

# Williams has a passion for pastels

## Artist finds inspiration in themes of water, fish and windows

By Joel Hagen

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Kirk Williams' house is like a museum for antiques and collectibles. Visitors must mind their heads to not run into any antique airplanes hanging from the ceiling. Old advertisement posters hang on the walls and glass cases hold old collectible cars and dolls.

For Williams, having such an environment helps in finding inspiration for his art.

"I like to collect, and it coincides with nostalgic designs," he said. "I find designs that inspire me from old advertisements. The odds and ends kind of add ideas to my themes."

Williams, of Fergus Falls, has been creating art since he went to the west coast in the 1970s. He continued his edu-



Journal photo by Joel Hagen

On his front lawn, Williams has a sculpture of a fish rising out of the ground as if from water.

cation at the Minneapolis College of Art and Design to study fine arts. Although he has been in greater art magnet areas, he knew he wanted to live in Fergus Falls.

"I have deep roots in Fergus Falls. It's a good place for me to work," he said. "I find the landscape inspirational."

One theme that Williams finds throughout his work is water, which is another benefit of living in Fergus Falls.

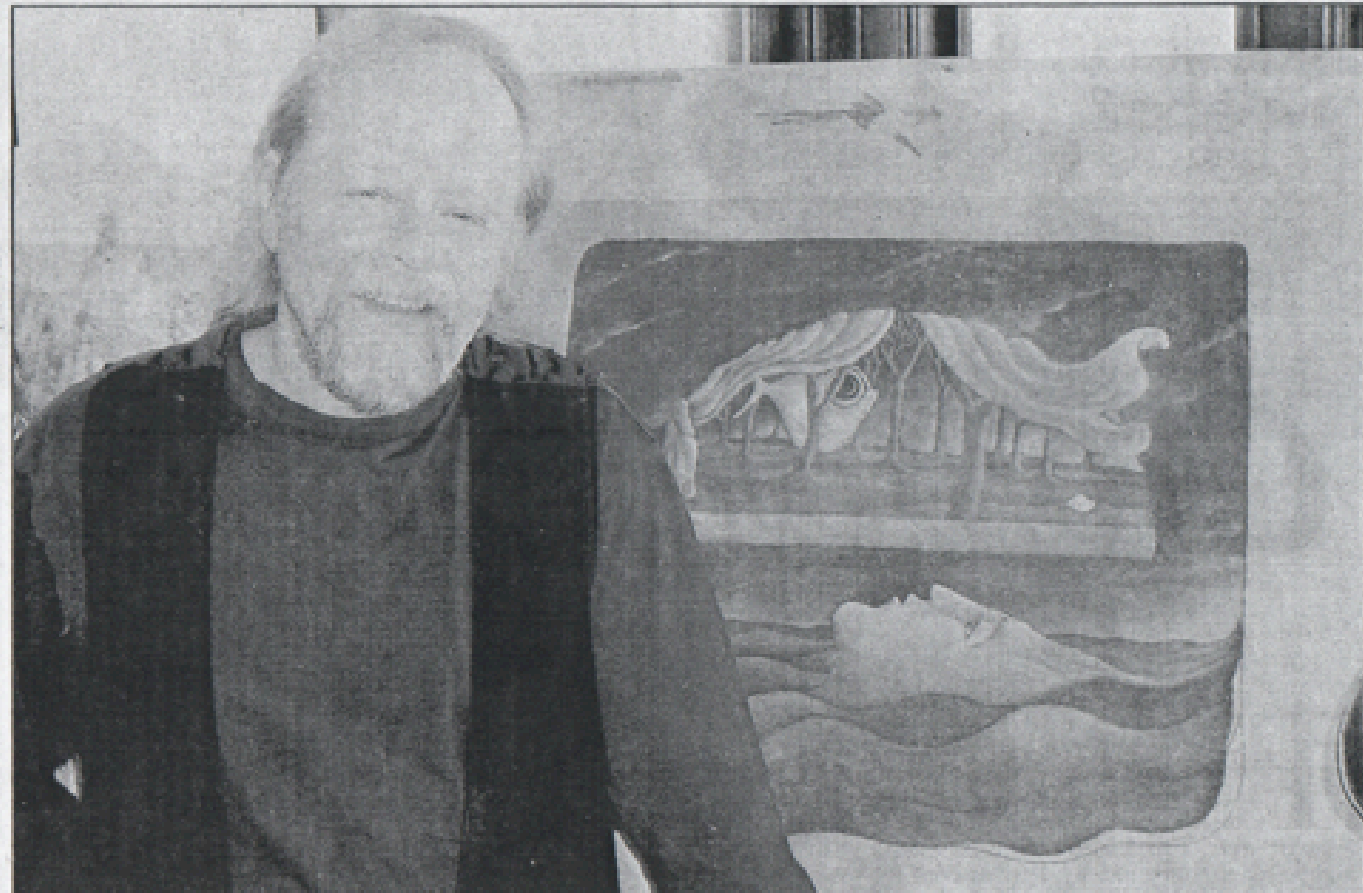
Williams has worked mainly in pastels and sculpture for the past 15 to 20 years. When he began, he tried to work with oil paint, but found he didn't have the control he wanted in creating his art.

"I have a lot of control over shading and composition," he said. "I like the color I get from (pastels) — a kind of twilight night theme. Soft colors lend themselves to mystical themes."

Williams finds inspiration in his passion — creating compositions out of his head. He also uses a lot of subtle symbolism in his art, which usually incorporates water, flying figures, window themes and fish.

"I'm a water person," he said. "I find fish interesting. I like to take them out of their context."

One example he was work-



Journal photo by Joel Hagen

Kirk Williams has been working with pastels for 15 to 20 years — incorporating fish, water, windows and flying figures into his art.

ing on is a fish swimming through a forest. He said such displacements represent mystery. His favorite creations are the pastels that show the water. Usually, he will have a person floating in the water and looking up.

Williams has been fortunate to not have any dry spells in

creating. He said if he's not working on pastels, he is busy with his bonded bronze sculptures.

He likes the dimensional aspect of sculpting and "having your hands on a piece you can touch."

"As you're working, it seems to grow on its own," he

said.

One sculpture, incorporating fish, sits in his front lawn. The head and tail emerge from the ground as if from water. Williams also went through a series of fish with men's faces.

Williams has enjoyed seeing the art scene in Fergus Falls grow in the past decade.

He said when he started working, there were hardly any avenues for the arts.

"There are so many artists in the area," he said. "Not just visual, but musicians."

Williams' work is on display at A Center for the Arts in Fergus Falls through February.