

# Artist drawn to collaborative work around Laramie



ADVANCE FOR WEEKEND EDITIONS APRIL 28-29 - In this April 17, 2018 photo, June Glasson works on a piece of art at the 7th Street Studio in the Laramie Plains Civic Center in Laramie, Wyo. (Shannon Broderick/Laramie Boomerang via AP) [more >](#)

By EVE NEWMAN - Associated Press - Wednesday, April 25, 2018

LARAMIE, Wyo. (AP) - On the first floor of the Laramie Plains Civic Center, artist June Glasson works in a converted boys' locker room that's filled with portraits, sketches, notes, signs and other physical manifestations of a creative mind at work.

Piled against one wall is a collection of colorful signs proclaiming opinions about women's rights, gun control, immigration, racial justice and other causes. A banner above Glasson's personal studio space draws the eye: "Live and let live."

At the center of the locker room-turned-studio, now emptied of most of the lockers and shared with four fellow artists, sits a 40-foot-long table made in part from discarded basketball backboards.

The table forms an instant gathering place. It has drawn people from across Laramie to share meals, make signs, test ideas and build relationships.

Glasson's work as an artist and illustrator moves from galleries to book covers to murals to parades. At its heart, she says, are stories - the stories we tell ourselves, the stories we tell others, the stories we don't tell, or don't get to tell.



Biden maintains lead over 2020  
contenders as Warren passes Sanders: ...

[READ MORE >>](#)

She's exhibited work in galleries around the world as part of solo and group shows, and she's preparing for two more solo exhibitions this summer. But since moving to Laramie about seven years ago, Glasson has found herself

drawn to collaborations with other artists and projects with community members. She's been joining the gathering at the table and helping others share stories of their own.

"More and more as I get older and move through my practice, the collaborative stuff feels more rewarding," she said.

Glasson, who grew up in New York, moved to Laramie from Bangkok with her partner, Rattawut Lapcharoensap, who works in the Creative Writing Program at the University of Wyoming.

Soon after arriving, she teamed up with fellow artist Meg Thompson, joined later by Adrienne Vetter, to start the Wyoming Art Party, which aims to connect artists around the state and across disciplines.

"We felt like there were a lot of creators in the state, and we were looking for opportunities as artists to show our work, but also to meet with other artists in the community," she said.

They began organizing small pop-up shows. As interest grew, they scaled their model accordingly, and for the last three years have organized the Laramie Pop-Up Art Walk across the downtown district.

When they saw room in the Jubilee Days Parade for more diversity, they began the Parade Project, where they invited community members to build costumes and join a communal float.

Leading up to the Women's March in 2017, they opened their studio space to people who wanted to make signs and banners.

"It felt therapeutic to gather and talk and make things," Glasson said.

Word got out about the gathering space, people began donating materials for signs, and soon they were hosting work parties for more marches and events.

"It felt good to be creating a space where anyone was welcome, and people could show up and tell their stories," she said.

Vetter said the studio has provided a location for a variety of community projects.

"We just opened the space up for projects related to art and activism," she said.

As much as they enjoyed bringing people together and lending their expertise on all things related to banners and parades, Glasson and Vetter wanted to push themselves further. This spring, they started the Art and Action Project, a free community course where they talk about activism, art, community and inclusion.

"We really think about whose stories are being told and whose aren't and how to make space for the people whose voices maybe aren't being heard in this country," Glasson said. "Part of what's going on is people don't feel heard and their voices are being silenced."

This spring, Glasson has been part of a new kind of collaboration as a communication fellow at the UW Ruckelshaus Institute. During the semester-long posting, she's been collaborating with the institute's scientists and researchers to help tell their stories.

Project and outreach coordinator Kit Freedman said the fellowship was created to aid the institute's mission to conduct outreach and disseminate research conducted at the Haub School of Environment and Natural Resources.

"People latch onto stories and latch onto visual imagery, so it's way of upping our game in terms of creating useful sources of information for land managers for stakeholders throughout the state," he said.

Freedman said packaging reports with art helps more people engage with the information.

"That's our role, to connect the research to the people," he said.

During her fellowship work, Glasson has done illustrations for a research brief, which is a short bulletin describing the published work of a faculty member. She's done drawings for an animated short video about the value of conservation easements, and she's working on images for an interactive website about land stewardship.

Freedman said there were a lot of applicants for the position, which the Ruckelshaus Institute plans to continue in coming semesters.

"We jumped at the opportunity to work with June," he said.

Glasson said working with people in different disciplines, such as the sciences, pushes everyone to stretch their collaborative abilities. Scientists follow the prescribed steps of the scientific method, while artists sometimes meander on their way to a solution.

"You're forced to both work a little bit out of the way you normally work, and that can push the work in a more interesting way," she said.

Glasson, who has undergraduate and graduate art degrees from Cornell University, also maintains a private studio practice with a focus on portraiture and figures. She often explores the symbols and mythology of the American West, which leads her back once again to the stories we allow to be told and those we don't.

For example, Glasson painted an image of Katharine Fowler-Billings, a geologist who mapped the Laramie Range, in the alley behind Third Street. She helped initiate the "Historic Figure Alley" as part of the Laramie Mural Project.

The alley, off the beaten path of most downtown pedestrians, offers a corresponding surprise encounter with lesser-known Laramie figures.

"What are the stories you always hear about the West? What are the stories that are always hidden?" she said.

She said the collaborative work she does balances the studio work. She also enjoys creating work that "lives in the world," as opposed to fine art that finds its way to galleries or maybe a museum.

Last summer, Glasson painted the "Laramie" mural at the corner of Third and Clark on the Hot Power Yoga building. She invited the community to help out, paint-by-numbers style.

"I'm finding myself more and more interested in that kind of work," she said.

Vetter said the multiple ways that Glasson collaborates in the community are an expression of her affection for Laramie.

"I think that she does all of these things related to creating more opportunities for art and visual diversity to be in Laramie because she really loves the community of Laramie," Vetter said.

Vetter described Glasson as a generous person who is happy to share her time, ideas and talents. She said Glasson's presence in the community has made things happen that might not have if she weren't around.

"There are a lot of things that wouldn't have happened in the past three or four years without June getting in there and putting the time in and going out and engaging people," she said.

In all the varieties of work she does, Glasson said she aims to infuse it with the joy that arises from the creative process and the creative product.

"If you keep that at the center of things, you can be a healthy, engaged citizen moving through the world," she said.

---

Information from: Laramie Boomerang, <http://www.laramieboomerang.com>

Copyright © 2019 The Washington Times, LLC.

### **The Washington Times Comment Policy**

The Washington Times welcomes your comments on Spot.im, our third-party provider. Please read our Comment Policy before commenting.

Popular in the Community



MARK ESPER, SECRETARY  
OF THE ARMY, TO BE...



Tom  
27m

Bill Gertz already  
covered the story in...

BETO O'ROURKE VOWS  
TO TRY TO REVERSE AN...

Sgt. Mike  
23h

Eight troubled social  
misfits support this...

