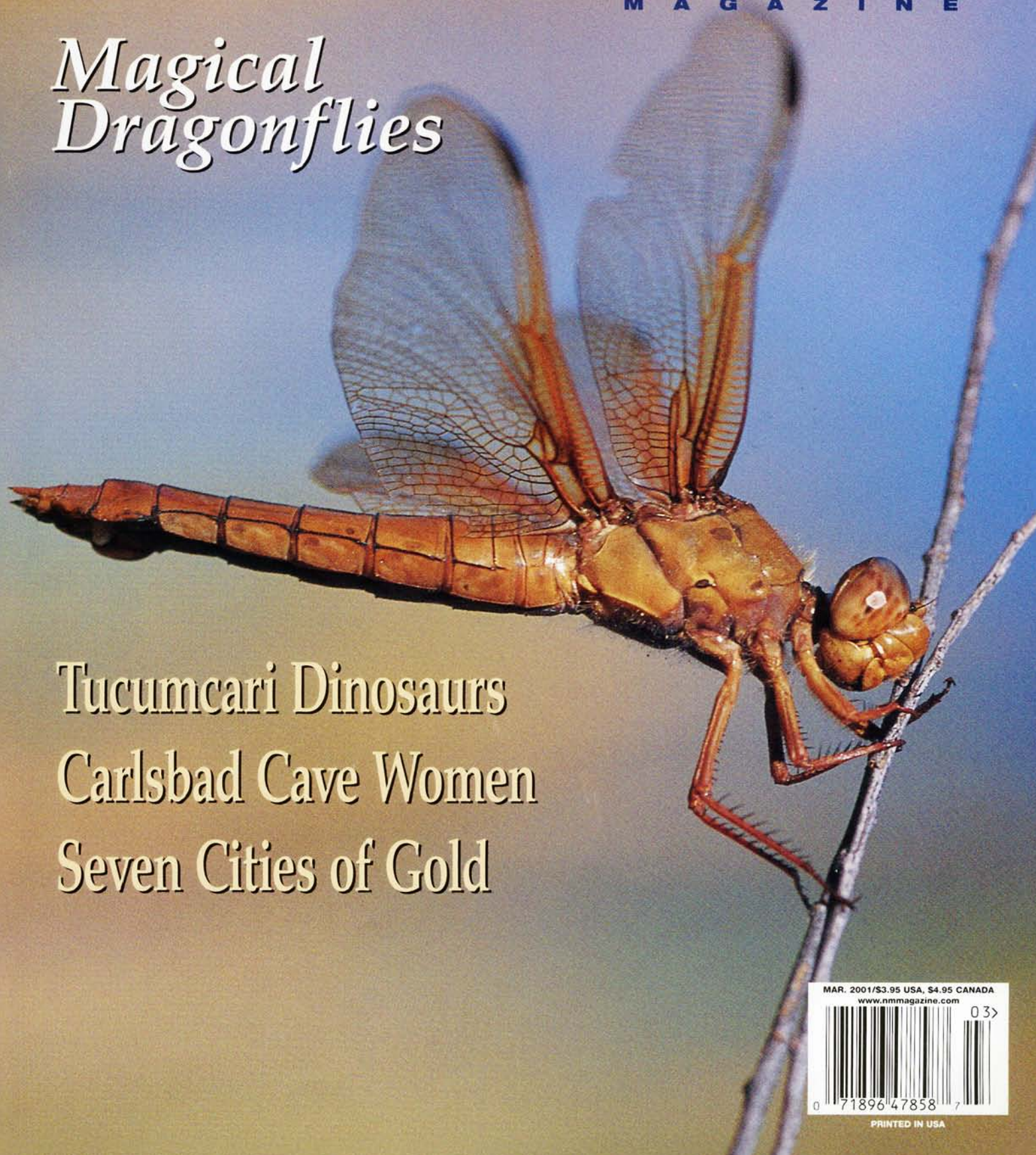


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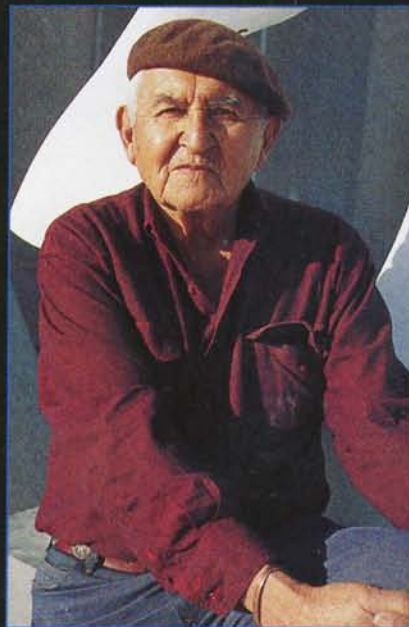
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# The Allan Houser Touch

Artist influenced  
three dynamic sculptors  
to follow their dreams

**G**reat artists blaze a trail that other artists follow even as they trod their own personal creative paths. Allan Houser (1914-1994), one of the foremost sculptors of the past one hundred years, forged a virtual highway to artistic expression for those who knew him and were inspired by his genius. Houser's contribution to the art of his century was vast. He also made seminal contributions to the lives and work of many sculptors who followed him—as a friend, a mentor and a champion. Sally Hepler, David Pearson and Bob Haozous each experienced Houser in a different way. But they took something of his remarkable spirit into their work—and into their hearts.



*Allan Houser*

*please see Page 38*



# DAVID PEARSON



David Pearson's elongated bronze female figures inhabit another world. He calls them people of light, spirits who have evolved out of the material plane and now guide and protect the rest of us. For spirits, they are weighty—as you will find when you pick up even the smallest of his pixelike pieces.

Pearson came to sculpture from the door of the technical. When he was 16, he began to visit the foundry owned by a friend's father. Shidoni, the legendary foundry that cast the work of artists such as Allan Houser and Una Hanbury, became a fascination for Pearson. He got a part-time job there helping to pour molten metal and, by the next year, began to sculpt his own metal pieces.

His figures range in size from a foot to 6 feet. They are invariably sensual females emerging from square, angular bases. "I see them less as specifically female and more as androgynous," Pearson says. "They just come to me naturally, with their shapes and their poses."

Like so many New Mexico sculptors, Pearson counts Allan Houser as having exerted a fundamental influence on him. "I studied his work very closely—fortunately, I was able to get as close as possible to his metal sculptures because in some cases I was in on the casting process," he remembers. After Houser died, his estate asked Pearson to design the complex in Galisteo, where some of the sculptor's work is on display.

In his early 20s, Pearson moved to a studio apartment owned by the painter Eli Levin. At Levin's, where visitors and long discussions were the order of the day, he was introduced not only to wonderful art but also to



*Opposite Page*—David Pearson's bronze sculpture titled Bliss stands 27 inches high. (Courtesy Patricia Carlisle Fine Art) *Across both pages*—Sequence shows Pearson as he sculpts a piece in his studio.

*Right*—Pearson bronze titled Finch stands 41 inches high. (Courtesy Patricia Carlisle Fine Art)



the artist's lifestyle. "At last I was being exposed to what the art world was really like," Pearson says. "For me it was like a total-immersion education in what it meant to be an artist, to see art, to appreciate it and to make it."

Pearson's studio is outside of Santa Fe along N.M. 14. Under his supervision, two employees polish bronze pieces and prepare wax molds for casting, while he works on clay models that eventually will become gleaming bronze statues in the Patricia Carlisle Fine Art Gallery on Canyon Road.

"I receive my inspiration from my experience," he says. In the future he would like to make more sculptures that include birds—there are so many birds out in the wide fields surrounding Pearson's studio in the country. He looks forward to traveling to Europe, especially to Florence, where so much of the great sculpture of Western culture was created and is on display.

Meanwhile, Pearson continues to work with the long, flowing half-human and half-spirit figures that live in his imagination. Some of his angels have only one wing—as if they might be transforming themselves into heavenly sentinels or descending from the clouds to become, sacrificially, human again. The pieces of evolving figures have a remote loveliness about them and a charming naiveté. Looking at them, one speculates about what kind of even larger and fuller artist David Pearson might be evolving into as his personal journey progresses.

Pearson's work is on display at the Patricia Carlisle Fine Art, 554 Canyon Road. For information call (505) 820-0596.

Story by Joseph Dispenza • Photography by Mark Nohl