Whimsical critters come to Carefree Arts Festival

BY SHEA STANFIELD

Foothills Focus Contributing Writer

culpture occupies real space. Patrons walk around it and relate to it almost as another per-

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.

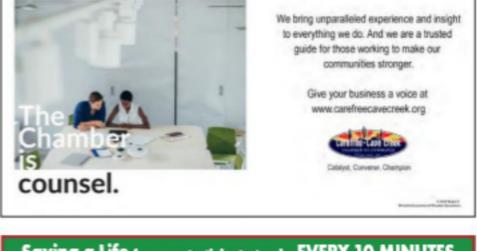


The on-the-job training provided Napier experience working on various commissions, exposing him to materials and techniques that only the masters of their craft knew. This hands-on experience in sculpting with clay built the foundation for Napier's work. Eventually, he was encouraged to try out his own 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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"Nestled In" by Jason Napier.

at that time, became recognizable globe." for its smooth bold shapes, the conand polishing.

shapes as a canvas for my patinas," Napier said. "Today my unique style

and colorful wildlife is nationally recognized and collected around the

In 1997, Napier and his wife, Dantrasting brightly textured patinas ielle, started a gallery in Friday Harbor, Washington. They learned very "My style evolved into using these quickly how seasonal the art market

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pointments for special projects and the annual Hidden in the Hills loves the face-to-face process of cre- Tour in November each year. ating a commissioned piece.

Napier gives back to the arts com- Spring Carefree Fine Art Festiva munity by serving as an artist adviser the Thunderbird Artists from for the No. 1 fine art show in the na- to 5 p.m. Friday, March 12, to 5 tion, La Quinta Art Celebration, and March 14. Visit carefree.org or th sitting on the board of Cougar Moun- birdartists.com for more informa tain Zoo in Issaquah, Washington.

Locally, Napier is a member of the er's work or to contact him, vi

be exhibiting with at the 26th

To view a broad selection of Sonoran Arts League, participating in website, napierbronze.com.



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

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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.

es. Napier and his wife spend much of their time hiking and traveling. was on the San Juan Island, prompt- Their particular focus is on wildlife, ing them to search for larger cities the challenge is to spot an animal in where the arts market was thriving. a unique pose or setting that inspires Spotting an opportunity, the couple, them to bring on a brainstorming packed up Napier's sculptures and session, this typically results with Napier "heating up the clay pot" to capture the animal spirit of the mo-

Napier's creative critters are seen throughout the year in fine art shows The Napiers became full-time res- in Arizona, California, Utah, Florida idents of Scottsdale's thriving arts and Washington. He is also represented by several fine art galleries Inspiration comes from many plac- across the country. He welcomes ap-



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