

## Dolan Geiman brings out the beast in his art

As a 10-year-old boy, Dolan Geiman visited Colorado in the pages of his granddad's old piles of *Outdoor Life* magazines. When he finally made it in person years later, it was love at first Lazuli bunting sight. As Denver's Cherry Creek Arts Festival brought them back year after year, Geiman and his wife, Ali Marie, took longer pilgrimages to enjoy the state's hiking, camping and bird-watching. The couple moved here in 2015.

The Geiman home near Green Mountain and studio next to the South Platte River allow close-up experiences with the natural world. From these perches, Geiman watches deer nibble at grass and listens to

coyotes yip. "If you stick around, the night birds come out and trill and rustle in the little canyons below the hills, sending their songs like sharp little lullabies gliding up the hillsides," he said. Most of his art draws not from a specific memory, but by mixing elements of many observations together, "like ingredients in a stew."

His 2D and 3D works include collages, drawings and sculptures made of wood, metal, leather and found objects. Nearly every piece references nature, whether it's the butterflies adorning a blouse or flowers crowning the head of Our Lady of Guadalupe. But the bulk of subjects are animals themselves – giant bison heads made of warped and rusted metal, or piles of paper scraps becoming warblers and woodpeckers.

Several hotels, including the Gaylord Rockies and the Park Hyatt Beaver Creek, and restaurants like New Belgium Ranger Station in Snowmass and Salt & Lime in Steamboat Springs feature works by



Paul August Winner

Dolan Geiman works in his studio near the South Platte River, close to nature.

Geiman. He donates a portion of proceeds from sales to the Southern Plains Land Trust, which preserves more than 25,000 acres across six grassland prairies. The land isn't used for hiking, hunting, biking, fishing or birding – there are no humans on the land at all.

Geiman once worked for the U.S. Forest Service, explaining the wonders of nature to the uninitiated. He continues that work today through his mixed media art – which at times seems simpler: "It's much easier to get someone to stop and look at 100 tiny pieces of paper that have been cut up to construct a bird, than to get them to stop and observe the same bird in the wild."

– Leah M. Charney

## Old cars, new art rev up downtown Yuma

Small-town America has never bought into the argument that bigger is always better. Matter of fact, folks living in towns across Colorado's Eastern Plains might claim the opposite holds true.

That philosophy has been on display in downtown Yuma for the past year in a new facility called The Orphanage ([orphanageyuma.com](http://orphanageyuma.com)), a small, somewhat eclectic "auto-themed gallery space" that has gradually become a place for community events and a revolving showcase for local and regional artists.

According to co-owners Ron Wenger and Richard Birnie, the idea began after they purchased a vacant storefront directly across the street from Wenger's auto repair business two years ago. They needed storage space for their growing collection of automobiles and motorcycles. After an extensive interior remodel of the former furniture store, Birnie, who had recently retired, had more ideas. He eventually transformed the small building into a popular meeting site, complete with modern kitchen facilities for

catering, audiovisual equipment and even a rotating turntable for one of the antique automobiles in the front window.

The Orphanage now hosts anniversaries, business meetings, high school reunions and community functions – like the local high school prom last spring, complete with a balloon drop. Moreover, since opening last year, The Orphanage has regularly featured local and regional artwork from quilters, jewelers, photographers, painters and sculptors. And more are scheduled in the months ahead.

Now, about that name, which some might confuse with the setting of a Charles Dickens novel: "Orphan cars are cars whose manufacturer no longer exists," Birnie explained, noting a few, like Studebaker, Nash and Crosley. There have been exceptions to the rule, however. Recently, the business partners purchased a mint-condition Model T Ford from Denver's Forney Museum. "We're not sure where that one will go yet, but we'll find a place for it," Wenger said.



Yuma Orphanage

A Nash Rambler is displayed in an auto-themed gallery called The Orphanage.

At a time when downtown business districts across the Eastern Plains are struggling, The Orphanage has found a home. And it appears to be at the forefront of a revitalization effort, one Studebaker at a time. Several other new businesses have also risen from the ashes of old storefronts in downtown Yuma, including a small craft brewery, a home decor and flower shop, a children's retailer, a crafts store and even a remodeled Yuma City Hall just a few doors down.

– Matt Vincent