



*"Voice in the Wind," bronze, 21"*



*"Shamon Shadow," bronze, 16"*

## A REFRESHING NEW TAKE ON WILDLIFE

Joshua Tobey brings wit, sophistication, refinement and raw talent to bronze.

BY WOLFGANG MABRY

Joshua Tobey's lifelong passion for the outdoors shows no sign of abating as this young sculptor continually seeks new adventures in untamed nature and shares his experiences in the august permanence of

bronze. At only 27 years old, Joshua has just released his 30th limited edition sculpture. If there is a thematic current in this sculptor's body of work, it emphatically concerns the interdependence of wildlife, humanity, and

environment. Tobey unfailingly infuses his sculptures with elements of dignity, spirit, and humor that are true to the nature of the subject and more often than not revelatory about aspects of ourselves.



Growing up in an outdoors-oriented family, Tobey envisioned becoming a professional fly-fishing guide/ski instructor/outfitter/adventurer. When college time came around, Tobey's school of choice was Western State College in Gunnison, Colorado. Not only could he major in recreation and minor in business, he would be in the heart of fly-fishing heaven. An art class was part of the core requirement that Joshua wanted to finish as a freshman. To his surprise, he liked it so much that he ended up earning a Bachelor of Fine Arts with emphasis on sculpture.

"I never thought that I was going to be an artist," Joshua reflects. He gives his father, noted sculptor Gene Tobey, filial accolades for never having pushed art on any of his children, and for always being ready and able to help with technical advice and general pointers when called upon. Looking back, Joshua recognizes that his dad's attitude of allowing him to make up his own mind probably made it inevitable that he would become a sculptor. "I grew up around sculptors, foundries, ceramics," explains Joshua. "I am extremely grateful to my dad. I look at a display of my work and I can see his influence, but I can also see what makes it different. Without that thumbprint of originality, there would be no challenge, no motivation."

One of many bronzes that exemplify Joshua's stylistic inventiveness is called "Voice on the Wind." By no means the first to sculpt a young bull elk in full bugle, Joshua Tobey is surely the first to do it like this. He presents a noble creature inflated with vital energy and want, certain of his supremacy, intent on attracting a suitable mate. Tobey has placed all four of the animal's legs in a close-in, pedestal-like pose. This innovative and purposeful bunching of limbs is both a visual surprise and mental delight. It contributes mightily to the artist's clear articulation of mood, attitude, and theme. Smoothly polished and finished with a beautiful contemporary patina, the bronze speaks volumes about elk reality, and at the same time addresses something we recognize in ourselves. Is there something about the male ego in general hovering around the thematic air? "Voice on the Wind" offers up equal measures of truth, humor, originality and sheer visual and tactile splendor. With customary thoroughness, Tobey has approached another subject with compassion, complexity, humor, observational acuity, and absolute craftsmanship.

Joshua Tobey is a master composer in three dimensions. His bronzes have authority beyond his years. With concise and eloquent forms, rich and sensual finishes,



*"The Thinker," bronze, 15"*



*"Josh and Danali"*

Tobey's bronzes invite the experience of touch even as they satisfy the most discerning eye. His passionate and comprehensive appreciation for all wildlife conspires with the artist's unique vision and compelling talent to produce bronzes truly worthy of their subjects.

*Joshua Tobey's sculptures may be seen at Manitou Galleries, 123 W. Palace Ave., Santa Fe. Hours: Monday-Saturday 9:30-5:30, Sunday 11:00-5:00 (505) 986-0440, (800) 283-0440. [www.ManitouGalleries.com](http://www.ManitouGalleries.com).*