

John Martinson

Artist biography



John Martinson collects a wide range of tools, old metal parts from bikes, buggies, cars, lawn mowers, lightning rods, springs, and just about any interesting piece of metal he can find. His studio is a wood-framed building with high ceilings. Outside, he stores his parts on shelves. He mixes them with imagination, a little creativity, and out comes the unpredictable, the repurposed – the art.



John was born in St. Peter, Minnesota. He has a degree in sociology from Gustavus Adolphus College and studied art at UW-Madison. He operated the Galena Blacksmith Shop for many years and then opened his own studio, which is now known as the West Street Sculpture Park in Galena, Illinois. An eclectic collection of more than two dozen large, welded steel sculptures are scattered throughout his two acre park in a beautiful, natural setting. Sculptures include two 40-foot towers, contemplative artworks, a giant tinker toy, unique signs, and humorous assemblages.

John has exhibited in many shows around the Midwest. In addition to the sculptures at his West Street Sculpture Park, he has produced a large body of work over the last 30 years including many public works, private commissions and gallery pieces.

Videos: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c7Tn_yF-jx0 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OCzIS1WcnH8>

