and captured my imagination," says Stephen. "It's the architecture of the music of what I ended up playing later in life."

At the age of twelve, Stephen started playing snare drums for his school marching band. His style originates from frenetic "hippy bands" of the time. "I was a spaz,

really high energy and really low attention span," says Stephen. "Drums just fit."

### Tactile Art

We'll get back to his music, but it's important to follow Stephen's career(s) from their root. At 30 he taught himself blacksmithing, pounding out everything from extravagant metal gates to fireplace covers for high-end houses.

*"I felt like I'd finally done something neat with my life."*

"It was God's time. It made total sense, there was a rhythmic thing that went back to music, you got the cadence on an anvil sitting there hammering in time, it fit me perfectly," Stephen said.

"I have a little bottle of sand from the Atlantic coast and a little bottle of sand from the Pacific coast," Stephen says about mementos

representing two large jobs. "I felt like I'd finally done something neat with my life."

During this time, Stephen came to admire the work of Western bronze sculptor Mehl Lawson. Lawson uses a unique salmon patina bronze in his art, which Stephen says was wrought with an "incredible amount of detail but still had a natural presence."

He attended Lawson's workshops for about four years, and his idol became a friend and a mentor. Mehl is the watermark and the benchmark for Stephen, who praises Lawson's balance of visual clarity and emotional messaging.

"I didn't become an artist until I started sculpting, and then I could really explore some ideas," Stephen says. "The tactile aspect





of art really matters. Before the metaphor, before the controversy, before the imagery, the tactility of stuff really fascinated me.”

Stephen’s work proves tactility’s importance.

Everything from the tilt of the cowboy hat to the whip of the stallion’s mane flirts with tangibility to convince you it’s real. But in addition to tactility, art must invoke emotion.

Stephen’s bronze work “Standing Room Only” exemplifies

such invocation. It’s a seemingly simple piece of seven saddled horses, but it deepens as you look closer. You notice how two horses in the middle tilt their heads in to whisper, how the steed next to them stamps his foot, how the tiny ropes loop around the fence, all creating a feeling of expectation and potential.

## Renaissance Man

But back to the journey. Stephen’s sculpturing career



sent him around the country to sell at conventions and be interviewed by news stations and art magazines. He built a brand and a living.

**// The tactile aspect of art really matters. Before the metaphor, before the controversy, before the imagery, the tactility of stuff really fascinated me.”**

But then the market crashed, and he was forced to step away.

“I went back to work as a cowboy,” says Stephen. The hard labor and long days “really sucked” compared to touring, but he holds no regrets. The

next chapter of Stephen’s life was sparked by his love for bits and spurs, which he started engraving and silversmithing, later branching out into jewelry, guns, and accessories. He has continued this work to the present, but his focus has shifted once more.

While Stephen has played the drums since middle school, about five years ago he started learning guitar.

“The transition in all of that is I keep hearing the melodies... at some point you go on from (the baseline) ... to the melodic experience...,” said Stephen.

“That stuff just starts nagging at me. That need to articulate the harmonic side of those impulses was the gateway to guitar.”

## A Religious Discipline

For Stephen, music is the most religious and passionate of his skills. He’s made good money with his other disciplines, but not music. Why does he stick with it?

“Music is a proof of God for me,” says Stephen. He knows his music is not a path to fame, it’s for him to give back.

“There’s a cadence in all of it,” Stephen says about his skills. “This is one of those God things for me. Whenever I’m in that flow I know where I’m supposed to be.

“There is an underlying rhythm between the layers that when you tap into... when you’re playing so well you don’t have to think about where your fingers are, when you’re sculpting so well that you could close your eyes, when you’re engraving in that place, when you’re blacksmithing in that place... you’re in that flow of absolute bliss.”

Stephen believes finding that state is, “worth... pursuing because I think it’s the only time, we’re at true peace here on Earth.”

Finally, Stephen relates this “flow of absolute bliss” back to where he first found it.

“When I step back from my life at this point, I’m never not a blacksmith. I always have a fire, I always have an anvil... I never lose track of that.”



See more of his artwork:

 [stephenelee.com](http://stephenelee.com)

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*The High Desert Palette* welcomes contributions that highlight creativity and creative people in Southeastern Arizona. We seek to explore the creative impulse, showcase creative product and inspire creatives in all fields. Original contributions in artistic and/or creative fields and articles or feature interviews with the people who create them will be accepted. Let us know of creative individuals we might highlight in future issues.

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## CREATIVE COWKIDS

By Joshua Allred and Wesley Schofield

Part of a child's experience at Willcox Elementary School are special classes. These highlight-of-the-day experiences take place once a week and allow an exposure to topics outside of routine curriculum. This year the school is providing two fine arts special classes. A visual arts class taught by Amanda Berger, and a music class taught by Jocelyn Allred.

Amanda Berger learned the ropes of child education as a longtime employee at Willcox Theater and Arts where she led classes and workshops for kids. She brought those skills with her to the elementary school in 2020 as a paraprofessional.

That same year her capacity for arts education was realized and she was put to work teaching art classes to third and fourth graders every other week. At the start of the next school year special classes were reworked to provide an art program for the entire elementary school with Amanda as the instructor.

Jocelyn's contribution to arts education was similarly happenstance. After her



youngest daughter began school, she applied her degree in elementary education to teaching first grade at WES. Between a nagging interest in music that had been applied throughout her younger life and some coaxing from a friend and work colleague she decided to fill the spot for music teacher that had been left open. "When Ms. Shelley Lamb, our previous wonderful music teacher, retired they advertised the position throughout the whole school year and as far as I know didn't really have any applicants. A colleague of mine said 'you would be good at that, you should find out if that is something you can do!' So one thing led to another. I'm so happy to get to teach music to

the kids and have music as a big part of my life again."

### The Looks on their faces

Where art can be confusing and frustrating for beginners,

Amanda sees her class as a way for children to develop their confidence in a safe environment. "I think they're at the age where they're not afraid to do it. I want to invoke that confidence now so that when they get into 5th grade, 6th grade, and high school they aren't already hating on themselves.

A lot of the older kids just think 'I'm so terrible/I can't do this' before they even start. If you can teach them now that they can, that getting

*"I think they're at the age where they're not afraid to do it. I want to invoke that confidence now so that when they get into 5th grade, 6th grade, and high school they aren't already hating on themselves."*



it as perfect as possible isn't as important as having fun while doing it, then when they get older they will have the confidence to do it."

She recalled her own childhood artistic insecurity, "I know that for me I didn't have many creative outlets. The biggest thing was that I wanted to draw, but didn't know how. When I did draw I hated it so much that I didn't want to do it anymore. I didn't have someone to guide me. I think that helps, especially when you are young so that you can build on your skills instead of just guessing at what you should do."

**“ The looks that I see in the kids faces. That has been a true joy this year teaching music. They love it.”**

More than developing life skills like confidence, the arts are fun! To many children, music is an enjoyable way to take a break from some of the more stressful activities of the school day. Jocelyn recalls instances where students were excited to talk with her outside of class about what they were learning, "I know it means something to them when I get to help take kids to where they get picked up by their families and they want to talk to me and are happy about what they are learning in class."

It's that visible enjoyment, the looks on their faces, that Jocelyn finds the most rewarding in the

classroom. "The looks that I see in the kids faces. That has been a true joy this year teaching music. They love it."

Valerie Simon, the Willcox Elementary School principal, echoed the words of Amanda and Jocelyn, saying: "Young children need art and music in their lives for so many reasons! The fine arts program at WES will help our students develop critical thinking skills, build confidence in themselves, improve their academic performance, and express their creativity. It is so exciting to be able to offer our students both art and music classes. In a time when many schools are cutting their fine arts programs, we have chosen to rebuild ours, and I think parents and the community will be very excited to know that."

**“ Young children need art and music in their lives for so many reasons! The fine arts program at WES will help our students develop critical thinking skills, build confidence in themselves, improve their academic performance, and express their creativity...”**

**- Principal Valerie Simon**



**Read more about the benefits of arts education on pg. 12!**





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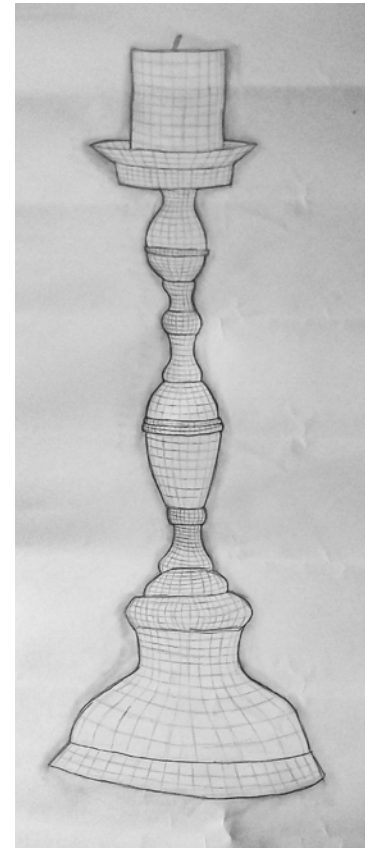
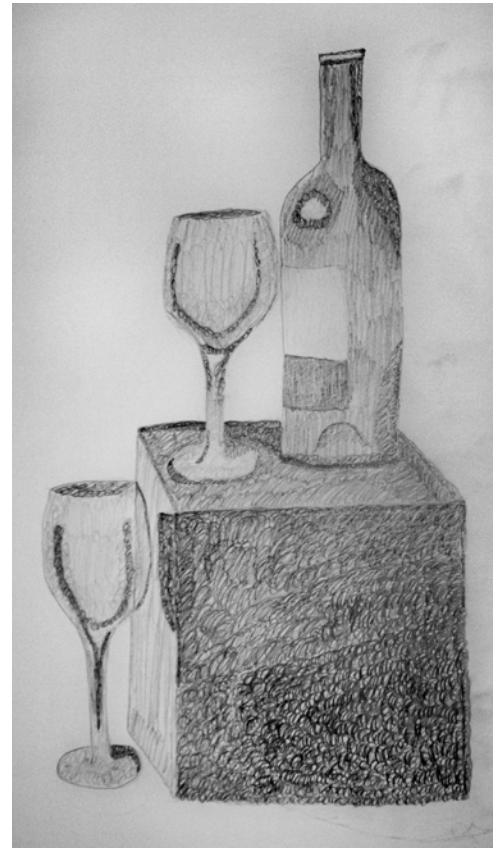
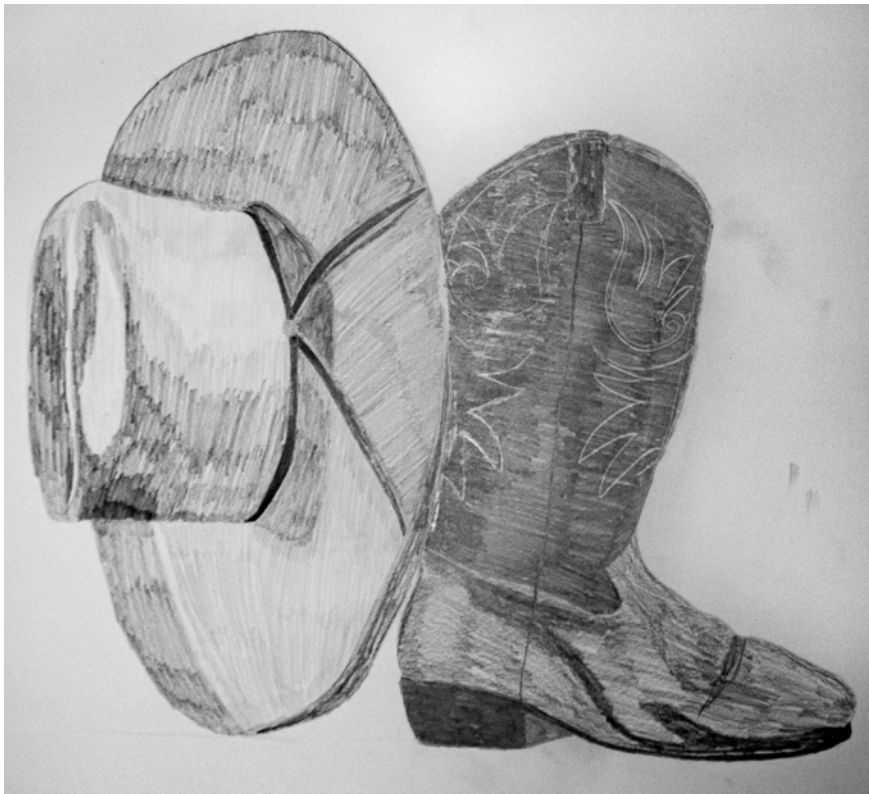
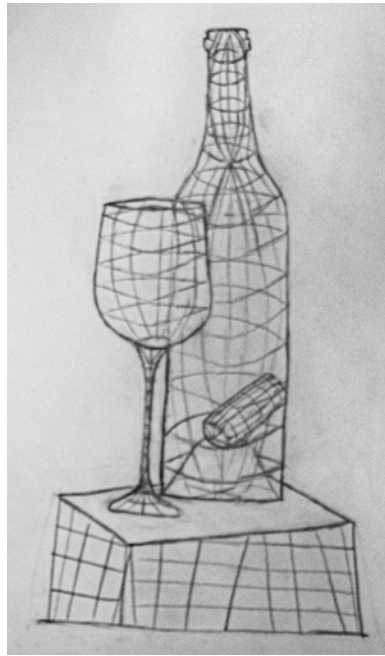
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## ART LOOK

Featured are select samples of work from a drawing class hosted at Willcox Theater and Arts throughout last summer. The class sought to teach the fundamentals of drawing through observational drawing. Participants studied principles including line, value, shape and volume, and composition.







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Willcox Theater and Arts thanks the following individuals, foundations, businesses, and government agencies who are supporting our programming during the 2021-2022 Season.



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