

**James Walter “Jim” Knalder, *Mask Series*, phone interview with Jennifer Mayer on 9/15/15**

Jim is a Laramie native whose family came to protect the railroad, before Laramie became a city. “I’ve been here forever.”

**Birth year:** 1948

**Explanations of process and technique**

Studio, I have all my things around me. Not to sound crazy, but the objects speak to me. I see what goes together—I can see how these two objects go together to make another entity. Each one is unique unto itself. Walking into my studio is like walking into a piece of art. My studio space has grown since you last saw it, it is a huge building with all my stuff. My job is to make a brand new thing out of items I collect. “This needs to become this.” My art is all the things I collected, I’ve been recycling since I was a kid. Everything comes from junkyards, flea markets and second-hand stores. The titles of the pieces come about as I’m working on them. The title of a piece gives the viewer an idea of what the artist was thinking of at the time of manufacture. The viewer looks into that window and sees it or something else that benefits them.

**Inspiration or intent behind the piece**

Different places, went to junkyard, found the street lights and knew they had to be masks. They are the top or backs of street lights, normally you can’t see them unless you are viewing from a building, from above. I was thinking of masks by Eskimos and Northwest Indians.

**Content of the piece**

The Point of Business: The point of business to me is money. I put formulas on there, the formulas all came from an old business accounting book—I don’t know what they mean. I also put money on there.

Shark Chair: The black pieces are rubbery arms from a secretary’s chair. I had the chair arms, and wondered what they would look like. This was before Shark Week.

Here’s Looking at You Kid: The face of this piece was an old drinking fountain. The “tongue” glows and is where water would have come out.

Terminator: I grew up with Arnold Schwarzenegger. The eyes flash red and glow, this one took me a while.

Jackson and Me: This one refers to Jackson Pollock, that is why there are paint splatters. The “nose” of the piece is a mirror, so it reflects the viewer back to themselves.

The Number You Called is No Longer in Service or Has Been Disconnected: I put old telephone wire in this one. It reminds me of a hearing aid.

Cone Head: The “nose” is a dry cleaners steam piece. Along the edges are epoxied pine cone pieces found in California, from sequoia trees.

Praise the Lord and Pass the Bullets: This was the old WWII saying—religion is one thing, but you better have your bullets. If you look closely, you see the little brass pieces look like little white crosses.

**Any additional info:**

I am now doing painting on canvases, I’ve got to get that plug out there (laughing).