

wisconsin

people & ideas

the magazine of the wisconsin academy
of sciences, arts and letters

Water, Stone, Feather & Bone

We meet two venerable Wisconsin artists with a deep appreciation for nature: JoAnna Pöehlmann and Lee Weiss

Small Science, Big Picture

Will Wisconsin lead the world into the Nanotech Age?

Midwestern Boy

Our exclusive interview with author Larry Watson





WISCONSIN ACADEMY MEMBER PROFILE
KELLY PARKS SNIDER

ARTIST, AUTHOR, AND CO-FOUNDER OF PROJECT GIRL - MADISON
member since 2000

Why are you a member of the Wisconsin Academy?

The Wisconsin Academy's formula works. I like the Academy's process, combining mediums (fine art, science and the humanities) connecting people to issues and ideas that concern us all. The Academy gives us a moment, an opportunity to focus, bringing us face to face with ourselves and the culture that surrounds us. That brief stillness allows us to attend to our thoughts that we feel in the chaos of our lives, unlocking our perspectives and opening our eyes and minds to new ways of interpreting this world. In many ways, we have become passive bystanders, viewers of a commercially generated culture. Through television and the Internet we take in vast amounts of information, but we don't always do the best job filtering it. The Wisconsin Academy provides a critical lens allowing us with an opportunity to focus, with a greater sense of openness and an increased awareness, so we can all become thoughtful interpreters of this culture.

How has the Wisconsin Academy been meaningful to you?

Shortly after relocating to Wisconsin, in the summer of 2000, I submitted artwork to the Wisconsin Academy's James Watrous Gallery's annual call to artists; my exhibition was entitled, *Dialogues with Silence*, a collection of paintings and literary prose, created while attending many estates sales across the country. The gallery's director at the time, Randall Berndt, selected some of these paintings for an issue of *Wisconsin People & Ideas* magazine.

Later, in 2007, I was part of an exhibition, entitled *Rural Women: Voice and Spirit*, which was featured in the Steenbock Gallery as part of the *Future of Farming and Rural Life in Wisconsin*. *Rural Women: Voice and Spirit* explored Wisconsin farming from the perspective of rural women. The collection of paintings, corresponding literary selections, and a companion video presentation by Jane Bartell created a portrait of the culture of agricultural life. Later that same year, *Wisconsin People & Ideas* magazine featured an article about Project Girl. [Editor's Note: See "Project Girl: A Catalyst for Social Change," Martin Scanlan, Summer 2007, or visit projectgirl.org.] Project Girl is an organization and a nationally touring exhibit that I co-founded with Jane Bartell. Project Girl is a youth-led initiative that combines art, media literacy and youth-led activism into a national project aimed at encouraging our children and teens to be better interpreters of this world.

As member of the Wisconsin Academy, on what kinds of projects would you like to see the organization focus more of its time and/or resources? I am interested in projects that shake up the status quo, in examining the questions that shape and inspire. Currently, I am interested in the use and abuse of power and its cultural and political implications. As an independent nonprofit, the Wisconsin Academy could be a trusted voice in addressing any of these subjects.

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