Carolyn Braaksma
Riddles, 2004
Carved stone & litho-dye

Carolyn Braaksma
Fish, 2004
Indiana limestone

While strolling along Wall Street in the Vail Village one might notice the engraved stones on the pedestrian path. Images of an owl, a pig, a bowl, a jar, a dragon, a clock, a chicken, a whistle, and a tent are among the images engraved in these colorful stone blocks. The Denver based artist Carolyn Braaksma created this visual play on words and images for the Town of Vail's 2004 street renovation project.

These clever rebuses and word puzzles have caused people to stop in their steps in curiosity. A rebus is a representation of words or syllables depicted by pictures of objects or by symbols whose names resemble the intended words or syllables in sound; a riddle made up of pictures or symbols. (Merriam – Webster) Braaksma's puzzles are specifically designed for Vail and were a collaborative effort with the AIPP Board in 2004. Ski slopes, gardens, landmarks, and symbols of Vail are playfully displayed within these riddles.

If one looks carefully to the stone walls on the east side of Wall Street they will discover carved works by Braaksma embedded into the wall. These animals carved in Indiana Limestone coordinate with the word puzzles along Wall Street. A hare to a toad; a toad to a bird; a bird to a fish; and a fish to bait are all images included in these beautifully carved stone elements of Wall Street. Braaksma's goal is to, "Bring to her work a sense that public art is both art and public. It must maintain artistic integrity, satisfy the public…"

Since 1989, Carolyn Braaksma has been executing public art projects throughout the country. Her site-integrated work is specific to the location. Her award winning public art can be viewed at the Denver International Airport; TREX project on the I-25 Corridor in Denver; University of Texas at San Antonio; San Diego International Airport; Iowa State University; and the City of Scottsdale, Arizona, to name only a few.

- Molly Eppard, Art in Public Places Coordinator