

Sculpting Feelings

For David Pearson, his work is all about tapping emotions.

By SUSANNE CASGAR
ABN Editorial Director

“You’ve got to touch people,” says sculptor David Pearson. “That’s why you create art; to touch people. I want to touch them in a way that enables them to find some deep emotion inside themselves that they’ve hidden away. The sculpture brings it out so that they can access the emotion.”

Pearson, who makes his home in Santa Fe, NM, began sculpting at age 16 at the Shidoni Foundry in Tesuque, NM. Casting works for 20 years for well-known sculptors in the area, and in spite of his many sculptural influences, he easily developed his own style, technique and repertoire of imagery.

“In his 30 years as an artist, Pearson has been exploring the transformative process of metal,” says Cynthia Sanchez, director of the Capital Art Foundation.

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Ruth-Ann Thorn, vice president, Crown Thorn Publishing, San Diego



Alan Blazar, owner, Blazing Editions, East Greenwich, RI



Todd Hallie, publishing director, Editions Limited, Emeryville, CA



Nan Miller, owner, Nan Miller Gallery, Rochester, NY



Melanie Smith, co-owner, Seaside Art Gallery, Nags Head, NC

MARKET FORECAST:

Extended Period Of Cautious Optimism Ahead

Will the art market mirror the economy?

By JOE JANGSURAK
ABN Editor

Will sales of original works accelerate?

There’s enough good news out there among the leading economic indicators to leave art market experts feeling cautiously optimistic as 2007 gets underway.

What trends will dominate in the coming year?

Art Business News posed these, and many other questions to 11 art market experts.

The good news consists of an unemployment rate (about 4.5 percent) that is near its lowest level since May 2001 and a 1 percent increase in wages and benefits during the third quarter of 2006, the most since 2004.

Read on to see who’s saying what about the 2007 art market in this first part of a two-part feature.

Further, while the housing market continued its slump through 2006, economists at the National Association of Home Builders 2006 Fall Construction Forecast Conference, shared the view that the cur-

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Bob Chase, Jr., president, The Chase Group, Northbrook, IL



Roland Augustine, president, Luhring Augustine, New York City



Pam Dantzing, president, Unity Marketing, Stevens, PA



Larry Winn, president, Grand Image, Seattle



Steve Lucas, owner, Gallery of Surrealism, NY



Dick Kleinman, owner, Kleinman Fine Art, Cleveland

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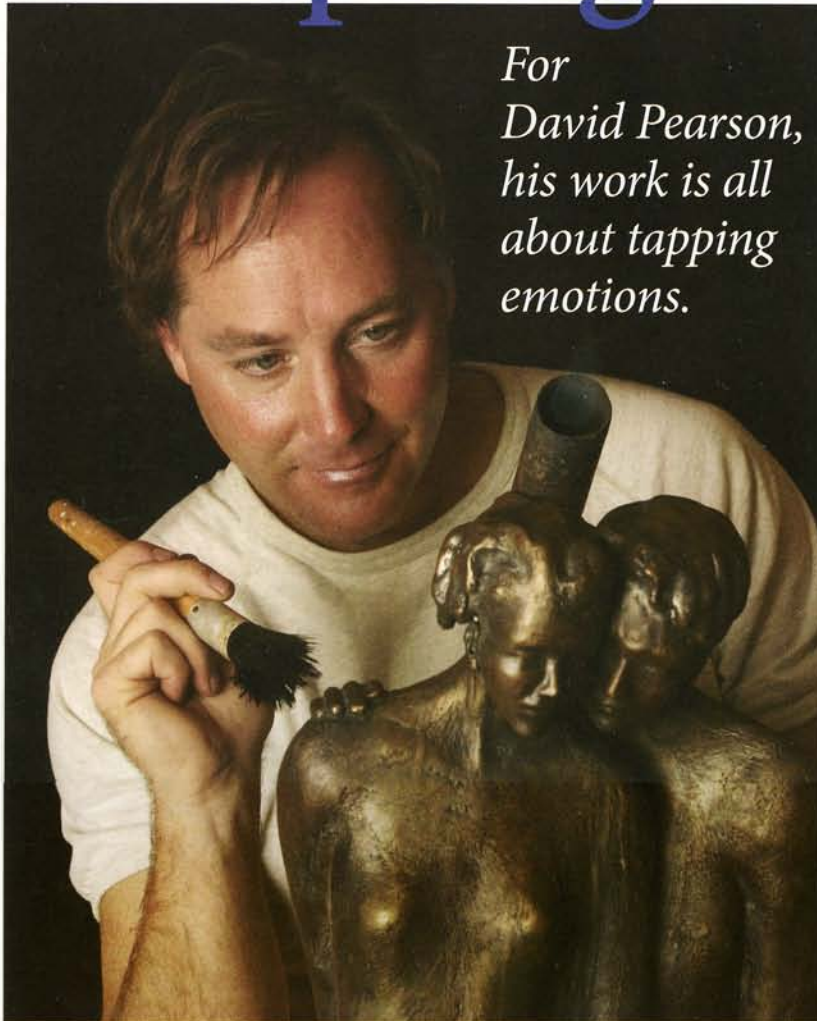
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artist profile

David Pearson

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this open-minded atmosphere that cultivated free expression that Pearson calls “totally free and caring. I really fared well. I don’t know if I would have said I had talent,” he explains, “but I was always looking at books and art, and seeing art in other people’s houses.”

When Pearson was 16, he was hired at the Shidoni Foundry, the oldest in the Southwest. It wasn’t a glamorous job, but Pearson marveled at the lustrous bronze shapes as he chipped away. Moving along rapidly in his art, he mastered the techniques and moved into the job of “finisher” within a year,

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“He finds energy in each literal transformation of material—from hand to clay and the creation of the mold, the wash; to the casting and the burnout, the pour; and to the chasing of the metal and the final completion of the patina.”

Pearson came into the world during the autumnal equinox on Sept. 20, 1958. Born on the cusp of perfectionist-oriented Virgo and beauty-absorbed Libra, he has always felt a destiny with a greater life force. “A lot of times, pieces just come through me and when they’re finished, I can’t believe I made them,” says Pearson.

His bronzes are most often shaped into elongated female forms, mummies and one-winged angels, and are sometimes accompanied by doves and finches.

Spending his first eight years in the ranching town of Tucumcari, NM, Pearson thrived. “I re-

member being about six years old and going out with my uncle and the rest of my family, hunting for arrowheads. We would do that twice a month. I loved it. And I loved visiting the old Indian ruins. I was always into the mystery, wondering what it was like for them.”

Unfortunately, the town of Tucumcari died after the railroad moved out, taking 20,000 people with it. The hub had been in Tucumcari, and then it moved to Amarillo, TX. Pearson’s parents moved the family to Santa Fe, where Pearson found himself in the midst of a bohemian environment, known for its large concentration of artist studios.

Pearson’s own artistic aptitude soon emerged, drawing illustrations for the newspaper at Santa Fe High School. He went by the name of “Rainbow” at that time and flourished in experimental classes such as horticulture and electronics. It was

► “One Song,” bronze, 30 inches, edition of 14.



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▲ "Ascension of Eve," bronze, 57 inches, edition of 15.

and was a natural at patina quirks. He mastered such processes as rubber wax molds, wax grating and dressing wax. He loved working with bronze, and later described it as "old, magical energy with melting metal."

For Pearson, the Shidoni experience served as art school. "He got to see what artists do, how they do it, how they sell it, and how to make a living with it," says sculptor Doug Coffin, a mentor of Pearson's.

"I was motivated and inspired by all of the artists I worked with," said Pearson. "They didn't really care if anyone liked it; they really didn't care if it sold. They found that space within themselves where nothing else mattered except their art," he says.

Employees at Shidoni were able to receive reduced rates for the bronze pouring process. Pearson pursued that privilege and began producing an elongated female form that bespoke Egyptian and African art influences. "I was 18, and I made my first piece, 'tracy,' and put it in the gallery, and it sold within the first week," he remembers.

Though Pearson's sculptures were being sold in galleries all over the Southwest, it wasn't a secure living. So in 1982 he accepted a position at Dwight Hackett's Art foundry in Santa Fe, eventually becoming its director and master sculptor. After an

impressive 10-year run at Art Foundry, he left to head a 700-piece casting project for Notre Dame's College Football Hall of Fame. Then, in 1995, a year after the passing of Allen Houser, the Chiricahua Apache artist who inspired Pearson in his early years, Pearson was hired to design and build a bronze foundry at Allan House Inc. The Houser project took Pearson three years, and turned his thoughts to his own mortality as he approached 40.

After purchasing some land in the Galiosteo Basin, south of Santa Fe, Pearson began building a studio in the mid '90s. A house would follow that



▲ "Kamsin," bronze, 70 inches, edition of 9.

he would share with his wife, Patricia Carlisle. The studio was his, and he could work from dawn to dusk on his own ethereal sculptures.

The lithe, ethereal, elegant pieces are the trademark of Pearson. Bronze figures inspired by tales of Greek Mythology flowed out of him. Narrow, elongated figures had, as arts writer Michael Koster wrote, "Stoic faces from another time evoke the stillness of the tomb, the dignity of an age long past."

Pearson's style is unmistakable. Linear, tapered figures are idealized rather than individualized. They are sometimes more abstracted, sometimes more representational, but they belong to every culture, every era. They are spiritual, significant,

"You've got to touch people. That's why you create art."
—sculptor David Pearson

romantic and universal.

Asked about what advice he would give an emerging artist, he explained that young artists "live with so much angst in looking for themselves, and they don't really have skill in promoting themselves. One of my secrets is in making small editions, and artists who push large editions are missing the point...they shouldn't spread themselves too thin."

"It has been a steady progression from the 16-year-old sculptor to the artist that I am today at age 48," he continues. "I have found my space. Nothing can change me because this is my art, this is who I am and this is what I do." **ABN**

SOURCE

■ Patricia Carlisle Fine Art, 505-820-0595, www.carlislefa.com



▲ "Une danse de Reve," bronze, 52 inches, edition of 15.