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Media Station Design Works Unique Signs for a Unique Community

By Alison Grey



When I looked for The Media Station Design Works, owner Ole Nelson told me to look for the big green building on Mendenhall and Eighth. With its unique green hue, the building was easy to spot despite the fact that this sign shop has no sign. Before Nelson purchased the building it was another long-time Bozeman sign shop, Rainbow Signs.

Moving into a sign shop, with its concrete floors, high ceilings and other features specifically designed for sign making, was the perfect fit for Nelson, a sculptor and graphic designer. He's been creating one-of-a-kind signs from this location since 2005. He moved his business to this location from its previous location on East Peach Street after all the welding started destroying the wood floors in the building. Concrete was a little more practical.

You can see his work throughout town, with around 40 signs in Downtown Bozeman including The Nova Café, Plonk, The Bacchus, Homepage, Rockford Coffee, the steel globe-shaped sign outside World Boards and many more. His work is as varied and unique as the businesses he creates signage for,

helping to maintain the eclectic, unique community feel of Downtown Bozeman and help businesses portray their best first impression to customers.

"It's a really cool way to feel a part of my community," said Nelson, who primarily works in steel, aluminum and glass. "I am doing my part to help make Bozeman look unique and contribute to its feel of quality and craftsmanship."

Nelson got a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree with an emphasis in graphic design and sculpture at MSU. He discovered that "anything you can draw, you can cut out of steel," and the creative and transformative process of mixing these elements has been his career since.

After developing logos for new businesses or using existing ones, he creates signs from a 2-dimensional image and interprets how that will look, and work, as a 3-dimensional piece of work. The process requires him to think about creating a cohesive finished product that melds the logo with durability, structure and lighting.

In addition to signs, The Media Station Design Works is a full-fledged graphic design firm that creates an array of products, "from dimensional metal with neon to sandblasted wood and custom fabrication." Nelson uses the techniques he has learned and mastered with sign making to create

high-end interior sculptures and public art sculptures as well.

One of his favorite interior sculptures is "Early Woman of Winter," a mixed media sculpture inspired by the poster art of Alphonse Mucha. It is a 6-foot tall turn of the century wall sculpture that is "a testament to the beauty emerging from the stylistic curves and sweeping lines of the art nouveau traditions." The sculpture, mesmerizing and larger than life, is on display at the Jewelry Studio, located at 129 West Main in Bozeman.

"It's fun to have other projects in addition to signs," he said. "Being creative keeps me motivated and excited."



Nelson's latest pursuit is Fish Face, an outdoor public art sculpture on display at Soroptomist Park as part of the Gallatin Art Crossing Display (GAC). GAC is a free community

outdoor art exhibit organized by the City of Bozeman and the Downtown Business Association in which 17 sculptures have been donated by area artists and installed for one year in the Downtown Bozeman Area.

The sculptures will be voted on by the public through Bozeman Public Library and the Downtown Bozeman Association Ballots, submitted online or by mail. These ballots will determine the winning sculpture and the GAC Committee will then consider purchasing and placing the sculpture permanently. "Vote for Fish Face," Nelson says, joking that he should make t-shirts.

Hey, I would buy one.

To vote for Fish Face (or your favorite sculpture) visit www.gallatinartcrossing.com. For more information on The Media Design Works, visit www.mediastation.biz.

