

Sculptor David Jungquist visits Cayman

TOPIC: Arts & Culture

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Sculptor David Jungquist stands next to his piece *See No Evil*, part of an exhibition by the sculptor now on show at the National Gallery.

Sculptor David Jungquist held the first Lunchtime Lecture at the National Gallery's newly opened facility on the Esterly Tibbets Highway. The sculptor, whose work is on show in the Deutsche Bank Sculpture Garden, spoke about his work and inspiration, as well as plans for future projects.

Born in Pusan, South Korea, the artist was adopted by a family in the US and grew up in the small town of Bedford Hills in Westchester County, New York. The sculptor explained that he would spend hours exploring the nearby woods and streams as a youngster, developing a true love and admiration for nature's beauty - a constant inspiration for his work.

Showing a talent for painting and drawing from a young age, he went on to study fine art, in particular painting, at the Pratt Institute.

"Initially I wanted to be a surgeon, but I also had a gift for drawing. My high school teacher encouraged me to try art school, which I did," he said.

Indeed, it wasn't until an apprenticeship with acclaimed wood sculptor Toshi Odate that David discovered his true passion for sculpting.

"I had always found painting quite restless. I'm quite physical and my paintings often reflected this. Sculpting is a better fit."

David moved to Italy where he had the opportunity to truly hone his craft, studying with the renowned marble craftsman Mauro Spadacini.

"Italy really influenced me. At first my sculptures were very two dimensional, but soon I started experimenting with three dimensional forms."

Commenting on his thought process, he said he always asks himself what message he is trying to convey before he starts.

"I look at things simply. I look at a sculpture as a form. Then I look at what I can do, what I can create from that. For me, sculpting is about the love of the process, the act of creating, doing. It is personal. I jokingly call it an expensive hobby. I do it for my pleasure."

Indeed, David's patronage from Ernest Olde, a long-time resident of Cayman who died some 10 years ago, gave the sculptor the opportunity to create freely and truly develop as an artist.

"I've never really had to focus on creating for an audience, or the gallery scene. Over the years I became very good friends with the Oldes and my patronage gave me the luxury to create whatever I pleased. I'm very fortunate in that I'm able to continue to make enough to do what I love. That's my validity to myself."

David says that unlike many other artists he constantly flits between different styles. Indeed, David's work ranges from life-like figurative works, to delicate abstract pieces and everything in between, in a range of materials such as marble, bronze and even wood.

"As an artist I'm very eclectic. I don't really have one direction, but that's the way I am. I don't feel I can define myself in one culture, language or form. I create like an art student, for the pure enjoyment of it. Personally, I like the process. I thrive on the chaos. When things are predictable, I'm restless."

David last visited Cayman some 12 years ago and said that his visit had been inspiring.

"Wherever I visit in the world I always draw some kind of inspiration. The breaks in Cayman's rocks, the sea shells that have been imbedded in the rocks, others that have been drawn, creating negative and positive forms has drawn my attention. I don't know what it will bring to my subconscious, but it is imbedded in my thought process."

Commenting on his future art projects David said that he plans to head into unknown territory.

"I'm going back to Pietrasanta in Italy and want to respond more to the material, to see which direction it takes me in. It's exciting. It's like going into the unknown."

He added: "Sculpting is always an experiment. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't. For me it's simply about the pleasure of creating."

Lunchtime Lecture

Those interested in the arts can learn more about local art through the National Gallery of the Cayman Islands' Lunchtime Lecture series. The 45 minute event features short lectures, presented by the gallery curator, artists or an occasional special guest lecturer and a light lunch, giving attendees enough time to enjoy the artwork, lecture and their lunch while on lunch break. The Gallery's Lunchtime Lecture takes place on the first Thursday of the month. Free for members, \$5 for non-members. Call 945-8111, or visit www.nationalgallery.org.ky.

Spirit Within

Spirit Within is one of eight sculptures by artist David Jungquist now on show at the National Gallery's Deutsche Bank Sculpture Garden.

Talking about his inspiration behind the piece, the sculptor said he wanted to create a twist on a classical piece.

"I wanted to take an image, like David's Michael Angelo, which is familiar the world over, and do something different with it, something new and unexpected that hasn't been done before. Most people don't expect the portrait to be in the head. It makes people think."

David Jungquist's exhibition includes an eclectic selection of the artist's work, from the personal collection of local resident Susan Olde. The work will be on show for the next year.