

Archie St. Clair – International Bronze Sculptor

Inside every living creature – whether animal or human – exists the primal instinct to rise above the challenges that threaten our very soul. In the animal kingdom, where it's eat or be eaten, the drive for survival is universal and unfaltering. Among the human race, triumph requires revealing our inner strength and removing society's shackles to transform adversity into opportunity.

Whether it's a firefighter who puts life at risk to rescue others, a cowboy who takes on the harsh Australian outback, or simply our neighbors who silently and humbly outmaneuver the struggles of everyday life, my goal is to sculpt not only each person's portrait, but his or her story. There are hundreds of talented artists who can capture the physical sense of a subject – a photograph memorialized in bronze – but neglect to capture his or her spirit.

I want my audience to see not only the distinct physical characteristics of my subject but to discover something new and fascinating about his or her character each time they come face to face. In the meticulous movements of a lioness stalking her prey, one witnesses the wild, untamed rawness of nature. In the eyes of a cowboy, one sees not only his determination in lassoing a rogue steer, but the self-reliance, independence and grace that accompany his fortitude.

Breathing life into bronze and bringing a story to realization requires my full immersion in each subject. When sculpting wildlife, I employ my experience as a butcher to accurately portray the animal's form and study hours of video to precisely capture its traits and movements. When memorializing a historical figure, I methodically study his or her background, meeting historians and reading everything I can get my hands on to create a visual biography of an inspiring leader. Each sculpture is historically, anatomically and dimensionally accurate to ensure uncompromised realism.

My focus on overcoming hardship stems from my days as a cowboy, butcher and pilot in the outback of Australia. After a horrendous helicopter accident, I was confined to a wheelchair. During this time of recovery, I began my first foray into sculpting. Art evolved into my unexpected destiny, allowing me to reinvent my career and myself. Through my own experience and those of the remarkable, inspiring characters I celebrate in bronze, I hope to inspire people to discover overcoming adversity in the highest degree is very possible.

Today, I sculpt commissioned statues and monuments that rise above communities in Australia and the U.S. and feature my personal works at OA Gallery in St. Louis, Mo. The sculptures are as diverse as the subjects – legendary jazzman Miles Davis, the colorful characters of Grapevine, Texas, the founder of Fort Worth, the stockmen of Australia – but in each is the soul of the incredible. A soul uplifted by unadulterated joy, inherent strength, and uncompromising independence

Every day brings obstacles. And every obstacle is an opportunity. Those who take it on with grace and strength inspire others to do the same.