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Every custom piece that is commissioned is complicated owing to the many layers and patinas.

ART FORUM

THE SAW LADY

Nebraska based multimedia artist, Cindy Chinn speaks exclusively to Home Review about her work with saws using plasma torches.

Cindy Chinn, aka The Saw Lady, is a globally renowned multimedia artist, who creates unique art pieces by cutting saws with a plasma torch. In an exclusive to Home Review, Cindy shares with us her journey up till now. She also tells us all about her clients who regularly come up with the most fascinating commissions and requests.

Speaking about her first run-in with a plasma torch, she says, "I have always been fascinated with plasma torches and the possibilities of what could be done with them. I had no idea or any expectation of what I would do with them and just thought it would be fun to see what came from it or if I even liked creating something with one."

Text By Priyanka Menon
Photographs Courtesy Art Whitton
Photography



Cindy's favourite and ours too! Magnificent detailing here, but it is also a fine tribute to the artist's workmanship and imagination.



Made from a shovel head, the scene depicts how a fish is all set to take the bait!

When she chanced upon a shovel that had been cut to look like lace, inspiration hit her. "The first thing I cut out was the shape of a tree on a shovel that I had. It was rounded and I thought that it already looked like the top of a tree," she says. Post this she bought a stack of old and inexpensive saws at a yard sale.

She then went on to cut scenes on these saws which were mostly themed on life in the West and on farms in general, representative of her own home and life. Fourteen scenes later, Cindy's imagination took off. And that's how the Saw Lady was born, we could say.

"I try to make each saw unique, even if it's a small change," Cindy explains. "I start with an old hand saw and trace a design onto it." However, metal sometimes "has its own ideas" and this may result in changes in the final outcome. "Typically I am a fine artist and craftsman," she says. "This form of art is very foreign to me." Considering how messy the art form can get sometimes, the process of creation is not always clean and precise.

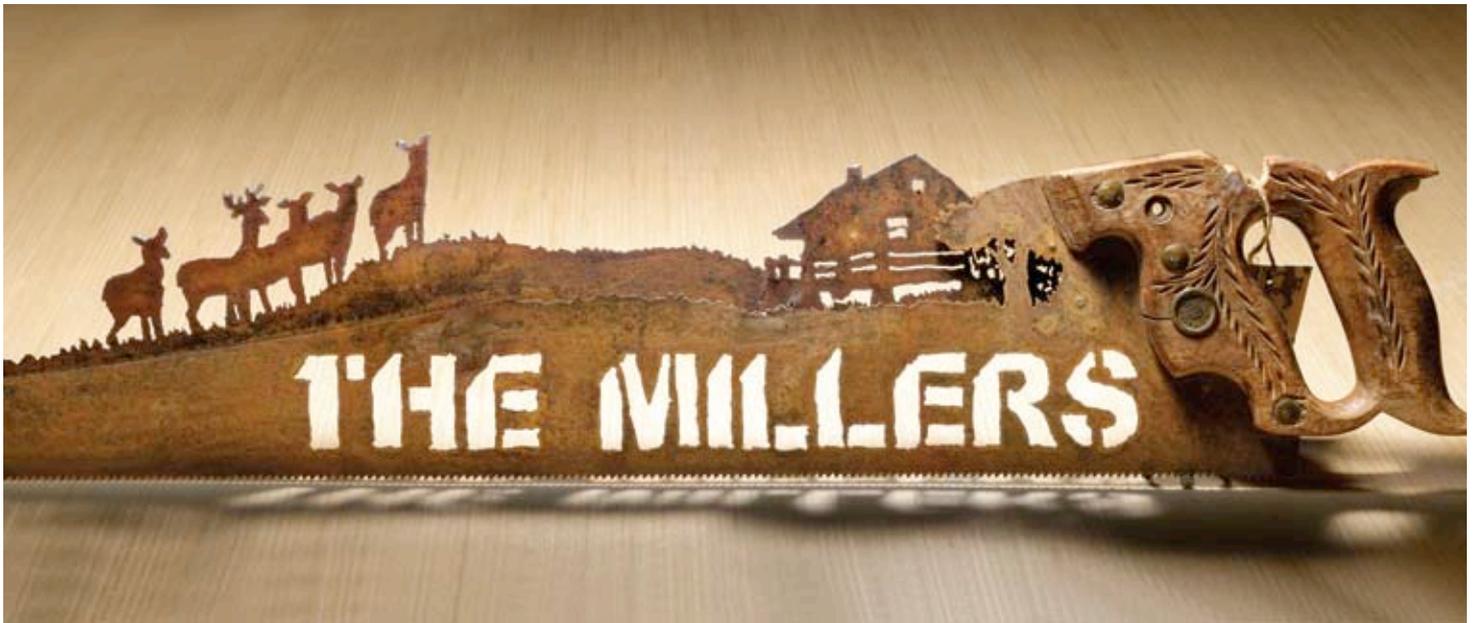
We asked Cindy where she takes her inspiration from, and she said, "Most of my inspiration comes from my clients. People send me saws that have been in their family for generations and ask me to depict their family farm or to commemorate their grandfather's logging mill." She has a set of designs ready at most times, ranging from love birds to tractors. But considering the limited supply of saws, she only cuts them when she is commissioned to create a piece.

"Working on custom commissions allows me to get very creative and specific," she goes on to say. **Once she was commissioned to create a tractor running down the rows in a vineyard, along with kangaroos and rabbits.** "I would never have thought of this," she says as she reiterates how such requests inspire her and challenge her creativity.

Every custom piece that is commissioned is complicated owing to the many layers and patinas. "I have also started adding moving parts like windmills and propellers, even lights with switches." This shows Cindy's finesse as a multimedia artist. "I find myself wanting to combine techniques and pushing the designs to their limits," she says. And the end-result, as we all know, is mesmerising to say the least.



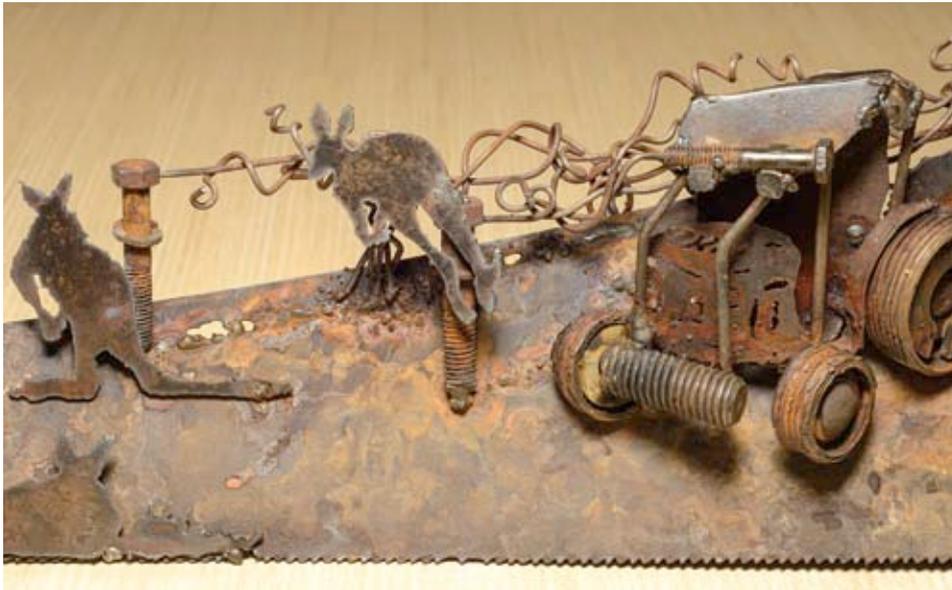
The Ponderosa Log Cabins. Working on custom commissions allows Cindy to get both creative and specific.



A cabin in the woods, with deer for visitors. What a scene!



Hard to imagine this is actually a saw, isn't it? The cat holding onto the stem of a flower as a butterfly sits on its petals. What happens next is anybody's guess.



Tractor on a farm that is home to kangaroos and rabbits. This is a close-up of the detailing of a creation that is oh so enchanting!

But every art form comes with a fair amount of challenges that can sometimes boggle the artist. For Cindy, one tough commission was to create a certain piece for a client's son – a man riding a motorcycle and dogs chasing him. "I made the motorcycle with handlebars that turned and wheels that spun," she says.

"When I had to put the man on the bike, I realised he would have to be movable as well. It was like making a puppet from metal." This was particularly challenging, especially when you take into account that the metal had to be made to look like the boy and his bike. "The most challenging part," Cindy goes on to say, "was to get his hands to hold the handlebars. She named the final piece 'The Hog and Dogs Saw'.

For Cindy though, the piece she is the most proud of is 'The Lamplighter Fish'. "It takes a standard saw to a whole new level where you see the artwork first, and then the saw." One look at the final piece and you'll know why she ended up selling it right away, even though she had started out to make it for herself.

When we asked Cindy for an interview, she was pleasantly surprised that we wanted to showcase her work with saws. "Normally my pencil carvings get all of the attention," she told us. We'll get to those eventually. But right now, we are obsessed with the Saw Lady!

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