

# Whyte steps *On the Fringe* with uncharacteristic art

JORDAN SMALL BANFF

➔ A Banff resident has gone medieval on art as Whyte Museum's newest exhibit swings into motion.

*On the Fringe of the Bow* begins Saturday (Oct. 21) at 7 p.m. as part of the Banff museum's Fall Exhibitions, which features local artists' innovative work from skateboard designs, tattoo artistry, and three-dimensional chainmail pieces.

The type of art is a step out of the comfort zone as far as what's typically showcased at the Whyte, but the museum describes its newest exhibition as "unconventional, spiritual and rebellious."

Banff chainmail artist Larissa Barlow blends past with present in her art with pieces such as a shiny and metallic Wonder Woman dress.

"I think when people think of chainmail, the first thought is knights in suits of armour," she said. "I feel like I've taken it beyond that and had a re-evaluation of what chainmail is."

Barlow is presenting 15 pieces of such work for *On the Fringe of the Bow* of different shapes and sizes, including scale and chainmail clothing, wall pieces and a lion that's five-feet wide and five-feet-eight-inches tall.

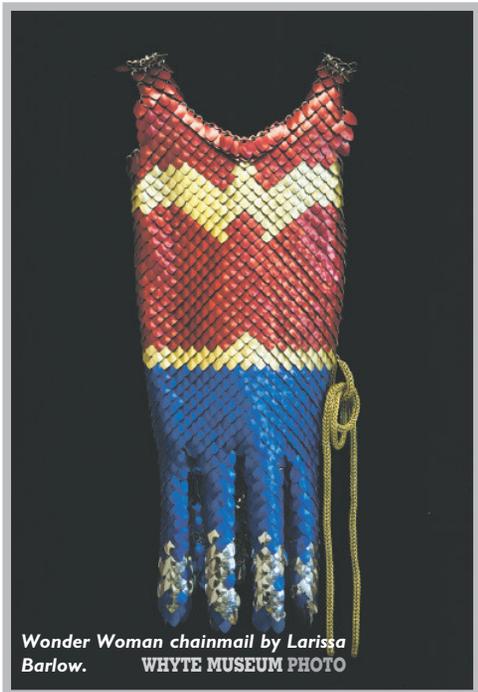
Using 53,000 rings, it took Barlow four and a half months to construct the red and gold-coloured lion, which weighs about 30 to 35 pounds and is the largest piece she's ever constructed. The Wonder Woman dress weighs between 10 to 15 pounds.

Armed with pliers in each hand, Barlow twists and turns aluminum rings the size of a dime to a quarter, and arranges them into an imaginative pattern on 16-gauge wires.

"I don't find it difficult, I find it freeing. It always makes sense when I work with this," she said. "I love the creative process of designing something and seeing it come to life."

Each construction session can range from a few hours after her day job to a 12-hour day on weekends.

Barlow's worked creatively with chainmail since 2015 after she was brainstorming about Halloween costumes and, earlier this year at Banff's Homegrown Art Show, she



Wonder Woman chainmail by Larissa Barlow. WHYTE MUSEUM PHOTO

won a people's choice award for a "Pac-Man" wall piece she designed using chain mail, which was a big confidence booster.

"I've always been into that era of medieval times," she said. "It was such an involved process, such a creative process and a calming one for me."

*On the Fringe* is one of two exhibitions being featured in the 'Bow Biennial' at the Whyte. The second exhibition is *Eastern Slopes Grizzly Bears: Each One is Sacred*.

Colleen Campbell, a field biologist and artist, tracked patterns of bears along the eastern slopes of the Rockies and created renderings detailing the bears individuality and demonstrating the challenge they face in this high traffic corridor.

The Bow Biennial runs until Jan. 28, 2018.

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