

Art That Keeps on Singing: Work by Anne Kingsbury

On view: Mar. 13–May 28, 2026

Events:

Gallery Night MKE: Fri. Apr. 17 & Sat. Apr. 18 | 4–7 pm CDT

Join us on Fri. from 4–7 pm for light refreshments and a chance to speak with Anne. On Sat., the gallery will be open for Gallery Day from 12–7 pm.

Reception and Artist Conversation with Debra Brehmer: Sat. Apr. 25 | 2–5 pm CDT

Anne will be in conversation with Debra, the owner and director of Portrait Society Gallery of Contemporary Art in Milwaukee (her storied, full bio is below). Come early to get a seat and a snack; the conversation will begin at 2:30 pm.

Closing Reception: Sun. May 24 | 2–5 pm

A toast to Anne and her art! And to singing on and on.

Anne Kingsbury Artist Statement

For more than sixty years, I have been a working/exhibiting artist, using my hands as primary tools. Rather than seeing a totally finished piece in my mind, each creation unfolds during the process of making. I have worked with woodcuts, clay, leather, beads, and deer hides, sometimes combining them. Process, concept, and materials are equally important, becoming a form of slow improvisation.

During times when it was difficult to make art, journal pages became a lifeline for documenting what I could and did do. These were small activities to start a day. Things that were short, defined by a timer set for five minutes. Get dressed. Brush fangs. Comb hairs. Do

dishes. Take out trash. Tasks that could stop when the timer went off. This was not a series of ‘to-dos’ or a record of exciting events, but rather a testament of ordinary things.

I retired from Woodland Pattern in early 2018, but I still keep the journals, which of course have evolved. Pages show recorded time as well as the actual time taken to make a piece and reflect other daily activities around it. It was years before I realized these pages of trivial activities had become an art practice—even during the times I mourned not making any art. They are repetitive, and yet each day is different; the handwriting and color of pens used varies. They are an homage to unimportant things that make up a life.

In my years at Woodland Pattern, I also took on multi-year projects that were explorations of materials and methods dependent on time to find solutions, rather than a preconceived road map giving me directions on how to get there. The evolution that happened during this process was always integral to the finished piece—even if the pace meant years instead of months.

The *Three Roles of the Fairy Beaver* wall-hanging on display—which takes on the traditional form of the cope, a stole-like garment worn by medieval priests—documents my early years at Woodland Pattern: *Fairy Beaver as Happy Home Maker*, *Fairy Beaver as Artist*, and *Fairy Beaver as Arts Administrator*. Each are surrounded by the necessary tools used on a day-to-day basis. The artist beaver wears a shaman’s headdress; the administrator is dressed in a pin-striped business suit. All use a toilet brush. Around the edge are sixty-nine small ceramic tiles with scientific and intuitive “beaver” facts.

I now surround *Three Roles of the Fairy Beaver* with dozens of smaller-scale projects. Some works on display are unfinished pieces in various stages. Several were started over fifty years ago and all are still in progress.

My art has evolved from individual images to depicting relationships with time itself, and beaded deer hides have become works of conceptual art—not just word art, not just craft or beading—with each celebrating the steps towards unknown endings.

Biography

Where I grew up in the small town of Turtle Lake, Wisconsin—population 600—there were no art classes in public school. The first drawing I remember making was a cannibal with a strategically placed palm leaf in first grade. Until attending the University of Wisconsin–River Falls as an undergraduate, I wasn't aware of specific living artists. Four years later, after graduation, I was accepted by Claremont Graduate School in California in printmaking and ceramics and attended Scripps College.

After graduating with an MFA, I taught for several years, first in Hastings, Nebraska—where I met my husband, Karl Gattung—followed by a stint at Genesee Community College in Flint, Michigan, and finally at the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee.

In 1979, Karl and I co-founded Woodland Pattern, introducing hundreds of writers, artists, and musicians to Riverwest, a working-class neighborhood. As with drawing the cannibal in first grade, I had little idea what was really underneath the running of a nonprofit organization. We learned many things on the job, often the hard way, and coming to believe in the crawl of faith—the importance of the journey in relationship to reaching a destination.

Having the opportunity to be part of Woodland Pattern since its inception, having unlimited access to the dizzying array of small-press books on site, and meeting, hosting, and presenting thousands of writers, artists, and musicians has been exhilarating and greatly contributed to my continuing education and inspiration.

For years, many of the visiting artists stayed with us and getting to know them informally was an incredible privilege. Breakfast in bathrobes, casual meals as well as more formal gatherings, and treating visitors as guests led to friendships as well as unforeseen opportunities.

During my four decades at Woodland Pattern, like many artists, I led a double life: arts administrator by day and artist by night. My ongoing personal work became informed by professional experiences, and trivial activities became an art practice, revealing hidden narratives. Journal pages became a limited-edition suite; one journal page was entirely

translated as beadwork on leather (taking four hours per square inch and requiring three years to finish). A beaded *Pataphysical Alphabet* was purchased by the Beinecke Library at Yale in 2018. In May 2023, a deer hide covered with journal entries, drawings, and situational beadwork was completed after 27 years, and delivered to Executive Director Laurel Reuter at the North Dakota Museum of Art for their collection.

In 2014, I was awarded a Mary L. Nohl Fellowship as an Established Artist. This made it possible to first think about and then commit to building a studio addition to the back of our house, which was completed in mid-2017. Since retiring from Woodland Pattern, I have received the Wisconsin Visual Art Achievement Legacy Award (2020) and the Milwaukee Arts Board Artist of the Year Award (2021), and had an exhibition—*Slow Improvisation; a Frame of Mind*—at the North Dakota Museum of Art in 2025.

I am currently working on a new major piece, *Invite Your Demons to Dinner*, exploring life experiences as an artist through beaded text (a three-course menu), appliquéd drawings, and letters, and celebrating the steps toward unknown endings. Day by day becomes ever after.

List of works (from left to right as you enter the gallery)

“Anne” by Karl Gartung from *Now That Memory Has Become So Important* (MWPB Books, 2008). Print 1 of 1 for *Art That Keeps on Singing: Work by Anne Kingsbury*

Portrait With Wild Hairs, woodcut, circa late 1980’s, NFS

Raku Head In Leather (Unfinished Scrap), clay and leather, 3.5 x 4”, circa mid 1980’s, NFS

Reclining Pincushion, ceramic and velvet, 7”, circa 1970’s, NFS

Standing Pincushion, ceramic and velvet, 6”, circa 1970’s, NFS

Figure (Unfinished Scrap), leather, beaded face and hand, 12 x 10”, NFS

2 Faces (Unfinished Scrap), ceramic eyes, mouths, leather nose, 14 x 11", NFS

Pen and Ink Figure, 14.5 x 19", circa 2012, \$1000

Ceramic Buffalo Figure, crocheted ceramic pieces, 5 x 15", circa 1980's, NFS

Beaver With Beaver, leather, ceramic, 8.5", circa mid 1990's, NFS

Time, folding leather and ceramic book, 3 x 2.5", 1988, NFS

Adam & Eve—Bathtub, woodcut, 1969, \$1500

Adam and Eve on Bed, woodcut, 15 x 19", 1969, \$1500

Rabbit & Invisible Girl on Turtle, wood drawing, 8 x 12", 2020, NFS

Invisible Rabbit, cut and inked, 7 x 12", 2020, NFS

Invisible Girl with Magic Buttons (Beaded Woodcut), beads, ultrasuede, miniature buttons, 10 x 7.5", 2020, \$1800

Trio of Figures, woodcut, 11 x 15", 2023, \$350

Cup Sketches (Journal Pages), digital print, 13 x 19", \$350

Beaded Mer Creature With Sea Stars, beads, ultrasuede, 5 x 5.5", 2022-2024, \$7000

Beaded Leg Trout, beads, 4.25", circa 2015, NFS

Beaded Rabbit Wearing Donkey Mask, beads, ultrasuede, 7 x 5.2", 2018-2019, \$6000

Beaded Invisible Girl on Hobby Horse, beads, ultrasuede, 5 x 5.6", 2018, \$1500

Beaded Dancing Figure, beads, ultrasuede, 1.5 x 2.25", 2018, NFS

Beaded "Work", beads, leather scrap. 1.75 x 1", 2019, NFS

Fey/Fay, leather, ceramic, beads, circa 1980's, NFS

Self-Portrait With Beaver, clay, leather, beads, quilted wall hanging, 36 x 28", 2010-2012, \$12000

Invisible Girl on Skates, woodcut, 7.5 x 10", 2022, \$150

Invisible Girl on Racing Turtle (Beaded Woodcut), beads, paper, 10 x 7.5", 2019, \$2500

Invisible Girls (Wood Block), cut and inked, 6.5 x 16", 2020, NFS

Fairy Beaver Cope Draft (Journal Pages), digital print, 13 x 19", \$250

Invisible Girl/Fish, woodcut, 11 x 15", 2023, \$350

Fish Figure 1 (Beaded Woodcut), beads, paper, 11 x 15", 2024, \$2500

Beaded Self Portrait with Fish, beads, ultrasuede, 7 x 7.75", 2018, NFS

Beaver Log (Artist Book), leather, clay, photographs, 6 x 6.5", circa late 1990's, NFS

Fairy Beaver Cope (Quilted Ceramic Leather Hanging), ceramic, pig skin, leather, 36 x 40", 1980-1983, \$35000

Clown Doll, ceramic, leather, 8.5", circa 1980's, NFS

Children's Hour, woodcut, circa 1995, \$500