

# Artisan or Alchemist...

# Tim Cherry's Sculpture

## Turning Bronze Metal into Gold Medal-worthy Art

by Josephine Cozean Styron

Like a good poem, Tim Cherry's sculptures have complexities not apparent at first glance. Deceptively complex, there is a joy in studying his work. Every circle and line is anatomically true to the animal Cherry depicts in bronze.

"Traditional Western sculpture depicts every hair. It is very tight, like a novel. My sculpture is more like a poem," Cherry said. "It still has to express realism and likeness of form, but it doesn't spell everything out. I want to capture the spirit and soul of the animal."

That distinct Cherry style is getting lots of attention. Like Frederick Remington, Charles Russell, and equine sculptor Harold Holden, Cherry's renditions of Western wildlife are turning heads, West to East.

Exhibitions of Cherry's work span the national map - Los Angeles, New York, Arkansas to Wyoming.

Although his subject matter is Western wildlife,

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Cherry's sculpture is not created in the traditional Western style. Cherry describes his work as "straddling a world between realism and abstraction," using color and style to differentiate his sculptures.

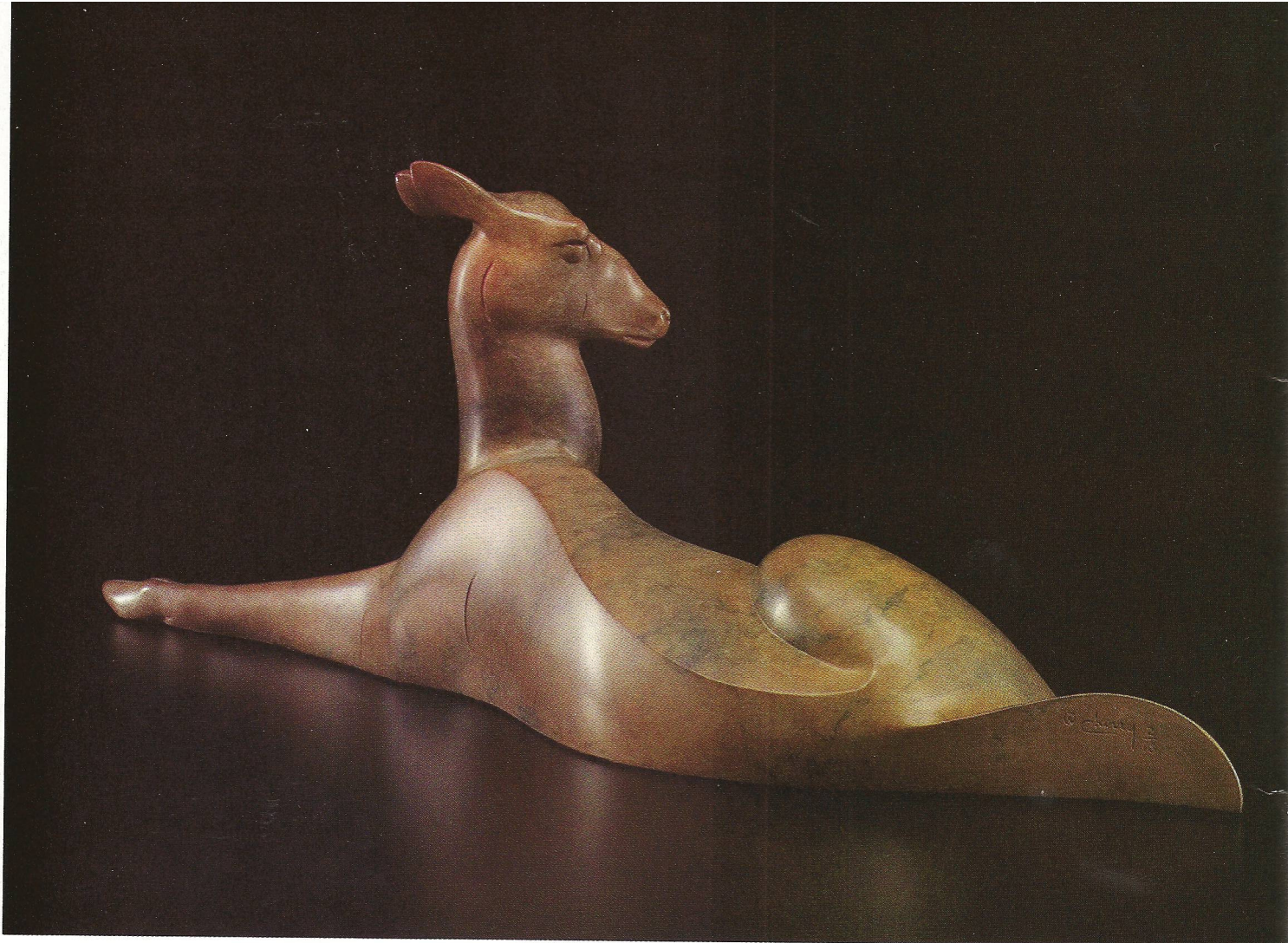
Cherry uses the structural elements of the circle and simple geometric shapes to produce the strong flowing designs his sculptures are known for. "There is something inviting about round, smooth volumes," said Cherry. "People will say to me, 'I just want to touch your sculptures.' His sculpture has broad appeal. "Most of my work goes to contemporary and traditional collections," he said.

Cherry was born in Calgary in the Canadian province of Alberta, and grew up in mountainous British Columbia. As a youth, he spent much of his time trapping and fishing with his grandfather. By the age of 16, Cherry was working as a horse wrangler and cook for a hunting outfitter, before becoming a hunting guide himself, in northern Canada.

"I loved being in the mountains, working with horses. There were 10,000 square miles allotted to

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at left, the 2007 National Sculptor Society  
Gold Medal winner, Flea Flicker



our (hunting) outfit, and nobody else was around,” said Cherry. “You could still be the first to climb a mountain. To be outdoors like that and to get paid for it was a great way to spend one’s youth.”

While still guiding hunters, Cherry learned the art of taxidermy, began sculpting taxidermy mannequins. “I knew animals would be important to my livelihood, but I didn’t know in what way,” he said. The skill would later serve him well as a bronze sculptor.

On a trip to New York City with a fellow taxidermist, the 19-year-old Cherry paid his first visit to the Tallix Foundry and the Salmagundi Club, a well-known center for fine art and artists. “My love of wildlife and the outdoors, my love of art, and my knowledge of taxidermy... this is where it all jelled for me,” Cherry said. “When I

*Cherry was tapped by the City of Little Rock to provide a sculpture to be placed on the grounds near the Presidential Library*

was introduced to the artwork at the Salmagundi Club, I realized this is what I wanted to do.”

Fate intervened again when Cherry guided well-known Colorado sculptor Dan Ostermiller on a hunt. “He invited me to live and work in Loveland, Colorado,” said Cherry. “Ostermiller gave me my start, and (Colorado sculptor) Fritz White solidified my direction as a sculptor.”

Cherry was sculpting in the traditional American Western style when a block of alabaster changed the direction of his art forever. “I was carving alabaster, which is a soft stone. I couldn’t put in the details because the alabaster was so soft. As I was carving I was getting these nice round volumes, and the beauty of the stone was coming through,” Cherry said. “Then I had a revelation,” he added. “If I could do this in bronze, I could experi-

ment with color and finish.” These round volumes, geometric shapes, and finish are very appealing to adults and to kids.

In 2004 Cherry was chosen to be the Artist in Residency at Holland Hall, a private school in Tulsa, OK. The Artist in Residency position is part of Holland Hall's internationally recognized Artworks Program. For three days Cherry taught sculpting at the Holland Hall campus, working with students from kindergarten through 12th grade.

Byron Shen, the upper school art director at Holland Hall, said, “Tim did a great job with the students. He explained the history of his sculpture, Hare Ball, and how he abstracted the form from wildlife so that it was recognizable and abstract at the same time. The kids really enjoyed working with him, and they enjoyed the geometric forms of Tim's work. The abstraction of his forms makes it accessible to kids.”

Shannon White is the River Market Manager in Little Rock, AR. She said that Cherry was tapped by the city of Little Rock to provide a

sculpture to be placed on the grounds close to the William J. Clinton Presidential Library. “We needed sculpture that could be low to the ground and accessible,” White said. Cherry's monument-sized sculpture, Rabbit Reach, fit the bill.

“Kids love the rabbit,” said White. “They climb on it and ride it like a horse. The first

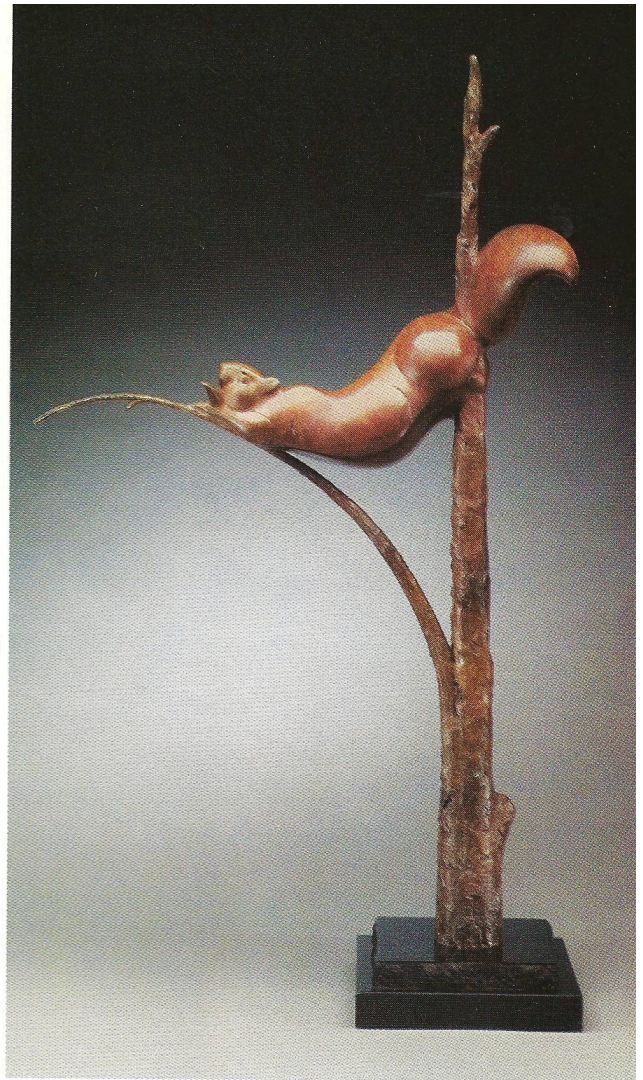
thing they do is straddle it and grab the ears. The rabbit sculpture has little marks all over it. It took me a while to realize that they were the marks where kids' jean brads had scratched the bunny.”

This interaction with his sculptures is something Cherry works toward. “There's a reaction there, so obviously I did something right,” he said.

The quality of Cherry's work has garnered him many awards. His latest, the 2007 National Sculptor Society Gold Medal and Maurice B. Hexter Prize, was awarded in honor of his fox sculpture, Flea Flicker. “I consider this my most important award because it was given by a group of my peers,” he said.

His wife, Linda, whom he met while he lived in Colorado, and their daughter, Amber, have been instrumental to Cherry's success through their contributions of

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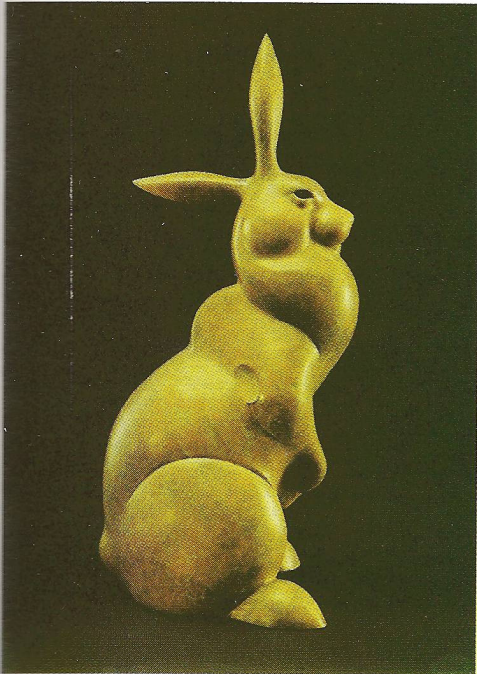


**Tim and Linda Cherry , left  
Squirrel Stretch, above  
and Dozing Doe, opposite**

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photography, graphic design, business acumen, and sales. "Amber is my biggest salesman," laughed Cherry.

Cherry's desire to "explore and experiment" has led him to incorporate furniture into some of his designs. He also casts some sculptures in stainless steel, which he described as "very cool and very contemporary."



**Hare Raising**

Although Cherry sometimes returns to the Canadian wilderness to "recharge his batteries," he gets everyday inspiration from his surroundings in Branson. "I'm influenced by what I see in my environment, like the bald eagles, the turkeys, and the ducks," he said. "There's not a day that goes by that I don't see an animal do something cool." Luckily for us, these animal actions may very well end up cast in bronze.

To see more of Tim Cherry's work, visit [www.timcherry.com](http://www.timcherry.com)

*"There's not a day that goes by that I don't see an animal do something cool."*

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