

Whimsical critters come to Carefree Arts Festival

BY SHEA STANFIELD
Foothills Focus Contributing Writer

Sculpture occupies real space. Patrons walk around it and relate to it almost as another person.

In the world of Scottsdale sculptor Jason Napier, each piece is full of attitude, challenging the viewer to smile with amusement, or gasp with the subject's awe-inspiring nobility.

Growing up on the Oregon Coast provided the young Napier with endless opportunities to explore nature's wild coastal regions and experience a variety of ecosystems.

In the beginning, as Napier tells his story, "When I was 18 years old, I started working in a bronze casting foundry, Burning Palace Bronze in Troutdale, Oregon, to pay for college. There, I was fortunate to meet many exceptional and wildly successful artists. Many of them became good



"Stir'd Up" with Scottsdale sculptor Jason Napier.

friends and mentors."

The on-the-job training provided Napier experience working on various commissions, exposing him to materials and techniques that only the masters of their craft knew. This hands-on experience in sculpting with clay built the foundation for Napier's work. Eventually, he was encouraged to try out his own ideas in clay and lost wax. Under the guidance of these generous souls, Napier soon completed a small body of his own work. That's when the magic happened, the spell was cast, and the doors opened.

Napier's body of work,

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at that time, became recognizable for its smooth bold shapes, the contrasting brightly textured patinas and polishing.

"My style evolved into using these shapes as a canvas for my patinas," Napier said. "Today my unique style

and colorful wildlife is nationally recognized and collected around the globe."

In 1997, Napier and his wife, Danielle, started a gallery in Friday Harbor, Washington. They learned very quickly how seasonal the art market

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"Nestled In" by Jason Napier.



Scottsdale sculptor Jason Napier in his studio. (Photos courtesy Jason Napier)

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was on the San Juan Island, prompting them to search for larger cities where the arts market was thriving. Spotting an opportunity, the couple, packed up Napier's sculptures and decided to gamble on Scottsdale.

"No doubt, this was the best decision we ever made, we have been spending winters here ever since," Napier said.

The Napiers became full-time residents of Scottsdale's thriving arts community in 2020.

Inspiration comes from many plac-

es. Napier and his wife spend much of their time hiking and traveling. Their particular focus is on wildlife, the challenge is to spot an animal in a unique pose or setting that inspires them to bring on a brainstorming session, this typically results with Napier "heating up the clay pot" to capture the animal spirit of the moment.

Napier's creative critters are seen throughout the year in fine art shows in Arizona, California, Utah, Florida and Washington. He is also represented by several fine art galleries across the country. He welcomes ap-

pointments for special projects and loves the face-to-face process of creating a commissioned piece.

Napier gives back to the arts community by serving as an artist adviser for the No. 1 fine art show in the nation, La Quinta Art Celebration, and sitting on the board of Cougar Mountain Zoo in Issaquah, Washington.

Locally, Napier is a member of the Sonoran Arts League, participating in

the annual Hidden in the Hills Tour in November each year. He

be exhibiting with at the 26th Spring Carefree Fine Art Festival the Thunderbird Artists from 1 to 5 p.m. Friday, March 12, to 5 p.m. Saturday, March 13, and March 14. Visit carefree.org or the birdartists.com for more information.

To view a broad selection of er's work or to contact him, visit his website, napierbronze.com.

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