

WeatherfordNOW

M A G A Z I N E

JUNE 2018

Featured Business:
R&K Café

In the Kitchen With
Ella Giles

UpdateNOW: Raymond George

Seeing
for Miles

At Home With Tom Struhs
and Elizabeth Falconer

Artistic
Expression

Three generations share
their creative ideas
through multiple mediums

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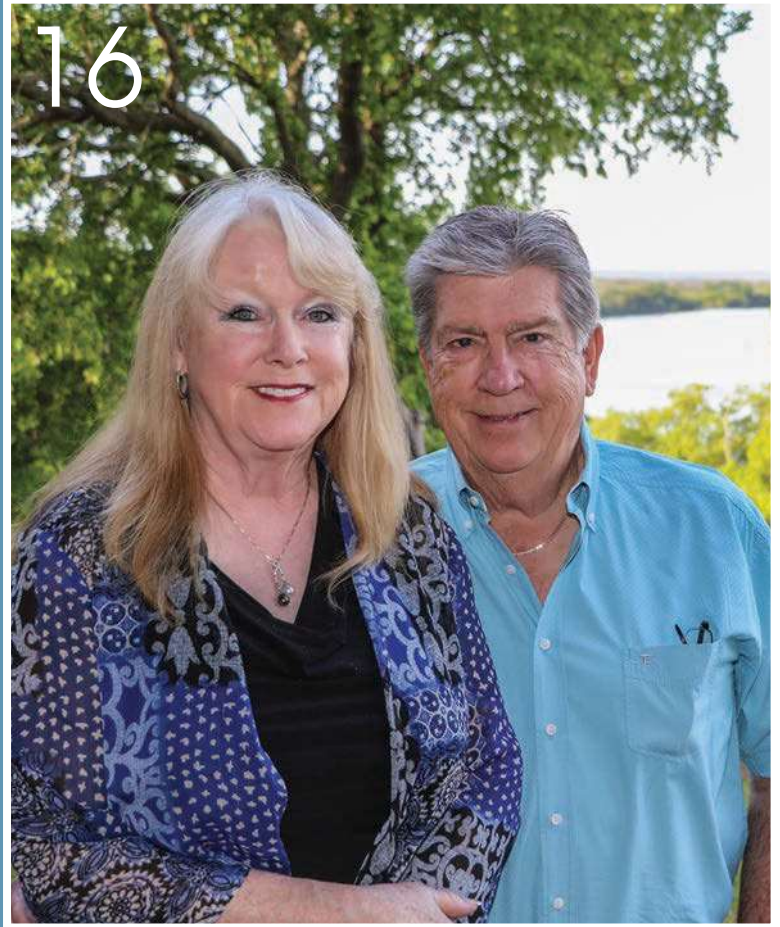
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ON THE COVER

Three generations of Crain women create art independently, yet together.

Photo by
Kenzie Luke.

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On 10 acres near Moncrief Ranch in Weatherford stands a shop that provides several thousand square feet of space for the creative mind. Three generations of Crain women spend hours each day in this shop, developing various types of artwork with a multitude of mediums. Clay has been their latest form of artistic expression, but their creations range from jewelry and clothing to glass work and paintings on canvas. “We make functional as well as decorative and sculptural objects,” Cathy Crain said.

Cathy has always been inspired by animals, which are the models for many of their sculptures. “She was drawing horses when she could pick up a crayon,” said Carie Bordeaux about her mother, Cathy.

“I’ve always been fascinated by color. My mother was a seamstress and would make the most gorgeous clothing,” Cathy shared. Cathy has always been creative and has earned a living in artistic employment since college. She worked in marketing in Houston before moving to Santa Fe, New Mexico, where she worked as art director for a local newspaper. Cathy then began making jewelry and clothing. One thing led to another, and she needed more help to meet orders. She invited Carie and her granddaughter, Sharae Crain, to live with her in Santa Fe.

To advance their clothing line, the three of them packed up several years later and moved to Nashville, Tennessee, where they lived and worked for the next decade. “They took me to work with them as a little kid,” Sharae shared. As a child, Sharae would make buttons by doming a dime with a punch and hammer and then soldering on a loop with a torch. “I tell people stories of my childhood, and some people are horrified. But, I loved it! It was fun!”

Cathy moved to Weatherford in 2004, and Carie, her husband and Sharae followed six months later. At the time, Cathy was working with glass but wanted to learn how to make molds for glass. She took a beginner’s ceramic class at Tarrant County College to begin her adventure with clay. “Instead of waiting days to see a final product, in three

A

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days, you can make something, dry it, fire it, glaze it, fire it and have a finished product,” Cathy stated.

Inspiration for their sculptures originates from just about anything. “You might see a picture, and you come home, and it becomes a 6-foot sculpture,” Carie shared. “We feed off each other and work well together.”

Most of their sculptures are sold across the U.S. through wholesaling and, sometimes, as retail at juried festivals. Occasionally, they donate something to nonprofits for fundraisers. “Once I make something, I tend to lose interest. It’s more the act of creating the final thing,” Cathy shared. “Every now and then, Sharae lays claim to something,” Cathy said,



**“I TRULY BELIEVE
THAT EVERYONE
HAS SOMETHING
CREATIVE THAT
THEY EXCEL AT.”**

grinning. “If it’s something she really wants, it magically never makes it into the booth.”

Clay can be shaped in ceramic molds or formed into intricate designs. The texture is done by hand. They use buttons, lace and even screwdrivers to press patterns in the clay. A lot of the lace and buttons used in their artwork were passed down from Cathy’s mother, Grace Emmons. Once the sculpture is complete, the naked clay is dried and then fired in a kiln.

When the clay is hard, it’s time to glaze. “It goes on like thick paint,” Sharae said. Usually, the clay is glazed with two or three coats, sanded and then put into the kiln to fire for about six hours. The glaze changes



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colors once in the kiln, so they test all of the glazes on tiles to determine the final color. It could take about four days to make one of their signature fish wall pieces. Larger sculptures take longer because of drying time. The weather, such as humidity or colder temperatures, can also affect drying time.

Carie makes many of the glazes they use in their pieces and most of the clay used for sculpting. She purchases and mixes different types of materials that have been mined across the country to give their clay more stability. She also makes a special type of clay for Raku, which is a heating process. The Raku kiln reaches nearly 2,000 degrees. Once covered in fire-resistant gear, one of them will take out the piece and add it to a container full of a substance that will burn, such as sawdust or newspaper. "It flames up. The flames will actually pull the metal in the glaze to the surface, and you end up with a metallic sheen over the glaze," Carie shared. The glaze cracks because of the thermal shock and causes the outside to shrink. Once it



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flames, they then smother it, and the smoke imbeds itself into the naked clay for a crackled look.

The Crain Art Studio uses the Raku process on many of the smaller, handmade ceramics, including one-of-a-kind horse sculptures. They are popular with the younger generation. "I like seeing kids' reactions to it when we do shows," Sharae said. "I watch their parents let them pick out a piece of art that they want." They showcase their sculptures at a handful of art festivals and shows in the local area each year to see the reaction to new pieces. The shows also allow them an opportunity to share their love of artistic expression with others.

"I truly believe that everyone has something creative that they excel at," Carie said. Whether it is basket weaving, writing, knitting or any other creative outlet, information is available in books, online or through educational courses. "You just learn. You have a desire or a need, and you just figure out how to do it," Carie stated.

"If you take it upon yourself to go and try something, whether other people think it's good or not, it's fantastic. You can tell a difference in people," Sharae said. "It's therapeutic." **NOW**