

Above: S me Hahm sits in front of some of her barn quilt tiles on her woodshed. Photo by Grace Wilson.

“It was a design called the Ohio star, just red and white on a piece of plywood,” she said. “It was old, weathered and cracking paint, and I was very drawn to it.”

Today, Hahm leads The Far North Quilt Trail Project, through which she and others create large quilt-pattern

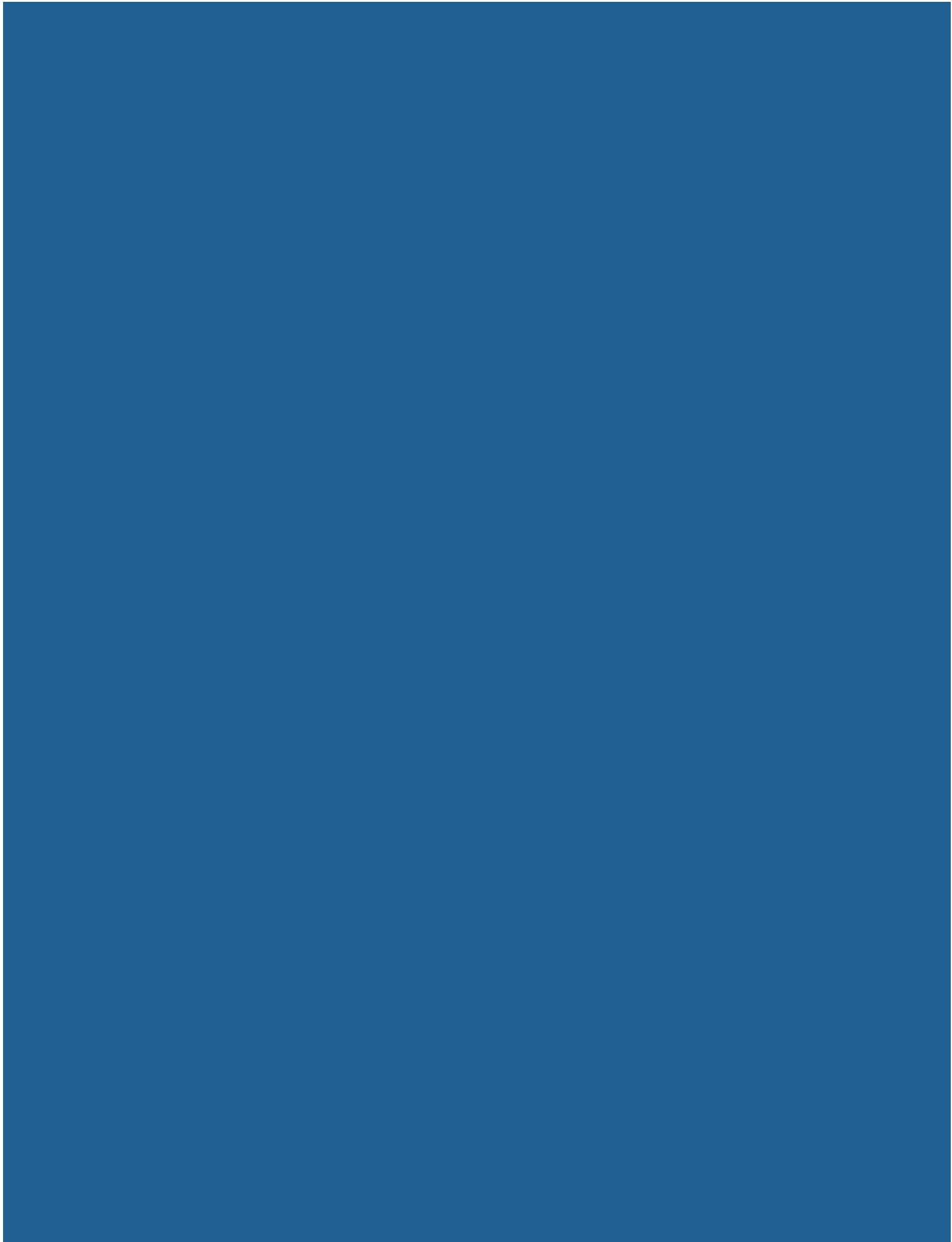
“Once I started thinking about Fairbanks itself as an art gallery, I couldn’t stop imagining all of the places that could be enhanced visually by a barn quilt.”

The roadmap soon brought her to a trail — one made of barn quilts.

The practice had been rejuvenated in Ohio in the early 2000s by Donna Sue Groves, who wanted to highlight architecture, honor families and connect communities.

“I started to ask myself a lot of questions. Why not me? Why can’t I start a quilt trail here?” Hahm said. “Once I started thinking about Fairbanks itself as an art gallery, I couldn’t stop imagining all of the places that could be enhanced visually by a barn quilt.”

Since then, Hahm has created 14 barn quilts, most of them in Fairbanks, including at the Fairbanks Community Garden, Pioneer Park, Creamer’s Field and Goldie’s. In May 2021, she installed three barn quilts in the Anchorage area for the Cook Inlet Housing Authority. Her goal for summer 2022 is to paint a quilt at the Georgeson Botanical Garden’s barn at UAF’s Fairbanks Experiment Farm.



Hahm's 'Flying Geese' barn quilt, installed in February 2020 on the historic dairy barn at Creamer's Field Migratory Waterfowl Refuge in Fairbanks, is a cornerstone piece in the Far North Quilt Trail. Photo by Sarah Manriquez.

"I designed the trail to ignite the eyes and minds of the public around vibrant artworks," said Hahm, who will return to UAF in 2022 as an adjunct professor of art. "I wanted to gain experience in creating and installing public art.

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on the Arts. Somer and a team of volunteers then hung the pieces on the cabin.

The quilt "is a beautiful and eye-catching piece for all to enjoy," Hamos said. "It will be especially appreciated during the winter."



Students gather with Hahm beneath "The Folk Quilt," which they created in summer 2021. Students made individual quilt tiles and Hahm arranged them on The Folk School of Fairbanks' cabin wall in Pioneer Park. Photo by Sarah Marriquez.

Hahm's "why not me?" philosophy has helped her flourish as an artist in Interior Alaska, along with hard work and perseverance.

Originally from Missoula, Montana, Hahm moved to Fairbanks, sight unseen, in 2005 to seek a Master of Fine Arts degree from UAF.

"I've always felt drawn to the North, and was excited about the idea of coming to Alaska," she said. "I had no idea the adventure that awaited, or that I would put down roots here in Fairbanks and call it home."

At UAF, she worked as a teaching assistant. "Instructing college-level courses, on top of the 12-credit graduate load for my own academics, was pretty intense," she said.

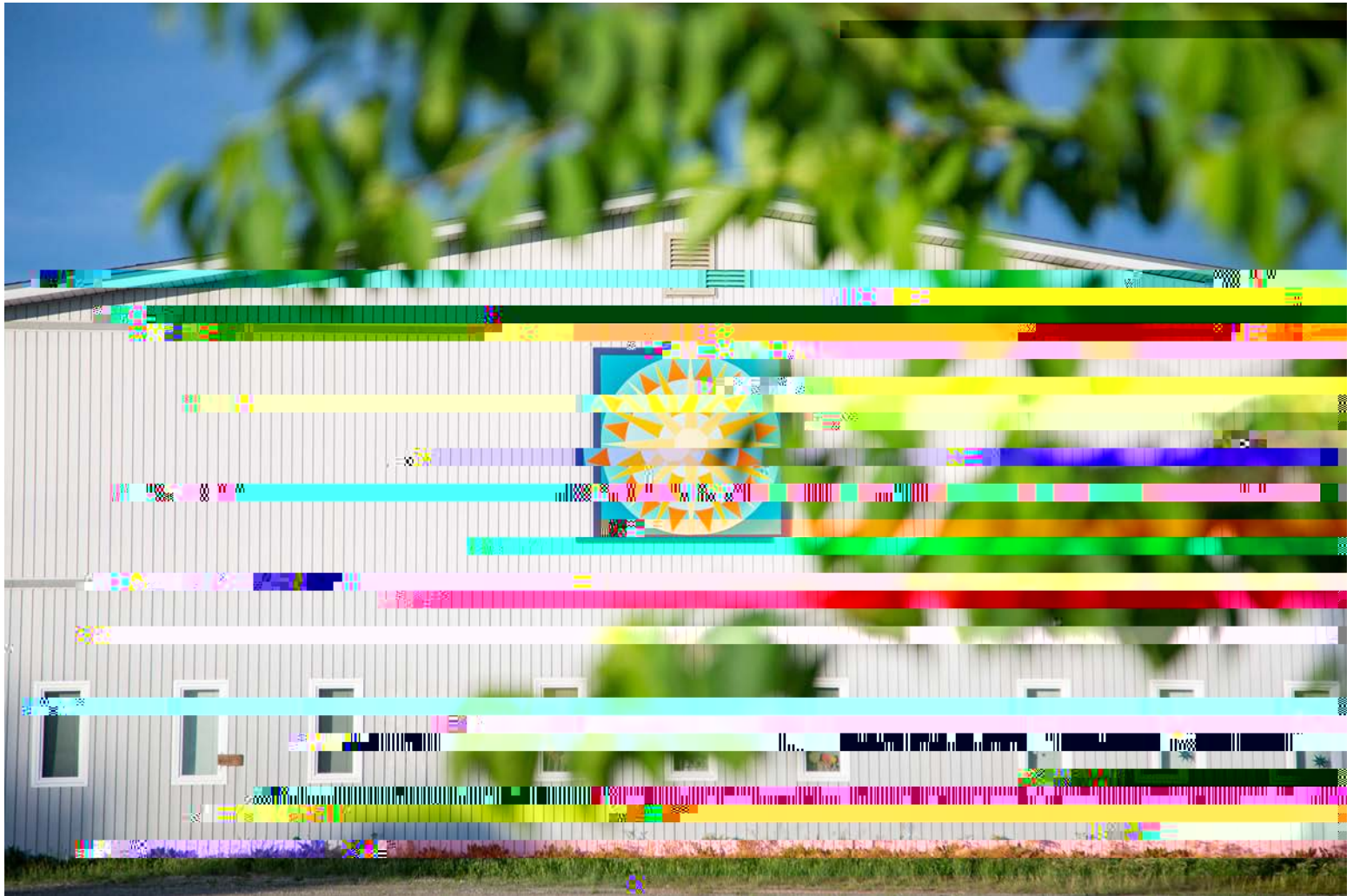
She supplemented that income by bartending and serving on weekends. Before buying a car, she rode her mountain bike in the winter — "before fat bikes were cool."

Her last year in the graduate program, art faculty awarded her a full-ride scholarship. That allowed her to complete her M.F.A. thesis exhibition, a display of 15 large acrylic paintings and 500 small drawings in a grid format.

Friends introduced her to _____, a UAF civil engineering graduate, who became her partner and eventually her husband.

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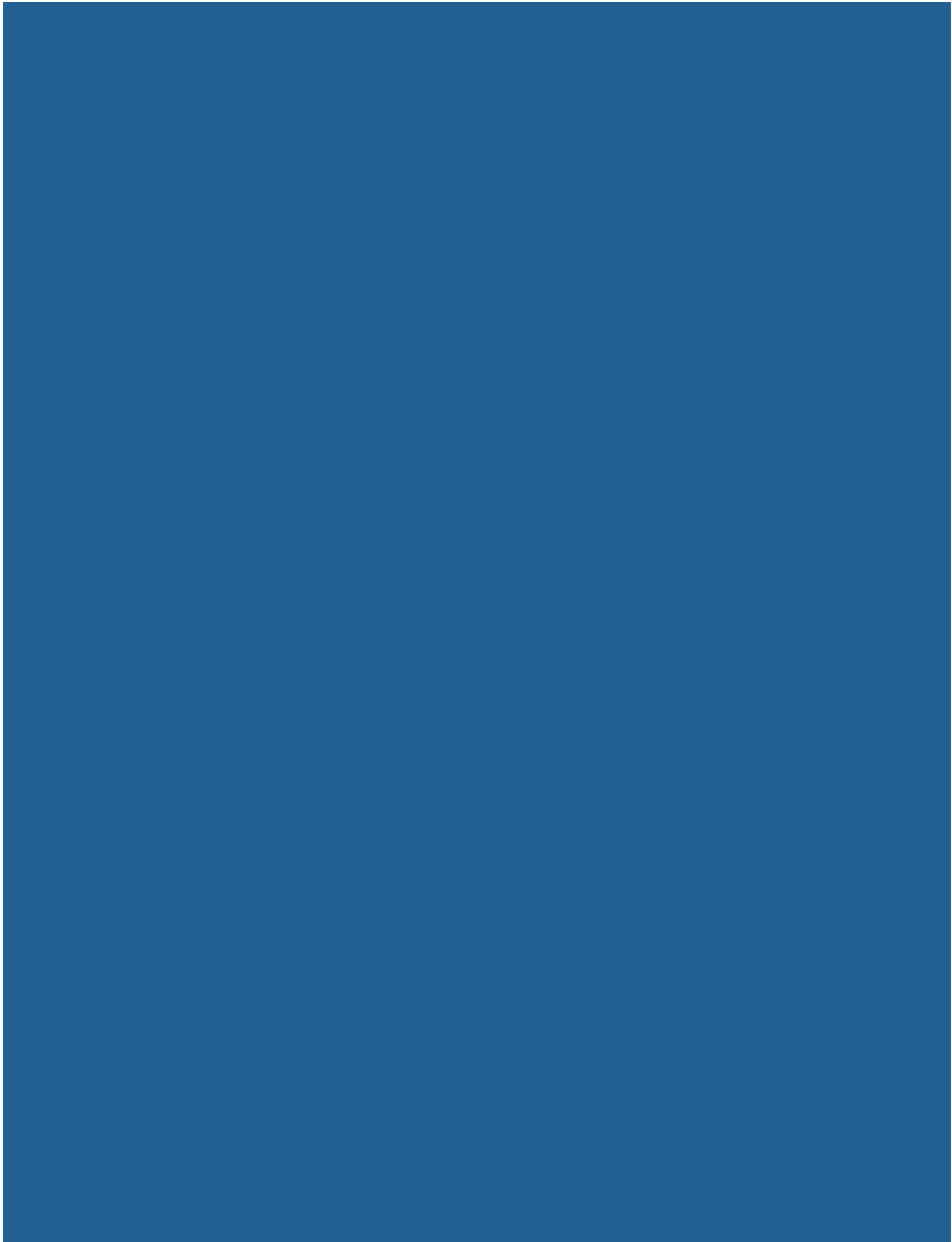
So she kept making art but branched off in completely different directions. During the next seven years, Hahm would do a great many things, while nourishing her roots as an artist.



Boreal Sun Charter School, on South Barnette Street in Fairbanks, and the Friends of Boreal Sun Charter School commissioned Hahm to paint the "Rising Sun" barn quilt in July 2020. Photo by Sarah Manriquez.

"I took a farm apprenticeship position at Calypso Farm and Ecology Center and learned how to farm in the interior of Alaska," she said. "The following year, I got married, and Ben and I traveled around the United States together. I was working as a bartender and as a gallery assistant at Well Street Art Co."

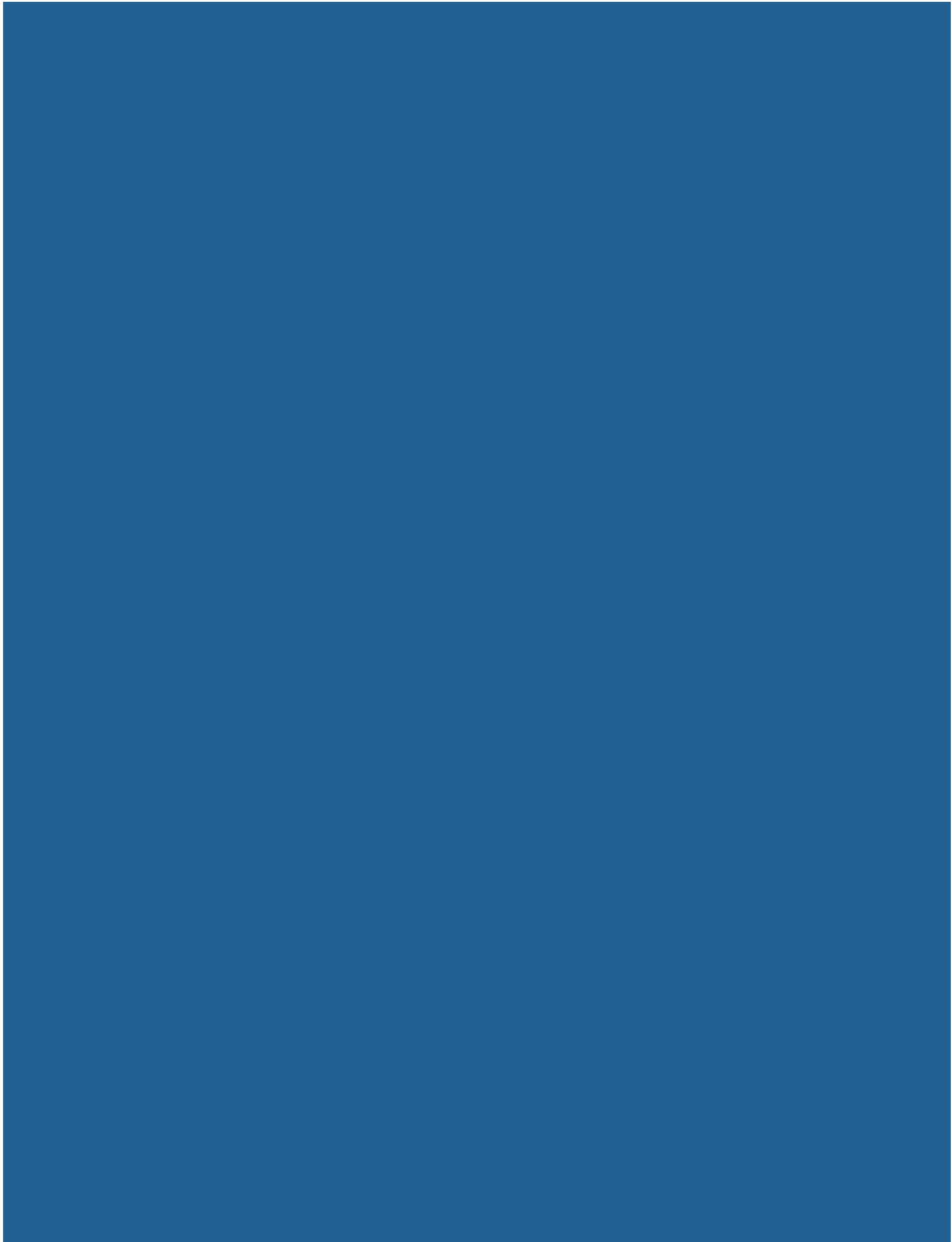
In 2012, shortly after finishing their cabin, Hahm and her husband were surprised by the news that they were pregnant with their daughter. While pregnant, Hahm created a solo exhibition of paintings, titled "Birds of Paradise." After the exhibition at Well Street, she moved

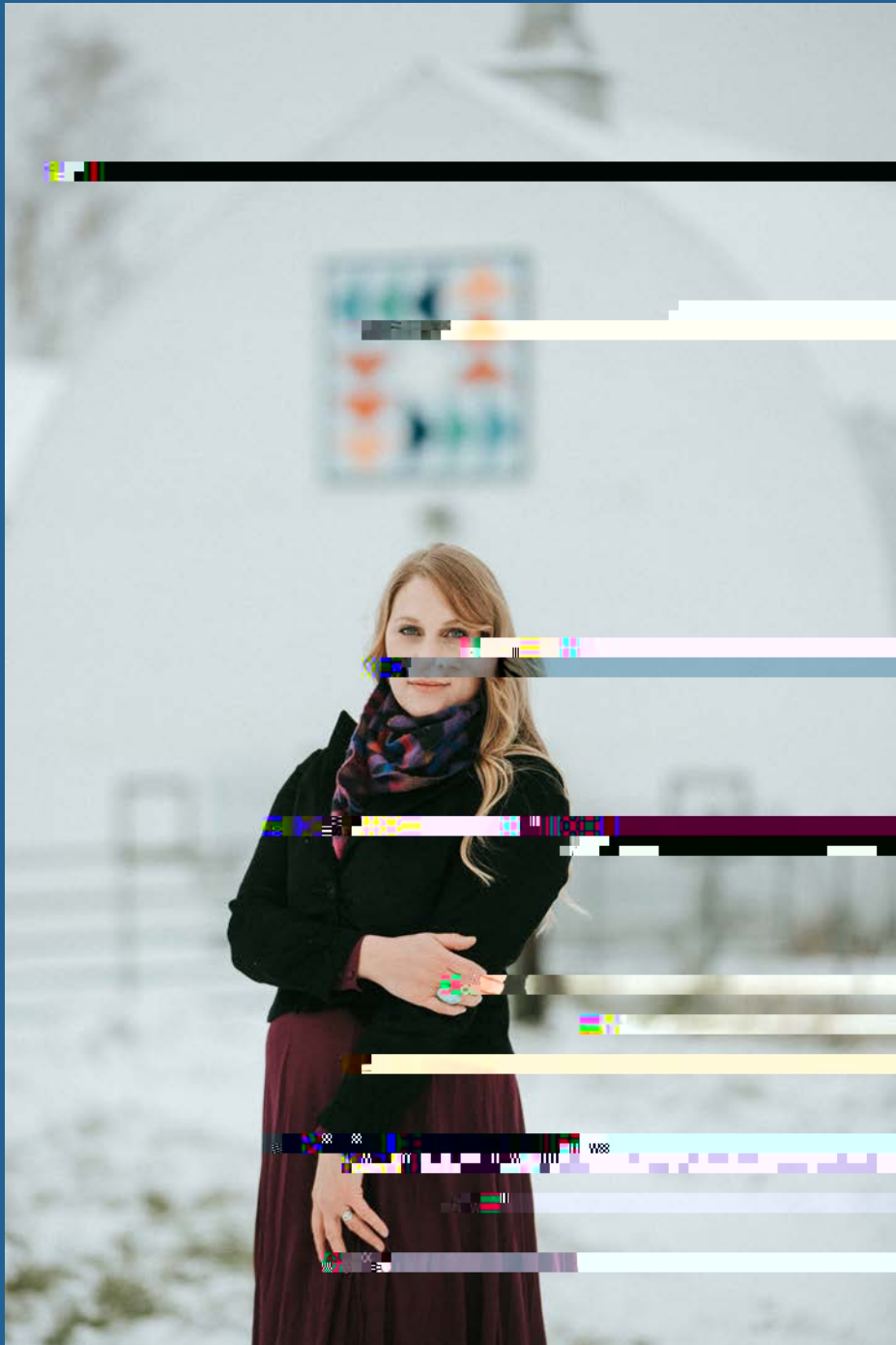


In 2018, Hahm began as the exhibition technician for the Fairbanks Arts Association's Bear Gallery. The same month, the association teamed up with the state arts council to host a conference in Fairbanks. The conference was filled with working artists who had wisdom to share. Hahm soaked in every detail.

"I took a session from Anchorage artist Maria Shell. She is an internationally known quilter. The session that she gave was all about writing a winning grant proposal," Hahm said. "It was the moment I began to change my focus from exhibition opportunities to awards and grant-funding opportunities. That conference gave me the tools that I didn't even know I needed, and the inspiration to do something important with my artwork."

Hahm learned to ask for help, solicit donations, seek funding and garner support from local businesses and organizations. Her grants have come from the Alaska State Council on the Arts, the Rasmuson Foundation, the Awesome Foundation's Alaska chapter and Our2Cents. Other partners and sponsors include Design Alaska, Johnson River Enterprises, Sherwin-Williams, Calypso Farm and Ecology Center, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and Boreal Sun Charter School.





*Hahm poses in front of the "Flying Geese" barn quilt at Creamer's Field.
Photo by Steph Barney.*

[Read more about the Far North Quilt Trail project.](#)

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