



Bondarchuk Studio News

(long overdue, but better late than never)

It's been a strange year or so. I was in the middle of a sabbatical from Western Michigan University when Covid-19 hit in March of 2020, and I've been teaching drawing online since last fall. I'm grateful to have a job, and will be even more grateful to *not* have to teach online post-pandemic. While the transition to online teaching took a toll on both my sabbatical goals and my studio output, I managed to continue pecking away at a few projects, described below. As you'll see, I tend to thrive with several irons in the fire...

Bred in the Bone (karenbondarchuk.com - Bred in the Bone)

This ongoing series was part of my sabbatical project, and I was fortunate to be able to conduct research for this work for almost two months in fall 2019. I spent six weeks in Salzburg, Austria at Stadt Salzburg, an artist residency on the banks of the Salzach River, and from there was able to travel through Germany to various natural history museums. Among the highlights of the trip was visiting the Landesmuseum in Darmstadt, Germany with its unparalleled collection of Eocene-era fossils from the nearby Messel Pits (a UNESCO world heritage site). The quality of those fossils is such that feathers and fur are visible in some species, as well as color in some insects. I have more research planned at the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History in D.C. whenever the pandemic allows.



above left: *Bred in the Bone* # 12: *Double Vision*, 11.75" x 11.75", ink, charcoal and inscription on handmade gesso, 2021
above right: *Bred in the Bone* # 11: *Shadow Relations*, 8" x 6", ink, charcoal and inscription on handmade gesso, 2019

Lost and Found (karenbondarchuk.com - Lost and Found)

This series conjoins two of my passions: scavenging and corvids. I've been an avid lifelong collector of 'stuff' - scraps of rusty metal, broken items, rocks, old tools - and since corvids are scavengers by nature, it seemed particularly fitting to accompany images of them with found articles of my own. *Octave* (below) was part of *The Crow Show* at The Studio Door in San Diego, CA, and other works in this series are available at Button Gallery in Douglas, MI.



above left: *Lost and Found: Interference*, 8" x 6", ink, charcoal and found object on handmade gesso, 2021



above right: *Lost and Found: Question*, 8" x 6", ink, charcoal and found object on handmade gesso, 2021



above left: *Lost and Found: Nefertiti*, 8" x 6", ink, charcoal and found object on handmade gesso, 2021



above center: *Lost and Found: Octave*, 8" x 6", ink, charcoal and found objects on handmade gesso, 2020



above right: *Lost and Found: Breathing Space*, 8" x 6", ink, charcoal and found object on handmade gesso, 2020

Martins in the Field (karenbondarchuk.com - Martins in the Field)

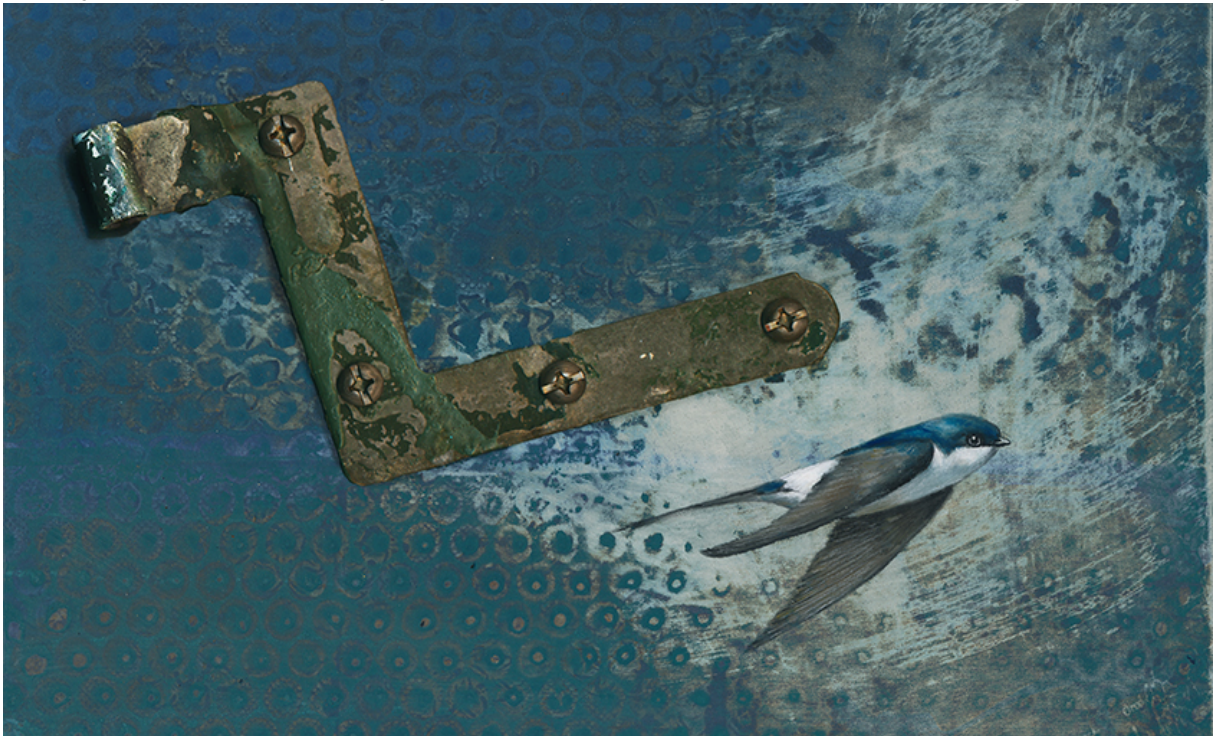
Similar to the *Lost and Found* drawings, these works marry scavenged objects with drawings on handmade gesso. My mother's maiden name was Martin, which initially inspired the use of the common house martin in these works, a bird my mother would certainly have known as a girl in London in the 1930s and 40s. The permanence and physical presence of the scavenged objects, however deteriorated, accentuates the fleeting and ethereal presence of the drawn birds, their lives, and by extension our own. These works were featured in a spotlight solo exhibition in 2020 at the Midwest Museum of American Art in Elkhart, IN.



above left: *Martins in the Field: Above the Fray*, 12" x 12", ink, pastel, charcoal, found object on handmade gesso, 2020



above right: *Martins in the Field: Exit Stage Left*, 6" x 6.25", ink, pastel, charcoal, found object on handmade gesso, 2020



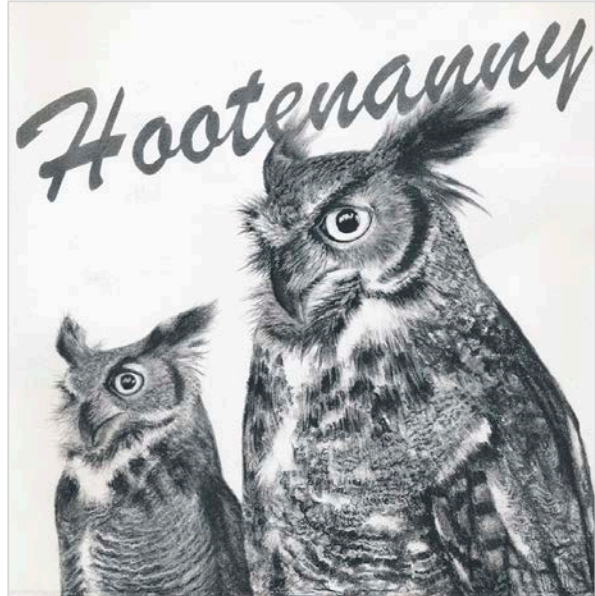
above: *Martins in the Field: Flight Pattern (detail)*, 8" x 12", ink, pastel, charcoal, found object on handmade gesso, 2020

Charcoal! (karenbondarchuk.com - Metaphysics and Synchrony; Betwixt)

These charcoal drawings feature both wild and captive birds that I have encountered or visited over the years in wildlife rehabilitation centers in Canada and the U.S. Some drawings contain graphic elements whose presence is as inexplicable as the inner nature of the birds themselves. *Hootenanny* (below) is headed to the National Museum of Wildlife Art in Jackson, WY for the annual Western Visions Show and Sale this fall.



above left: *Synchrony VII: f-stop*, 12" x 12", charcoal on Rives BFK paper, 2021



above right: *Synchrony VIII: Hootenanny*, 12" x 12", charcoal on Rives BFK paper, 2021



The drawing on the left, *All Along the Watchtower* (12" x 12", charcoal on Rives BFK, 2021) is part of the Ashes to Art Project, a fundraiser supporting the volunteer fire departments in Poudre and Rist Canyons in Colorado. Both canyons were devastated by wildfires in 2020.

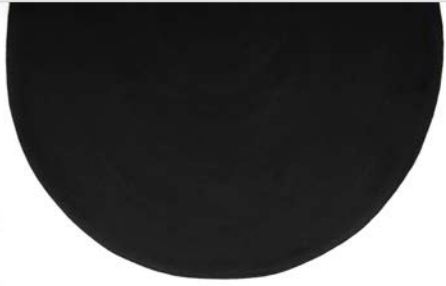
This work, and all works for that fundraiser, were created with charcoal from the wildfires. Each artist was sent charred wood from one of the canyons in order to create 'art out of ashes.'

Online bidding for pieces will begin Monday, May 10. Bidding will be open through the week until 8 p.m. (MST) Saturday, May 15. Items can be viewed and bid on at the Bidding for Good (link below artwork).

Opening bids start at \$25!

Artists from all 50 states are represented, as well as Columbia, South America and Great Britain. There will be about 100 pieces of art available for bidding.

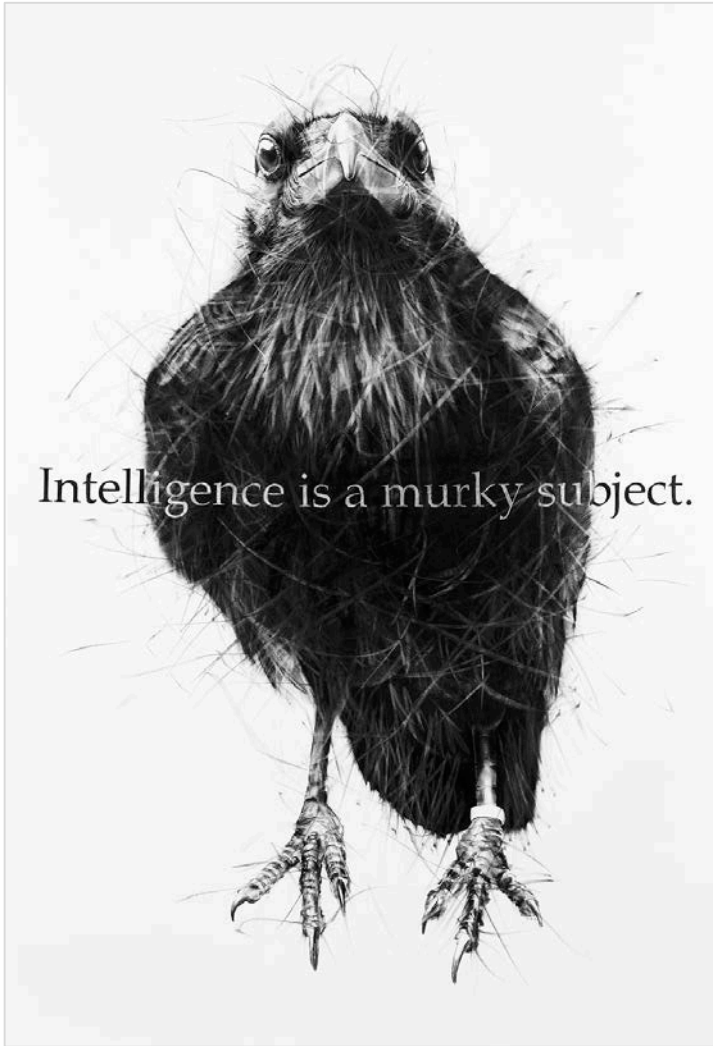
website: www.biddingforgood.com/auction/auctionhome.action?auctionId=341697649.



Metaphysics: Tautology (left) was included in the *Birds, Nest, Nature* exhibition at Bedford Gallery in Walnut Creek, CA. Because of the pandemic, the exhibition opened in fits and starts from June 2020 through February 2021. Other works in the series can be seen at karenbondarchuk.com - *Metaphysics* and *Synchrony*



above: *Metaphysics: Tautology, Back Talk and Ellipsis*, each 30" x 22", charcoal on Rives BFK paper, 2019



Corvids continue to inhabit my imagination, and it seems that I'm not alone in that. I frequently see articles and stories applauding the intelligence of crows and ravens, many of which engage in comparative intelligence "battles." The title of this work, *Intelligence is a murky subject*, came from a recent BBC article with the headline, "Crows could be the smartest animal other than primates," in which the author conveys the futility of ranking intelligence in non-human creatures.



above: *Intelligence is a murky subject*, 65" x 42", charcoal on Rives BFK paper, 2020. Photo: Nick Anderson

Tower of London was inspired by a trip to London in 2016. The flat I rented, on the top level of a 4-story walk-up, enabled me to poke my head through the rooftop skylight and take in stunning views of the surrounding skyline. On hearing a crow cawing outside one evening, I stuck my head out of my rooftop porthole and found the crow similarly surveilling the area. Kindred spirits...

This work will be part of the 2021 *Birds in Art* exhibition at the Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum in Wausau, WI.



above: *Tower of London*, 48" x 29", charcoal on Rives BFK paper, 2021. Photo: Nick Anderson

Ergo Sum: A Crow a Day (karenbondarchuk.com - A Crow a Day)

I began this series on August 1, 2014, as a way to honor my mother who was in the later stages of Alzheimer's disease. I dedicated myself to creating a crow drawing every day for a year as a way of marking the passage of time that she no longer seemed to recognize.

The 365 crows keep flying! Under the auspices of the Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum, *Ergo Sum: A Crow a Day* began traveling nationally in 2018 as a self-contained exhibition, and will be appearing at The James Museum, St. Petersburg, FL (May 2021) and the Richmond Center for Visual Arts, Kalamazoo, MI (September 2022).



above: installation of *Ergo Sum: A Crow a Day*, University of Saint Francis, Fort Wayne, IN. below: details of panels, each 7.75" x 5.75"

