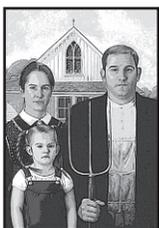


ART ADVENTURE | SAM DALKILIC-MIESTOWSKI



'Industrial Art' highlights artist's passion for steel

Artist Randy Simko has worked with metal as long as he can remember. Born in 1955 in the Harbor section of East Chicago, he has memories of welding scrap pieces of steel together in his father's weld shop in the early to mid 1960s. Simko shares his passion for art and steel in his own words:

"I have always seen beauty in abstract art even at a young age, and especially with metal because there are so many possibilities. I classify my works as 'Industrial Art.' I define Industrial Art as being art created from materials native to the steel and manufacturing industries of the Great Lakes area particular to Northwest Indiana.

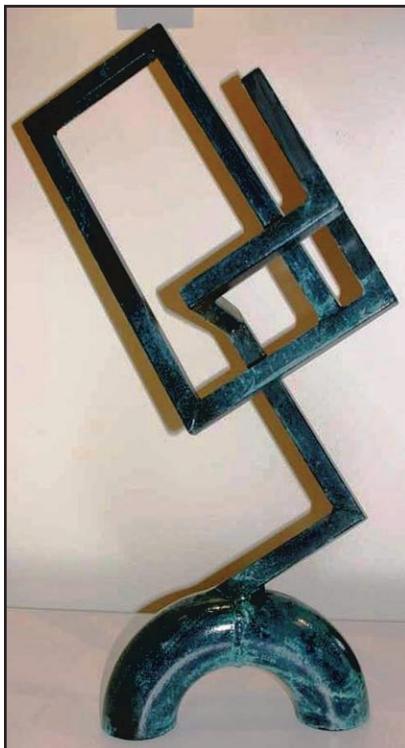
"I prefer to use materials such as piping, tubing, fittings, and also like to work with plasma cut plate, sheet, structural steel, and found objects that have an industrial reference.

"My philosophy has always been to have no preconceived idea or plan before I start creating a piece of sculpture. And finally, I always ask God to guide my hand when I begin.

"What I love about art and especially abstract metal sculpture are the different things you'll see the longer you look at them. I have pieces from 10 or more years ago that I see things now that I didn't see back then which is what makes art so cool!"

Joining Randy is his son, "Little" Randy, who is an up and coming artist. He too has an eye for art and is also great at finishing, coating, and patina, says his dad.

Currently there are six works at the Steeple Gallery by Randy Jr. One is called "The Teenage Years" which has received a lot of attention. Several



Artist: Randy Simko
Medium: Steel (Brass coating with aqua patina and satin clear coat finish.)
Subject: "No End"
Size: 31 inches high by 8 inches wide by 16 inches deep

regular gallery patrons have remarked on how this image of two people leaning on each other turned around reminds them of past situations of their life.

Though the piece has some visual references that imply figures, it is quite whimsical in nature. It is quite heavy yet is small enough to fit on a cocktail

or coffee table or a bookcase.

With the competition of the big box stores and mass produced items, it is refreshing to be able to acquire sculpture which has substance and meaning by a region artist who appreciates the value in his steel roots. All of Simko's sculptures have a permanency about them with regard to the materials.

Simko Sr. has two works in progress with stainless steel and stone for the gallery and hopes to have an outdoor piece ready for the grounds by fall.

"I am a blue-collar, hands-on artist from conception to delivery," said Simon.

"Many artists — famous and not so famous — who put their ideas on paper, contract out to weld shops, and have them build it, cannot possibly have the level of accomplishment and satisfaction I get when I see people view my work. My influences, besides my dad who instilled a great work ethic in me, are Alexander Calder and David Smith who I personally relate to because of their vision and hands-on approach."

We at Steeple are glad that Randy and Randy Jr. have joined our team of artists and look forward to the next pieces scheduled for unveiling by mid-June. The soul of the gallery has always been rooted in steel. Stay tuned for more updates of creative souls in the medium of steel in upcoming columns.

Randy Simkos' original sculptures range from \$250 to \$750. Viewing sculpture in person is the best way to see original, three-dimensional pieces.

To see these in person visit The Steeple Gallery Ltd., 11107 Thiel St., St. John. Or call 365-1014 or e-mail samowner@sbcglobal.net.



Artist: Randy Simko
Medium: Steel (Bronze coating with liver of sulfur patina).
Base: Bronze coating with light blue patina
Subject: "The Hunt"
Size: 18 inches high by 18 inches wide by 14 inches deep



Artist: Randy Simko Jr.
Medium: Steel
(Bronze coating with liver of sulfur patina)
Base: Bronze coating with light blue patina
Subject: "Teenage Years"
Size: 21 inches high by 14 inches wide

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