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Wildlife Is a Way of Life for Bronze Sculptor, Robert Ball



Thunderbird Artists, producers of the 15th Annual Scottsdale Fine Art & Chocolate Festival, Feb 10 – 12, will feature wildlife sculptor and bronze artist, Robert Ball.

Becoming an artist was not one of the things Robert Ball had in mind as he was growing up. In fact, the possibility never entered his mind until much later in life. Looking back, Robert said, “I can see a connecting thread leading from the past to the present. That connection being a love of wildlife and the habitat providing them sanctuary.”

Living in Lake Tahoe for many years and later moving to Montana gave Robert a great opportunity to observe wildlife and gain inspiration from the rugged and beautiful land. “My wife, Rae Ann, was really the first artist in our family. She had learned pottery as a means of financial survival in Montana during the 1970’s. Her pottery business was doing so well that I became her assistant to keep up on the orders. Even though this was challenging work and we were quite successful at it, there was a natural desire to change direction and wildlife sculpture provided an exciting opportunity.”

Primarily self-taught, Robert participated in a couple of workshops taught by renowned sculptor, Gerald Balciar. “This provided a significant boost to my level of skill, inspiration and commitment,” he adds. Recognition came rapidly over the next few years with Best Of Show and Best Sculpture awards from National and International events such as the C.M. Russell Auction; National Western Art Show; Pacific Rim Wildlife Art Show; Oklahoma Wildlife Art Festival; National Wildlife Art Show and The Calgary Stampede Western Art Show.

Robert enjoys creating his works in the timeless medium of bronze. His sculpture brings forth the unique and often whimsical nature of the animal kingdom. “I believe animals are similar to people in that each is an individual in their appearance and behavior. I try to bring that out in my work by focusing on their body attitude and facial expression,” he reveals.

Robert spends Montana summers and Arizona winters with his wife, Rae Ann, their dogs and a menagerie of bunnies. They often enjoy exploring the scenic byways and open road on their Harley’s.

About the Festival

The Scottsdale Fine Art & Chocolate Festival, Thunderbird Artists longest running event, will feature over 150 juried artists from throughout the United States and abroad displaying thousands of pieces of original artwork. In addition to paintings, sculptures and chocolates galore, this festival will also feature live musical entertainment.

The festival will take place at the Scottsdale Pavilions, just west of Loop 101 on Indian Bend. Hours are 10am to 5pm each day. Admission is \$2 and parking is free all weekend. Additional information is available at www.ThunderbirdArtists.com.