

LEE SHINEY
ART + PHOTOGRAPHY
ARCADIA, IOWA

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Transplanted Arcadia Artist Avoids Culture Shock by Simply Going to His Roots

At first glance, someone might assume artist Lee Shiney is out of his element by moving to Arcadia, but the culture shock is on them. “Once a country boy, always a country boy, I suppose,” he says. After years of living in Wichita, Kansas and being immersed in the art culture there, he feels like he’s finally getting back to his roots.

“When I was in the eighth grade, my parents moved our family to the little town of Norwich in central Kansas. I went from the largest junior high school in the state to a class of 28. My culture shock happened then, and from there I developed an deep appreciation for small towns and repetitive calming work, and big-sky views. Those things now inform my work, where you can sometimes see remnants of horizons, of digging and gouging, of minimalism.”

Fast forward to 2014 when he and his recently retired wife, Lajeane, bought the old Ar-We-Va school in Arcadia. They spent two years working, and living in both Kansas and Iowa, to get the building to a point where they could make Arcadia their permanent year-round home. Fast forward again to today, and he is back to being immersed in the arts.

He was invited to participate in the recently completed 8th Annual Southwest Iowa Art Tour at the Charles E. & Florence M. Lakin Community Center in Malvern, Iowa in Mills County, and he considered the exhibition both successful and rewarding. “Most of my past solo and group shows have been in large metro areas. I wasn’t sure what to expect, showing in a town just slightly bigger than 1,000, but this was a joy. The people were down-to-earth but also genuinely interested in the wide array of art styles on display. I sold several pieces, including some very large ones, which was great, but honestly it just felt good to be exhibiting in a small town I can relate to personally.”

The Shiney’s also are now back among family. Lajeane grew up near Denison and has family throughout Iowa, so having a large gathering place has its benefits. And then there is the working space. Lee has converted four of the eight classrooms into studios, woodworking, and art storage rooms. “Rather than do traditional paint-by-brush, I engineer things that I then use to paint with, anything from a computer-controlled paint dripping device to squirt bottles of paint. I like and need space to work, and now I have it.”

Is there anything he misses? “Sure I sometimes miss my artist connections and the non-stop art

shows, but something I really miss is Kansas wheat harvest and driving combines, something I haven't done in decades. But at least I can see corn and soybeans being harvested and hogs being raised right from my living room. You can't trade that for anything, and we love being in Arcadia."

Lee's next art show is "2 Artists 2 Weekends," a monthly series at The Brick Wall Gallery in Harlan, Iowa that will also feature works from artist Kim Piro of Harlan. The exhibit begins with an opening reception Thursday, September 30 from 5-8pm. The complete list of dates and times are:

- Thursday, Sept. 30, 5-8pm
- Friday, Oct. 1, 10am-5pm
- Saturday, Oct. 2, 9am-3pm
- Thursday, Oct. 7, 5-8pm
- Friday, Oct. 8, 10am-5pm
- Saturday, Oct. 9, 9am-3pm

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About Lee Shiney:

Lee Shiney is a painter, photographer, kinetic sculptor, and mixed media artist whose art and "art-making-art" machines are responses to high-art, art accessibility, aging, and illness. Homemade turntables, spray devices, and paint dripping machines are some of the mechanics he uses in his alternative painting processes. Recycling and repurposing is an ongoing theme, as is constant experimentation with non-traditional painting surfaces.

He exhibited in numerous solo and group art shows while living in Kansas, including the three-person "InterACTIVE" Exhibition at the Wichita Art Museum in Wichita, KS in 2008-2010. As a teaching artist with ArtsPartners of Wichita, in 2011 he and fellow artist Tom McGuire were awarded a grant funded through Spirit AeroSystems to develop a STEM project incorporating electricity, mechanics, and kinetic art using simple drawing robots, and went on to present the program to hundreds of elementary school students in the Wichita area for several years. After relocating to Iowa, his time is divided between "working on the school" and making new artwork.

Lee Shiney is a cancer survivor since 2001. He also roasts his own coffee beans and can make a darn good latte for visitors.

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Press info and high-resolution photos:

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