

COVER COMPETITION FINALISTS

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Bridger GMC
(detail, reversed)
by Wendy Marquis

Cover Competition Winners

As always, narrowing down the choices was no easy feat, but the 10 finalists profiled here show the variety of techniques and materials watermedia artists can utilize to create compelling images. Each artist also offers a valuable lesson that can be applied to your own artistic practice.

Wendy Marquis

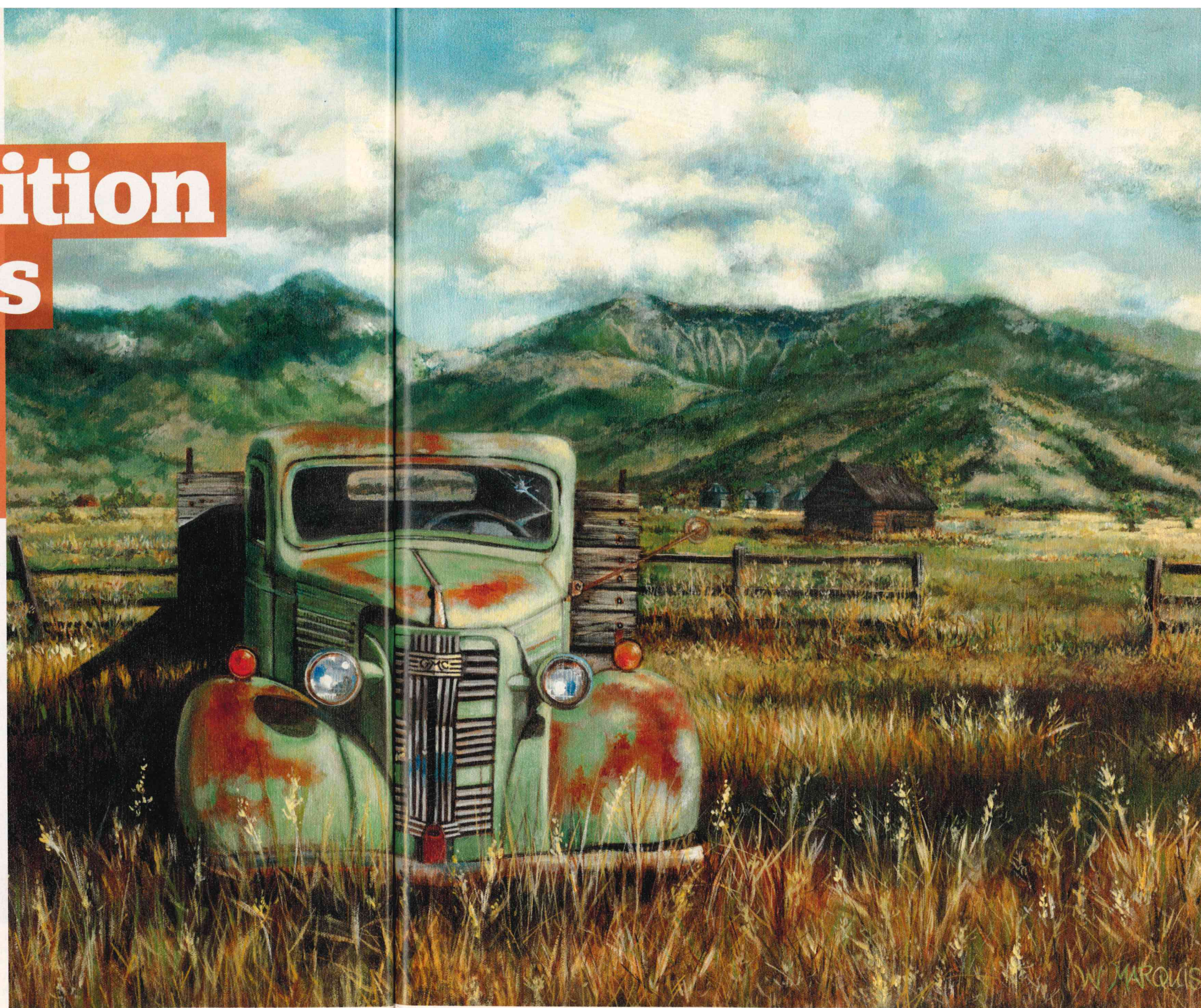
On the Cover: Bridger GMC

2010, acrylic, 24 x 30. All artwork this article collection the artist unless otherwise indicated.

Marquis paints with acrylic, glazes like an oil painter, utilizes painting techniques of watercolor, and draws upon her experiences as a faux finisher to create her scenes of life in Montana, where she now lives. *Bridger GMC* was chosen as the grand-prize winner not only for its simplicity—which made it an ideal cover image—but also for the way it demonstrates her informed approach.

The artist starts with an underpainting that is either done in pale sienna for a predominantly warm scene, or pale yellow for a cool one. Using photographic reference, she begins at the top of the composition and works her way down. To create depth, as well as a wide value range, she applies layers of thin glazes. “The glazing definitely came into play when I worked on the rusted areas of the truck,” the artist says. “There are probably four or five layers of the rust color, and more in the shadow areas. This gives the painting a translucency you don’t always see in acrylic. I was careful to keep the layers thin so that you can still see the base color”—I wanted to avoid that flat, plastic look that you sometimes get with acrylic.”

Marquis has painted other trucks since moving to Montana from New Hampshire five years ago, but this one



presented itself as something special. "I love to drive around and find inspiration, and I was on a mission that day to find something to paint," she recalls. "A lot of times I find the right subject but I have to change the background. This one was perfect, with a dream background." She says the sky was essentially as depicted, with minor editing necessary. Marquis was particularly pleased with how the clouds delivered broken shadows to the background hills, which she says anyone in the Bozeman area would immediately recognize as the Bridger Mountains.

The artist recalls her work on the foreground grass, which added much of the painting's depth. "I kept making the high-lights lighter and lighter and they kept popping and coming farther forward," she says. "I also made them four or five times larger than the grass in the middle ground. The most enjoyable part of painting is seeing things start to have depth as you play with light and color and brightness. It's like magic."

Marquis trained at the School of The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and at the University of Arizona, in Tucson, where she was a graphic design major, "but that didn't cut it for me," she says. "I needed to paint." She spent a decade painting murals and applying faux finishes to houses and businesses in New Hampshire before relocating to the Big Sky Country. Marquis was well established on the East Coast, but starting over in Montana has been worth it. "It's an awesome place for an artist," she says.

Sunset Bliss

2009, acrylic,
20 x 16. Private
collection.

For more information, visit www.wendymarquis.com.

