

Support Materials

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One Article

Prepared by
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I. The Orlando Sentinel, Volusia Extra, Sunday February 7, 1993. 4 pages

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Volusia Extra

K

Stores in downtown Deltona
Land close at 5 p.m.

Full-time artist sculpts out a niche for his work in Deltona

Dianne Copelon

SENTINEL CORRESPONDENT

DELTONA — Creative people are rarely as well organized as Brian Owens, a young sculptor who lives and works in a quiet neighborhood in Deltona.

Although he has been a full-time sculptor for only two years, Owens has already planned the next four or five years in terms of work, the size of his pieces, one-man shows and the networking needed to get them.

Deltona, he said, gives him the isolation he requires when creating new work.

The 33-year-old artist has transformed his two-bedroom house into several work areas, where he keeps a number of projects going at the same time. The living room is a gallery that displays his bronzes as well as paintings, prints and photographs by other artists, including his father, Carl Owens, a prominent portrait painter from Detroit.

The kitchen is a preparation area for making wax molds; the dining room serves as a carving area; one bedroom doubles as a drawing studio; and the garage is set up as a foundry.

Primarily self-taught, Owens learned the technical aspects of sculpture from other artists and from books.

Art has always been a part of his life. "I was fortunate enough to be raised in a home where art was woven in and out of everything that was going on," he said during a coffee break in his rigid daily work schedule. "My father was a visual artist and my mother a musician; they made art so much a part of life that I didn't think of it as such. It was the way things were.

"A lot of artists I know consider what they do a calling; it's something they must do in order to stay balanced, and they feel as if they have no other choice.

"I feel that way too, and sometimes wonder why it took me so long to discover that I had the stuff inside of me and why I would ever want to do anything else."

Owens said his prominent father never encouraged him to be an artist. "His exact words were, 'I don't care what you do, just do something you like doing.' But when I started doing art, I think he had a great big grin on his face that he tried unsuccessfully to suppress."



MARK LOSEY/SENTINEL

Please see ARTIST, K-7 Artist Brian Owens says sculpture is the focal point of his life.

The next page is an enlargement of the above.

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MARK LOSEY/SENTINEL

Brian Owens has transformed his home into a gallery and work space for his creations.

Artist sculpts for fun and inspiration

ARTIST from 1

Owens studied engineering in college and after graduation took a job in Orlando with the NCR. General Electric lured him to their facility in Daytona Beach, where he worked for eight years; his position was eliminated two years ago.

"I had bought the house in Deltona so that it would be easier for me to party in Orlando and work in Daytona. But those partying days are long gone. The life I live now is disciplined and very practical. At this point it's important that I create sculpture and lots of it.

"So I can't put my feet up and relax. Sculpture is the focal point... everything else in life is either simplified or removed altogether."

Owens used his savings to support himself during the first year as an artist. Now, with sales of his limited editions and commissions, he earns enough to eat and build better equipment.

"When I was working part-time as a sculptor, it was taking me a whole year to complete a piece. That was ridiculous.

"During that period I had gone to an art exhibit in a Detroit gallery to see the work of Artis Lane, an important black sculptress known by many for a portrait bust she made of Rosa Parks. I was so impressed that I said to myself, 'I can do this, I can probably do it 24 hours a day and not get tired of it.' So I came back to Deltona and started it."

Owens sculpts mostly black subjects and sells his work to affluent black collectors.

"I fall into the category of

Exhibitis

WHAT: Florida African-American Artists, works by 37 artists.

WHERE: Orlando City Hall Terrace Gallery, 400 S. Orange Ave., Orlando, (407) 246-2300.

WHEN: 8 a.m.-11 p.m. Monday-Friday, noon-11 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. Through March 26.

ADMISSION: Free.

WHAT: Artists of Color, works by six artists.

WHERE: Fine Arts Center, Bethune-Cookman College, 151 Lincoln St., Daytona Beach, (904) 255-1401, ext. 220.

WHEN: 9 a.m.-noon and 1-4 p.m., Monday-Friday. Through Feb. 26.

ADMISSION: Free.

emerging artist, which is a fancy way of saying my work is being collected, and it's well received. But I'm not yet nationally known."

Currently, his work is being shown in two area exhibitions that celebrate Black History Month: the Florida African-American Artists show in the Orlando City Hall Terrace Gallery (through March 26) and "Artists of Color" at the Bethune-Cookman College Fine Arts Center, Daytona Beach (through Feb. 26).

Important commissions that will bring him an even larger public include a purchase award by Virginia Power Corp. for the new Black History Museum and Cultural Center in Richmond, Va., and another for the Barnett-Aden

Collection in the Museum of African American Art in Tampa.

Owens claims inspiration comes from many sources.

"I'm constantly reading and absorbing information about the world that we live in and our history, not just African-American history, but the history of all of us. And the mind has a marvelous way of storing all this stuff up into a soup that gives rise to all kinds of ideas.

"Sometimes I get the stew going by playing music and drawing. Other times I get it brewing just being still. And there are other times, that no matter how hard I try, I can't get anything going at all."

Owens' work is basically figurative. "I have a strong personal preference for the human figure because it allows me to synthesize sculpture that deals with human concerns. I may stray from that and change my style at some point in the future. But the human figure is really where the action is for me right now."

Owens does everything by himself. He designs his work, creates his own tools, makes his own wax molds and does his own bronze casting.

"The overwhelming majority of artists simply can't do what they love to do full-time for practical reasons. To me, what I'm doing is a profound personal challenge.

"There's a renewed interest in art created by African-Americans right now, because of what is happening in history and because of the beliefs that art sustains our culture. I feel as if I'm in the right place at the right time."