

## Joshua Tobey, the Artist and His Work



### Contents

- Meet Joshua Tobey (Artist Profile)
- Joshua Tobey – Wildlife Visions in Bronze (Joshua Tobey Studios Profile)
- Joshua Tobey Quick Facts

Learn more at [www.joshuatobestudios.com](http://www.joshuatobestudios.com).

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*“Within the great tradition of sculpture, Joshua Tobey has set himself apart as an innovator who employs only the purest means of artistic expression.” – Holly Myers, Los Angeles Times art critic*

## Meet Joshua Tobey

Joshua Tobey brings a distinct voice to the Western art scene with his contemporary, bronze wildlife sculptures.

This self-professed conservationist not only draws inspiration from the Rocky Mountain creatures he loves, he connects us to them as well. His impressionist renderings of caribou, elk, and bear give each one an individual personality and emotion we can recognize. The effort is deliberate.

Unassuming and good natured, this artist considers himself a storyteller, and his animal subjects kindred spirits. The stories are resonating with collectors across the U.S. and the world.



This prolific artist is seeing demand for his work increase by 20 percent annually.

### **Second-generation sculptor**

Born Sept. 22, 1977, in Corvallis, Ore., Joshua is a second-generation sculptor. His father, renowned bronze sculptor and ceramist Gene Tobey, traded his role as a college art professor for an authentic artist's life and moved the family from Oregon to Tesuque, N.M., near Santa Fe, when Joshua was six years old. Joshua grew up in the Southwest art scene, with its focus on landscape, history and wildlife. Joshua was at home in foundries, studios and galleries from a young age.

The Tobey family was immersed not only in art, but also in the outdoors. Joshua became an avid hunter and fly fisherman, at home in the wilderness observing his subjects in their natural habitat as they interact with each other and with man.

### **Trading elk for tuition**

When it came time to select a college, Joshua's criteria included great fly fishing nearby. In fact, he enrolled at Western State College in Gunnison, Colo., as a recreation and business major with the plan of owning his own fly-fishing shop. (His father paid for his tuition by trading a life-size elk sculpture.)

But Joshua's dual love of nature and art were inseparable. He soon switched his major and earned his bachelor's degree in fine art with an emphasis in sculpture. After graduating in 2000, he followed his father to the Texas Hill Country as his apprentice, and opened Joshua Tobey Studios in 2001. Father and son worked closely until Gene's death in January 2006.

Joshua married his long-time sweetheart and business manager Josephine Franklin on Sept. 20, 2009.

## **Philosophy**

Art is a personal experience, and Joshua takes that seriously. For example, he prefers to install each of his life-size sculptures personally for his collectors, while most sculptors outsource installation work. In September 2011, he traveled from a show in Wyoming across country to Montana in time to install a piece for a collector's birthday – then returned to the show.

He explains:

*"Josephine and I are very thankful to those who value my work. We wouldn't be making a living with our art if there weren't people who valued it. And there's value when an artist personally installs the piece, and spends time with each collector. It makes the collector's art experience better, and they will always have that story."*

Between 2006 and 2011, Joshua installed approximately 80 large sculptures in 10 states.

## **Growing the Vision**

Joshua Tobey continues to grow as a sculptor, delivering creative works as diverse as his wildlife subjects.

Sculptures range from miniature (like a mouse that fits in the palm of the hand) to life size (like an 8.5-foot bull elk).

He creates as many as 15 original sculptures annually, with editions of each creation ranging from nine to 100.

The artist's vision is to expand the impact, influence, and pure enjoyment of his anthropomorphic, bronze creatures, whose expressive poses cause people to stop by, laugh, and interact with them.

He is pursuing that vision through increasing participation in public art projects across the United States.



*"Joshua Tobey is arguably the most exciting sculptor working in contemporary Western subject matter today. His work is innovative, fresh, and fun – yet classy and artistic. His work is in very high demand, and for good reason."* – Greg Fulton, owner, Astoria Fine Art Gallery

## **Joshua Tobey – Wildlife Visions in Bronze**

Joshua Tobey's expressive bronze sculptures reveal as much about the human spirit as they do his wild subjects.

Indeed, it is his ability to capture wildlife whimsy that distinguishes his work from that of his peers. His life-size bears, for example, recline lazily, amuse themselves and show affection, revealing a glimpse into a world not unlike our own.



This innovative, anthropomorphic approach that surprises and delights viewers is the trademark style that is securing Joshua's distinct reputation in today's Western art scene.

### **Impressionist Technique**

Creatures of the Rocky Mountains, more so than any others, are Joshua's inspiration. He uses his memory, not models, when he sculpts. The figures come to life based on his impression of the subjects.

His guiding principle when sculpting is to not copy nature. Sculpting in this manner allows him freedom to create and add character to his sculptures. In each piece, there is the suggestion of movement, the clear articulation of mood and spirit.



Joshua also develops original patinas that create visual texture and help create a mood for the piece, while being inviting to the touch. The unique finishes have become a hallmark of Joshua Tobey originals.

### **Mile-High Challenges**

Keeping production in line with the increasing demand for this prolific artist's work has been a key challenge. In 2011, with more than 800 castings in production, Joshua moved operations from Texas to Loveland, Colo. More than a conveniently located Rocky Mountain town, Loveland is an art production hub, with three foundries and supporting services. Joshua's castings are now being completed in eight weeks or less.

The move to Colorado also put the artist in his main geographic territory – the West. And, in a sense it was a homecoming, as he had spent four years at Western State College in Gunnison, where he officially chose the artist's life as his destiny.

All of these reasons made Colorado an easy choice for expanding Joshua Tobey Studios.

### **Accessible Art - Public Projects**

While private collectors across the U.S. and abroad are supporting demand for Joshua's work, the artist's vision is to grow the impact and accessibility of his work through increasing participation in public art projects.

He has pieces in public collections like Georgia's Booth Western Art Museum, Hawaii's Na'Aina Kai Botanical Garden, and Florida's Raymond James Financial Center.

His sculptures of a bull and bear charging, dubbed "Western Challenge," stand at the entrance to Western State College's Borick Business Building.

In 2011, the Gunnison, Colo., college – his alma mater – commissioned him to create an 8.5-foot mountaineer, the school's mascot, as well.

And a pair of colorful, playful bears are destined to be the lobby centerpiece at Phoenix Children's Hospital in Arizona in 2012.

As its reputation for creative, contemporary Western sculpture grows, the future of Joshua Tobey Studios is as open as the Western sky.



## Joshua Tobey Quick Facts

Born Sept. 22, 1977, in Corvallis, Ore.

Grew up in Tesuque, N.M., near Santa Fe

Married to Josephine Franklin

Second generation sculptor (son of Gene Tobey, renowned Western sculptor and ceramist)

Bachelor's degree in fine art, Western State College, Gunnison, Colo. (Father paid his tuition with life-size elk sculpture called *Wind River*.) Graduated in 2000.



Opened Joshua Tobey Studios in 2001 in Mason, Texas. Moved to Port Aransas in 2002.

Commissioned in 2008 to create *Western Challenge* sculpture for Western State

Named one of Western State's top 100 alumni in 2010

Moved production to Loveland, Colo., in 2011 after experiencing 20 percent growth in demand annually 2006 to 2010.

Largest piece: *Heart of the Mountain*; Best known work: *The Conspirators*

### Public Projects

- *More than I Can Chew*, commissioned 2005, donated by collector to Booth Western Art Museum, Georgia, 2008
- *The Conspirators*, Na'Aina Kai Botanical Garden, Hawaii, 2006
- *Western Challenge*, Western State College, 2008
- *The Mountaineer*, Western State College, 2011
- Lobby centerpiece, Phoenix Children's Hospital, commissioned 2011 for 2012 installation.

### Galleries

- [Astoria Fine Art](#) Jackson Hole, WY
- [Bronze Coast Gallery](#) Cannon Beach, OR
- [Exposures International Gallery of Fine Art](#) Sedona, AZ
- [Gallery 822](#) Santa Fe, NM
- [The Plainsmen Gallery](#) Clearwater, FL
- [Thomas Anthony Gallery](#) Park City, UT