



UNIQUE  
**FORMS**

INTRODUCTION BY JOHN O'HERN

## COLLECTOR'S FOCUS SCULPTURE

**T**he English poet and painter William Blake wrote, "A fool sees not the same tree that a wise man sees." The wise artist sees even more.

**Eric Serritella's** hand-carved ceramic birch sculptures not only fool the eye but engage it with sinuous shapes and a wide range of textures. Unlike the erect, pure forms we see on a forest walk, Serritella's forms bear the marks of the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune—fires, carved initials, disease. But, he says, "There is beauty in nature despite what we do as humans."

Serritella takes one organic substance, clay, to show the beauty of another organic entity, convincing us not only of the verisimilitude of his sculptures but demonstrating subtle design and an extraordinary mastery of the material.

His *Emergence* rises over 6 feet from its root-like base to the graceful, dancing shapes of its smooth-barked branches—a challenge he sought and met. He explains, "There are three big challenges in creating a sculpture this size in stoneware. One is supporting the clay during the creating and forming stage. Too much armature interferes visually with the negative spaces in the design, so I keep external supports to a minimum,

but sometimes that means things fall apart in the process and have to be rebuilt. The second is firing and reassembling the work since I don't have a 6 foot tall kiln. Placement of joints must be strategically negotiated without compromising the design. Third, after firing there is sometimes some minor warping. As the work is reconstructed and epoxied together the joints must be carefully addressed to be blended and visually disappear."

As he was explaining the process I recalled an earlier conversation in which he told the meaning behind birch trees. "For some reason every significant home we lived in had a lot of birch trees. My dad died when I was 10 and those birch trees remind me of him. For me, my dad is at the heart of all things birch. I think of them as the angels of the forest—these beings, almost mystical, ghostlike, with the purity of an angel."

The Asian aesthetic so prominent in Serritella's work occurs often in the bas-relief sculptures of **J.D. Welsh**, especially in *Mayflies and Trout Rise*. He describes his inspiration, sitting in his robe by the river at the end of cherry blossom time in Japan: "I sat in my yukata sipping green tea, looking out over the Okutama River. It was morning and a gentle breeze played at the cherry boughs overhanging the



1. **Rehs Contemporary**, *Climate Change*, bronze, 15½ x 8 x 9", by Bart Walter. 2. **Rehs Contemporary**, *Trotting Lion*, bronze, ed. 2 of 12, 18½ x 6½ x 9", by Bart Walter. 3. **Hirschi & Adler Modern**, *Script: Column #9*, 2018, marble, 56½ x 10 x 10", by Elizabeth Turk. Photograph © Eric Stoner.



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4. Jason Jacques Gallery, *Emergence*, stoneware, 74 x 32 x 34", by Eric Serritella. Photograph by Jason Dowdle. 5. Rehs Contemporary, *Golden Retrievers*, bronze, 12½ x 8 x 17", by Bart Walter. 6. Betty Branch, *Small Goddess*, bronze, 15 x 12 x 10"



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7. **Betty Branch**, *Bent Torso*, bronze, 13 x 11 x 12" 8. **Wiford Gallery**, *Mayflies and Trout Rise*, low relief bronze, ed. 3, 20<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 11<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 1/2", by J.D. Welsh. 9. **Gary Lee Price**, *Ascent Wall Hanging*, bronze, 70 x 19 x 8" 10. **Gedion Nyanhongo**, *Life Blossoming 2*, stone, 14 x 11 x 4 1/2"

water. The Sakura season was coming to a close and the petals were falling past me onto the flowing surface. I noticed a mayfly alight on the balcony railing—one then another and another. The trout began to rise among the blossoms."

The ephemeral cherry blossoms will give way to fruit and the even more ephemeral mayflies (they only live for a day) will breed other generations

and feed the trout which will be caught and eaten. A moment in the sometimes cruel cycle of life is captured in clay and then in solid bronze.

The solidity of marble gives in to the chisels of **Elizabeth Turk** who reminds it of its once fluid state. In *Script: Column #9*, she transforms a piece of marble that was once a pedestal at the The Getty into a sinuous column of twists and turns and folds. While she releases forms from the marble she releases her mind into the fluidity of thought, contemplating perplexing universal questions. In her 2019 commencement address to graduates of Virginia Commonwealth University, she spoke of the creative process: "...it is the inspiration found in being alone, being uncomfortable, being detached, away from a phone or the internet, to think, to listen and simply, to exist. This effort to be in the empty space where deeply unique and original thought resides, this is what is important as a creator. Addressing how to enter and remain in this 'head-space' without self-destructing and with the self-confidence to collaborate is a lifetime of difficulty."

A clue to the "meaning" of this sculpture is in its title, *Script*. Generations trained to communicate in block letters or through

the keyboard may not be able to decipher messages created earlier in cursive script. The direct translation of a thought through an expressive line on paper reveals the personality of the writer. As the words take gestural shape on the page, they become a sort of release.

*In the pages of this special section, collectors can explore more three-dimensional works that are as unique and varied as the artists who create them.*

**Rehs Contemporary** in New York City features sculptures as well as paintings from some of the foremost artists working today. Among these is bronze artist **Bart Walter**, who creates polished, anatomic-



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COLLECTOR'S FOCUS  
SCULPTURE



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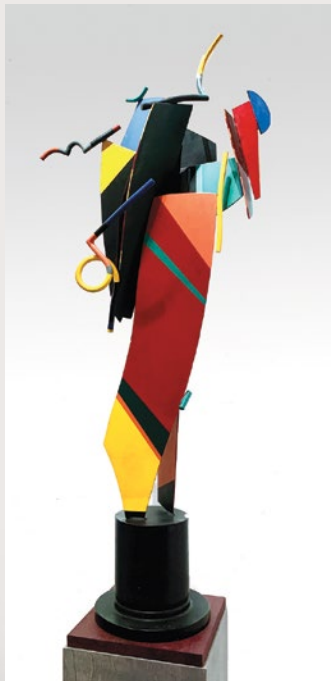
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11. Southwest Gallery, *Night Vision*, bronze, 20 x 39 x 21", by Raymond Gibby. 12. Southwest Gallery, *Bird Study No. 1*, powder coated steel, 61 x 23 x 47", by Nic Noblique. 13. Gary Lee Price, *Ascent Freestanding*, bronze, 28 x 6 x 6½"  
14. Gedion Nyanhongo, *Ready to Receive a Kiss*, stone, 27 x 12 x 5" 15. Southwest Gallery, *Flora Bella A*, painted steel, 51 x 19 x 11", by Michael Deming. 16. Gedion Nyanhongo, *Welcome*, stone, 22 x 13 x 6" 17. Betty Branch, *Emma*, bronze, 37 x 16 x 16"

cally precise wildlife sculptures. “Bart Walter’s art has evolved from his passion for all living things,” comments Lance Rehs, vice president and director at Rehs Contemporary. “As [the artist] says, ‘I strive to capture the essence of a living being and capture an elusive moment in time.’ The ultimate goal is to refine the subject in such a way that only the ‘true essentials’ are left, revealing the spirit of the animals featured in his work.”

Virginia-based sculptor **Betty Branch** of **Betty Branch Sculpture Studio & Gallery** works in clay or wax for her bronzes, and marble for direct carving. “The main inspirations for my work are women and children, and the crow/raven,” she says.

**Gary Lee Price** of Utah creates beautiful, dynamic sculptures in a variety of subject matter, from birds, bugs and other wildlife, to pieces for garden display, to Western subjects and aviation-themed works. Among his works is *Ascent*, depicting two figures climbing a sheer cliff face. He says, “This sculpture epitomizes the struggle to overcome opposition and difficult personal challenges and the absolute need we have for others to reach out, bring us in, and raise us up.”

**Gedion Nyanhongo**, born in Zimbabwe, Africa, passionately transforms hard and enduring stone into sculptures that capture all that is good and worth preserving in the world around us. He focuses not on the outside world, but instead on what he feels are the most important issues in the lives of all humanity: love, family, beauty and nature. “I believe sculpture has the capacity to lift people’s spirits in a way

that can make their lives better,” says Nyanhongo. Deceptively simple and flowing sculptures carved completely by hand, are the hallmarks of Nyanhongo’s expressive sculptures. His imagination is influenced by each stone he chisels into.

“Buy what you like!” says Bob Malenfant, director of **Southwest Gallery** in Texas. “We encourage our artists to create their best work and embrace all the tools and take advantage of the broad exposure on the internet. The art buyer wants to feel the value of his purchase. By igniting the clients desire to examine the value in owning artwork, they find out how it actually enriches their lives.” ●



# FEATURED Artists & Galleries

## BETTY BRANCH

Betty Branch Sculpture Studio & Gallery, 123 Norfolk Avenue SW, Roanoke, VA 24011, (540) 344-4994  
bettybranch10@gmail.com,  
www.bettybranch.com

## GARY LEE PRICE

Gary Lee Price Studios, Inc.,  
767 N. Main, Springville, UT 84663  
(877) 457-7423, info@garyleeprice.com  
www.garyleeprice.com

## GEDION NYANHONGO

Phoenix, AZ, (480) 255-4184  
gedionnyanhongo@gmail.com  
www.gediongalleries.com

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www.hirschlandadler.com

## JASON JACQUES GALLERY

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www.jasonjacques.com

## REHS CONTEMPORARY

5 E. 57<sup>th</sup> Street, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor  
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(212) 355-5710, info@rehscgi.com,  
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## SOUTHWEST GALLERY

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(972) 960-8935, www.swgallery.com

## WIFORD GALLERY

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