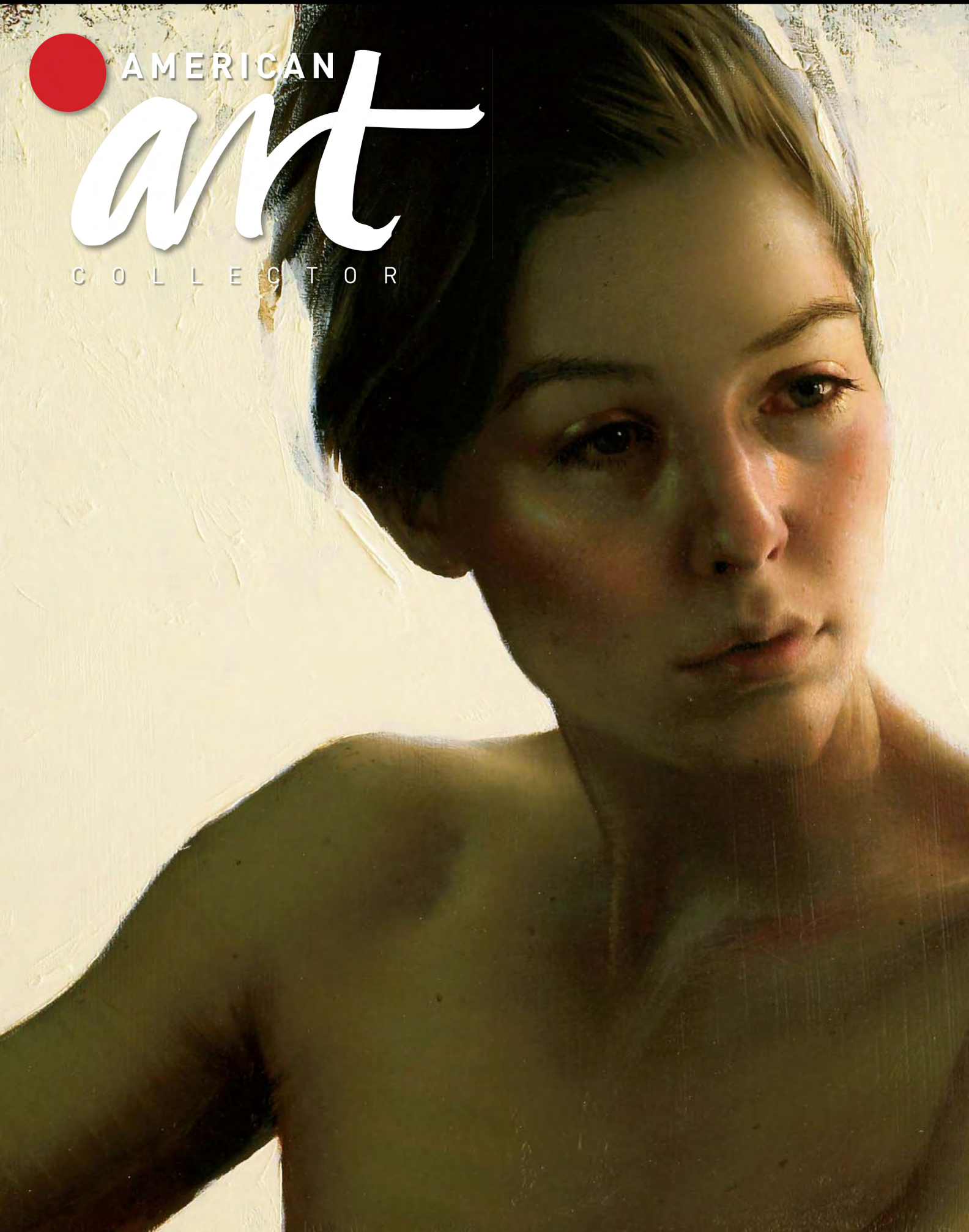




AMERICAN

# art

COLLECTOR





WILL CLIFT

# Balance and grace

Colorado artist Will Clift's wood and metal sculptures—gravity-defying presentations that articulate a range of seemingly impossible ballet-like poses—are graceful examinations of balance. “We all have balance, whether we know it or not,” Clift says. “Whether we’re riding bicycles or dancing the two-step. Our life is a reflection on how we react to balance and its many forms.”

And that's pretty much where Clift likes to stop talking about the meaning of his pieces, be it the coiling springlike pirouetting of *Circling In* or the meticulously designed pinwheel of *Circular Form in Ten Pieces*. “I avoid the particulars and specifics when it comes to meanings, because then people only see what I tell them to see. I want them to bring part of themselves into the space, and for them to enter on their own level,” he says. “I also don't want to be too intentional, to leave room for serendipity. Over-talking a piece can be bad, and I could talk myself into a corner. I don't want to become a cliché, which is why I tend to let people discover the pieces at their own speed.”

Clift—who maintains studios near Denver, Colorado, and in Santa Fe, New Mexico—says his work evolved after researching wind turbines and the aerospace and construction industries. He discovered metals and carbon fibers after hitting limitations with wood. “I try to not use materials for materials sake. Wood is very approachable, it's organic and still has elements of being alive, but it also changes over time. It has structural limits, and it doesn't do well outside. I was hitting walls with it,” he says. “Some constraints are good and necessary, and some are limiting.”

Gerald Peters Gallery will host Clift's first solo show in New York featuring his sculptures of metal and wood as well as other combinations. *Forms in Balance* opens April 25 and runs through May 23.

The overarching theme of the show is for viewers to question their own internal



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sense of equilibrium, something Clift says will open up “uncertainties and vulnerabilities” within his audience as they encounter his work.

The balance of the pieces—literal balance, not metaphorical—is attained through careful pre-planning and sketching, be it five sketches or 60. “There’s no trial and error in the physical construction. No calculations, no computer model, no tinkering,” he says, adding that he envisions a design and plans it all out

on paper before building the actual piece. “I tie myself to that form, so there’s no room for reimagining it or shifting mass from one side to the other. I’m not just making a pretty form; I’m trying to find something on a deeper level, to connect with it through the sense of movement in my work. The point of entry is this aspect of balance and its connection to the physical world.”

From June 27 to August 6 the show will be on exhibit at the gallery’s Santa Fe location. ●

**1**  
*Circular Form in Ten Pieces*, wenge and steel, 36 x 35 x 2”

**2**  
*Curving Over*, mahogany, 25 x 49 x 2”

**3**  
*Enclosing Form, One Enclosing Two, Suspended*, hardwood and white lacquer, 17 x 48 x 3”

**4**  
*Circling In*, hardwood, carbon fiber composite, steel and black pigment, 31 x 28 x 2”

**5**  
Will Clift begins work on a new sculpture in his studio.

Images © 2014 Will Clift, courtesy Gerald Peters Gallery.