

The Artist Who Turned a Small-Town School into her 33,000 sq ft Studio

*From the bright lights of Las Vegas to a Nebraska town of 230,
an artist's journey of creativity and reinvention.*



In 2006, artist Cindy Chinn left the bright lights of Las Vegas and bought the old Chester School, a 33,000 sq ft building in a Nebraska town of just 230 people. Nearly two decades later, her classrooms are filled with light, color, and creativity as she continues her journey of making, teaching, and inspiring others.

**"I saw potential in every space, and I've been filling them with my vision ever since."
- Cindy Chinn**

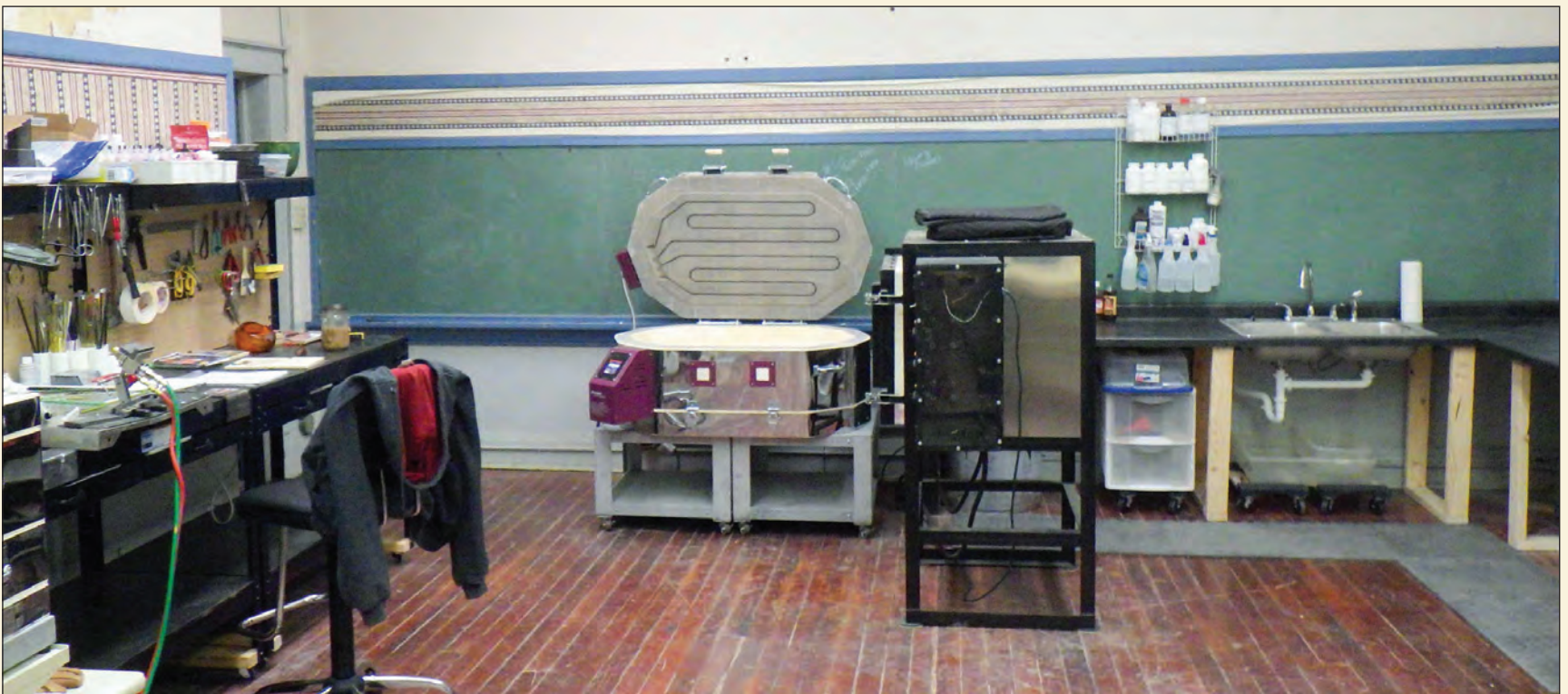
Cindy Chinn Studios | Chester, Nebraska | www.CindyChinn.com

Cindy Chinn's Story

In 2006, while searching online for materials for her Las Vegas home, Cindy Chinn stumbled across an eBay listing for a century-old school building in Chester, Nebraska. By the end of the year, she had traded the bright lights of Las Vegas for the quiet charm of small-town life, and began transforming the 33,000 sq ft building into her dream studio and home.

Adjusting to life in a town of 230 people, and a huge home, brought a few surprises, but soon those lessons gave way to a life full of creativity and community.

Over time, Cindy turned each of the empty classrooms into specific-use spaces, either studios, storage, or living space. Having the space and freedom to do as she wished, her imagination and creativity were unleashed!



Cindy now has studios set up for woodworking, glass art, mural painting, small canvas painting, fabric art, photography, small metal art, and a full metal-art welding shop.

These spaces have allowed Cindy to explore new skills and create stunning works like her life-sized peacock sculpture. This sculpture took her over a year to create and used a mix of media that included wood carving, enamelling, soldering, welding and more.

Life in rural Nebraska lets Cindy focus deeply on her work. The slower pace, tight-knit community, and access to scrap metal (some gifted by neighbors!) all feed her creativity and craftsmanship.

Looking ahead, Cindy is opening her doors to host small workshops, artist residencies, and retreats. With her spacious studio and endless curiosity, she's excited to share her knowledge, and her passion for creativity, with others.



Key Facts:

- Location: Chester, Nebraska (population 230)
- Studio: 33,000 sq ft former school building (built 1907)
- Moved from: Las Vegas, NV (2006)
- Internationally renowned with work shipped around the world.
- Mediums: Metal, glass, painting, recycled materials & more
- Signature works: Life-sized peacock sculpture, pencil lead carvings, hand-cut saw art

“Art isn’t just something I make, it’s the life I’ve built, room by room, inside this old school.” - Cindy Chinn

Why Cindy Chinn’s Story Matters Now

In a time when rural America is redefining itself through creativity and small-town revitalization, Cindy Chinn stands as a symbol of what’s possible when imagination meets community. Working from a 33,000 sq ft studio inside a century-old school, she’s transformed forgotten classrooms into hubs of art, craftsmanship, and innovation. All this in a Nebraska town of just 230 people, while also building her international reputation!

Cindy’s work celebrates sustainability and reinvention. Using recycled metal, glass, and found materials, she turns discarded items into extraordinary artwork, from intricate pencil carvings to massive sculptures. Each piece reflects her philosophy: that beauty and purpose can be found anywhere, even in what others overlook.

As cities become more crowded and impersonal, Cindy’s story resonates as a reminder that creativity thrives in unexpected places. Her journey speaks to the growing movement of artists bringing life, color, and opportunity back to rural communities.



Downtown Chester, Nebraska, home to just 230 residents, the heart of Cindy Chinn’s creative world.



Visitors exploring Cindy Chinn’s work at BAO Gallery, where her art celebrates rural life and recycled beauty.



Cindy Chinn in her welding studio, where she transforms scrap metal into intricate sculptures.



Cindy Chinn interviewed in Doha, Qatar for National TV about her artwork.

“Creativity isn’t limited by geography, it’s inspired by it.”
- Cindy Chinn

Where Imagination Takes Form

From the tip of a pencil to the curve of a welded feather, Cindy Chinn's artwork spans an extraordinary range of scales and materials. She carves entire worlds into pencil leads, transforms vintage saw blades into rural storytelling scenes, and welds scrap metal into life-sized sculptures that shimmer with reclaimed beauty. Working across metal, glass, wood, and paint, Cindy blurs the line between fine art and craftsmanship, guided always by a curiosity to see what each material can become. Her work captures both the delicate and the monumental, reflecting a lifelong fascination with detail, texture, and the quiet poetry of transformation.



Cindy's life-size peacock sculpture took over a year to create and features many different media



Cindy Chinn's micro-sculptures are carved from pencil leads, each piece taking weeks of precision work.



Cindy built a life-size Sandhill Crane from over 1500 pieces of scrap cutlery.

"I never start with a plan, I start with curiosity. Each material tells me what it wants to become, and my job is to listen closely enough to hear it." - Cindy Chinn

Inside the Studio: The Art of Process

Inside her 33,000 sq ft studio, Cindy Chinn's creativity unfolds one spark, one stroke, and one idea at a time. Every room hums with a different rhythm, the whirl of a grinder, the soft brush of paint, the quiet focus of carving. Her process is both disciplined and spontaneous, guided by the materials themselves. Whether she's welding, carving, painting, or assembling reclaimed parts, Cindy approaches every project with the same sense of curiosity and respect for transformation that defines her art.



Carving an oak church pew



Painting a 50' mural



Creating glass art



Carving a Pencil



'The Saw Lady' has crafted over 5000 saws



Making sparks

“For me, the studio is a playground of possibilities — a place where I get to ask ‘what if?’ every single day.”
— Cindy Chinn

Let's Connect

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Digital Contact Card
(Scan or Click)

Media inquiries welcome for interviews, studio visits, or feature coverage.



Oct 15, 2016 Ja Tho Faras
Pencil Carving Featured on TV show in Spain



May 13, 2021 - Nebraska Stories
Produced by Nebraska Public Media



Sept 15, 2020 Good Day Sacramento
Saw Art Featured on TV show



Apr 6, 2018 - Artist Cindy Chinn
Self Produced



July 30, 2019 Earth Tones Theremin
Self Produced



Dollhouse Miniatures Magazine Mar/Apr 2017
Feature article about Cindy's Pencil Carvings



2019 Featured in Disney's "Art Workshop"
Produced by Disney Studios



October 8, 2024 - Collaborative Sculpture
Produced by 1011 Now News



Cindy Chinn's work celebrates imagination, craftsmanship, and the quiet power of transformation. From her studio in rural Nebraska, she continues to create, teach, and inspire, one spark, one carving, one story at a time.

