

Ideas or comments? Contact Mike Larsen | 262-656-6337 | mlarsen@kenoshanews.com

Taking art to infinity and

Local artist's physics-defying tables feature

INSP is one of those cable networks you've probably never heard of — or watched.

But Kenosha area viewers may suddenly have a surge of interest in INSP and its new series, "Handcrafted America."

Kenosha artist Martin Antaramian is featured in the April 5 episode of the show, which travels around the United States to showcase artists at work. Each episode features three artists.

Antaramian was selected after "a producer came across my website and thought my work was perfect for the show."

His episode was taped in October of 2015 in the wood shop at the University of Wisconsin-Parkside. Other scenes take place in his parents' condominium and at Kenosha's Re-Vision gallery, where much of his work is on display.

Taping the episode took two days, he says, with about six minutes of footage ending up in the episode.

Antaramian shows off his unique solid wood "waltz tables," which look very unlike most tables.

The inspiration for his swirling design — which prompts show host Jill Wagner to say he "defies the law of physics with his tables" — came when Antaramian woke up one morning "with the vision of a spinning dress made out of wood in my head. I just had to make it happen."

Making it happen took a year and a half.

Antaramian first carved his table out of foam and then got to work with wood, which he gets from Kettle Moraine Hardwoods in Caledonia.

Now that he's finished three waltz tables, Antaramian can complete one in about six months, and that's with him also working on



Elizabeth Snyder

Kenosha News Staff



INSP NETWORK PHOTO

Local artist Martin Antaramian is seen at work on "Handcrafted America," a new series on the INSP cable network. His episode airs at 7 p.m. on April 5.



One of Martin Antaramian's "waltz tables," with his signature swirling design



"Creme de la Peep" by Martin Antaramian won second place in the 2013 Kenosha News Peeps Contest.

very similar, only in a different size or choice of wood to better fit their home," he says.

On "Handcrafted America," host Jill Wagner says his labor-intensive waltz tables sell for \$10,000 to \$15,000, but he also does other sculptural pieces.

Sculptures

"The inspiration for my sculptural work is typically very random."



Jill Wagner hosts the

The show

What: "Handcrafted America"

When: Airsts at 7 Tuesdays

Where: INSP is Channel 564 on AT&T and 259 on Dish Network.

Martin Antaramian's episode

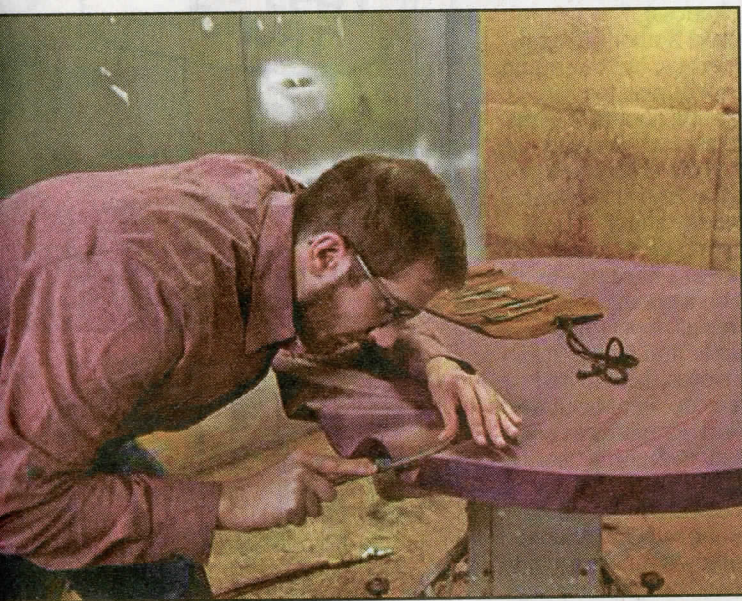
About the show: On "Handcrafted America," you'll meet fascinating artists dedicated to their craft. Each episode meets three gifted craftspeople and looks at how they create their work. In this way, you'll delve into their world and influence the design of their work.

About the network: INSP

has a schedule heavy on reality shows like "Ranger," "Bonanza," "The Ranch" and more information, go to www.insp.com

art to infinity and beyond!

s physics-defying tables featured on TV show



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Jill Wagner hosts the new series, "Handcrafted America."

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Where: INSP is Channel 387 on Time Warner Cable in Kenosha, Channel 564 on AT&T Uverse, Channel 364 on DirecTV and Channel 259 on Dish Network.

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About the show: On "Handcrafted America," according to producers, "you'll meet fascinating people from all across America who are dedicated to their crafts. In every half-hour episode, host Jill Wagner meets three gifted craftsmen and takes you on a behind-the-scenes look at how they create their products, from start to finish. Along the way, you'll delve into the history and cultural heritage that inspire and influence the design of their handcrafted products."

About the network: INSP airts what it calls family entertainment, with a schedule heavy on reruns of "The Waltons," "JAG," "Walker, Texas Ranger," "Bonanza," "Matlock" and "Little House on the Prairie." For more information, go to www.INSP.com.



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from Kettle Moraine Hardwoods in Caledonia.

Now that he's finished three waltz tables, Antaramian can complete one in about six months, and that's with him also working on other projects.

"I could probably do a waltz table in four months if that's all I was working on, but I couldn't keep my sanity," he says, laughing about the painstaking work involved with each table.

Antaramian wants to "break people's preconceptions of what objects can look like," and, if host Wagner is any indication, he's succeeded. She marvels at "his signature look — solid wood furniture carved to look like rustling fabric."

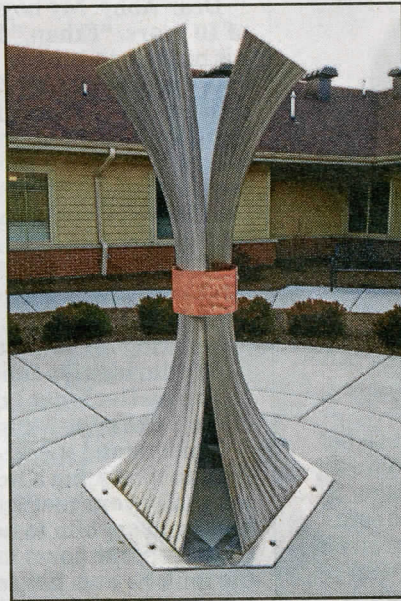
What's next

Antaramian, who has been doing woodworking for about eight years, is planning an ambitious replica of a Victorian dress, carved out of wood. "I started when I took a beginning woodworking course at Parkside," he says. "While I was in school, I did mostly geometric work, learning the basics. After graduating five years ago, I started doing wood carving, making more organic pieces."

Besides Re-Vision Gallery, he shows his work at various art festivals and juried exhibitions, including the "One of a Kind Show" from April 29 through May 1 in Chicago at the Merchandise Mart.

He was also just awarded a 2016 Racine Art Museum Artist Fellowship. The award comes with \$2,500 he can use for any expenses that

"waltz tables," with his signature swirling design



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Local artist Martin Antaramian calls this sculpture "The Harvest." It was commissioned by a memory care facility.

"will assist in the development of new work and the advancement of his artistic career."

The fellowship also means he will have a solo show at the RAM's Wustum Museum of Fine Arts starting on Aug. 25, 2017.

He also takes commissions for pieces.

"Often I will have a client who sees my work in a gallery or show and they end up wanting something

Sculptures

"The inspiration for my sculptural work is typically very random," he explains, "and I like to experiment with different materials. I was always very interested in mythologies when I was growing up, which is why I ended up making the Dionysus and Apollo sculptures."

His most recent sculpture is a commissioned piece for a memory care center in Merrillville, Ind. The sculpture, called *The Harvest*, "was designed around the client's desire for a simple abstract form and use of materials that would hold up against weathering."

Peeps!

One of Antaramian's most important pieces was a cast bronze Peep, which won second place in the 2013 Kenosha News Peeps Contest.

"I just thought it was funny," he says of the Peeps piece — which, in an obvious oversight, he does not list on his website under awards he has won.

(What? Does he really think there's no future in being a Peeps sculptor?)

He called his piece "Creme de la Peep" and said of his work, "I wanted to display it as a high-class dessert rather than just a piece of candy since it is such an iconic Easter symbol."

When he becomes a world-famous furniture maker, we're sure he'll remember that Peeps played a huge role in his artistic development.

Local artist Martin Antaramian
"Handcrafted American"

Martin Antaramian

Born and raised: In Kenosha, Wis. Antaramian. (Yes, his dad is a mayor who is running for re-election.)

School: He graduated from Kenosha Central High School in Sculpture and Furniture Design. He is currently debating between psychology and art. "It wasn't until I got my education credit that it really meant to do."

Awards: October 2012: Innovative Design at The Kenosha News Peeps Contest. July 2014: Best in Class at the Shore Festival of Art in Kenosha. March 2014: First place at the Kenosha for his Mocha Peep.

February 2013: First place at his Cherry Waltz table. May 2014: Best in Class at the Art Festival in Barrington. October 2013: Best in Class at the Furnishings Show in Merrillville.

Future plans: "Right now I'm committing my work to various galleries. I can increase my exposure in the world. I am also constantly looking at what people may think of my work."

More information: r

Want to be a zombie? Join 'The Walking Dead'

BY MARK KENNEDY
AP DRAMA WRITER

SECAUCUS, N.J. — When the lights come on, the scene in front of you isn't pretty: There's a gagged woman handcuffed to a wall, a TV on at full volume and a guy lying on a couch with a gaping belly wound.

Such is the troubling landscape that greets audience members at the beginning of the touring immersive show re-creating the chilling world of AMC's "The Walking Dead," in which the world has been plagued by a zombie apocalypse. The horror drama series is one of the most popular shows on television.

Visitors make their way through the 10,000-square-foot attraction — six sets built into tractor trailers,

plus various tents — as either a post-apocalyptic survivor or, after a quick makeup session, an undead zombie.

The show is traveling the country in three tractor trailers and is part of both the Walker Stalkers tour and the Heroes & Villains Fan Fest. It's currently in Salt Lake City and will stop in Chicago in May.

If you go in as a human, the handcuffed woman — she's the one moaning "They're going to kill me!" — needs to be ungagged. Then she'll give you some more unsettling news: The key to her handcuffs was swallowed by the gentleman on the couch, with the hole in his gut.

"Someone's got to go and get the key," says creator and director

Michael Counts, one of the early pioneers of immersive theater, during a backstage tour. "Use your imagination to figure it out."

After that gross situation, you must handle simulated gunfire, holographic images of Walkers, billowing smoke, tunnels, realistic light and sound effects, and actors playing Walkers hunting for you. And that's just the first part.

"It's all these effects that are highly designed, very specific, very produced that ultimately create this totally immersive, totally transportive experience where you're in the world of 'The Walking Dead,'" says Counts.

"The Walking Dead Experience — Chapter One" is set the

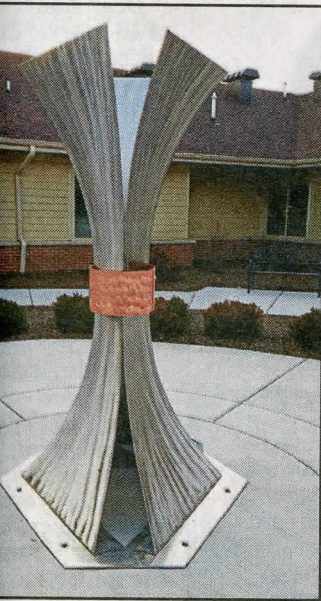
night that the zombie apocalypse starts. It's backed by the Walker Stalker Con and Entertainment, the company behind the comic book series "The Walking Dead" created by Robert Kirkman.

Walker Stalker Con, the largest fan convention in America, plans 16 events across America, a meet-up in Las Vegas in February and a Bahama

There are various ways to experience the immersive show, from being a survivor, or getting mauled by a gruesome Walker, including special effects, and scaring the survivors.

Counts prides himself on the quality of the experience and he promises high production values. "We've gone over

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"Handcrafted America" on the INSP Network.

Martin Antaramian: 5-second bio

Born and raised: In Kenosha. His parents are John and Linda Antaramian. (Yes, his dad is THAT John Antaramian, the former Kenosha mayor who is running for the office again.)

School: He graduated from UW-Parkside with a bachelor's degree in Sculpture and Furniture Design. "When I started college I was debating between psychology, philosophy and political science," he said. "It wasn't until I took an Intro to 3-D Design class as a general education credit that it struck me that sculptural work was what I was meant to do."

Awards: October 2014: Best in Show for New Product Debut — Innovative Design at The Fine Furnishings Show in Milwaukee.

July 2014: Best in Category for 3-D Functional at the 2014 North Shore Festival of Art in Skokie, Ill.

March 2014: First place at the UW-Parkside Juried Art Show in Kenosha for his Mocha coffee table.

February 2013: First place at the UW-Parkside Juried Art Show for his Cherry Waltz table.

May 2014: Best in category for 3-D Functional at The Barrington Art Festival in Barrington, Ill.

October 2013: Best in Show for Contemporary Design at The Fine Furnishings Show in Milwaukee.

Future plans: "Right now, I am trying to grow by business by submitting my work to various art competitions around the U.S. so that I can increase my exposure and become more well known in the art world. I am also constantly striving to push my work beyond the limits of what people may think is possible in a wood medium."

More information: martinantaramian.com

Zombie? Join 'The Walking Dead' immersive show

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"The Walking Dead Experi-
ence — Chapter One" is set the

night that the zombie apocalypse
starts. It's backed by the fan-driven
Walker Stalker Con and Skybound
Entertainment, the company led by
"The Walking Dead" creator Robert
Kirkman.

Walker Stalker Con, the second
largest fan convention in North
America, plans 16 events across
America, a meet-up in London in
February and a Bahamas cruise.

There are various ways to expe-
rience the immersive show: as a
survivor, or getting made up as a
gruesome Walker, including pros-
thetics, and scaring the wits out of
survivors.

Counts prides himself on realism,
and he promises high production
values. "We've gone overboard with

sets and authenticity in depicting
the reality of it," he says.

If "Chapter One" is a success,
new narratives for a sequel may be
borrowed from "The Walking Dead"
comic books and TV show — includ-
ing the recently renewed spin-off,
"Fear the Walking Dead" — and
video game series.

Counts has this warning for first-
timers, who gather in small groups
in a completely dark living room
when the experience begins: "It's
very possible that not everybody in
your group makes it out alive."

*Walker Stalker Con Chicago 2016
is May 28-29 at the Convention Cen-
ter in Rosemont, Ill. For tickets and
more information, go to the website
walkerstalkercon.com/chicago.*