

# Taking it



# Outside

Far from the protection of the collector's case, museum or gallery, these creations withstand the whims of Northwest weather to bring wit, whimsy and wonderment to the great outdoors



## Jack Lewis

It all started with an angel back in 1989. Jack Lewis, a tile fitter, thought it would be fun to create a mosaic sculpture of an angel with his nieces and nephews. Today his acre-and-a-half yard in a Tacoma, Wash. neighborhood houses dozens of sculptures, one over two stories tall.

Three in particular stand out—The Hand, The Head and The Man.

The Hand (12' tall) was made free-form and took Jack two years. He used



his own hand, standing at a distance and holding it out in front of him as a guide for how to bend the rebar. The Head also took two years and is primarily made of marble. Like material on his other sculptures, the tiles were left over from jobs.


The Man, however, is Jack's greatest accomplishment. It took nine years and is 18 feet tall. He built an exact 1/10th model before commencing—including the scaffolding, then painstakingly made every tile.

Although Jack's not a trained artist, he has a student's curiosity. For 25 years he's been collecting peoples' definition



of art. "My favorite is a general definition I read once—that if a piece was intended to have meaning above and beyond its normal potential, function or being, then it's art."

So what different meanings does each of these sculptures hold? Jack smiles. "They're sort of like a manifestation of what's going inside of me. But I think if I were to relate different aspects of it to different pieces, no one would be able to make heads or tails of it."

But The Hand, Head and Man together have meaning: "The Hand feeling infinity; the Head pondering infinity; and the Man standing in the midst of infinity." 

*Created mostly from marble left over from other jobs, Jack Lewis's "The Head" took over two years to complete and is 12' tall overshadowing the 5' tall "Hostage" (below).*



Her passion for mosaics started in college. She was sculpting a series of small, primitive but complex clay figures, and decided to make a large one for her senior project. After months of work, she placed the piece in an open pit to get it smoky—where it exploded. There wasn't time to recreate it.

"My sculpture teacher told me about an artist friend of his who used to break everything he made and then glue it back together so it would have an ancient look," says Clare. "He encouraged me to glue it all back together, and it turned out great—very mysterious."

When she began doing garden art, her pieces were made of broken tiles, and spontaneous. "Now I make my own tiles. I cut out specific shapes and the pieces are more planned," she says.

Clare's work has evolved from earth-toned figures to colorful spheres, birdbaths, birdhouses, and soon life-size deer.

"I just started making them and got addicted," she says. 🍷



## Clare Dohna

"I've been working with clay since 1972, but I've been seriously doing mosaic for the last four or five years," says Vashon Island artist Clare Dohna.

For the past 20 years she sold pins, made by casting old buttons and coins, at the Pike Place Market. But now it's tile and mosaic garden art, including a nest of eggs measuring seven and a half feet across featured at the 2004 Northwest Flower & Garden Show in Seattle.



## Dawn Sorrell

Rocks speak to her. On hikes, Dawn Sorrell will sometimes notice a particular rock and see a face looking up at her through the cracks and crevices. If it's exceptionally expressive, she snatches it up.

Back at her studio in Sumner, Wash., she uses diamond-tipped blades to carve the faces she sees into the incredibly hard surfaces. "It would actually be easier to start with clay models and then cast them, but then it's not any fun," Dawn says. "Part of the charm of these is that I see different images in them and so the faces and expressions are constantly changing."

Dawn has been creating her Rock Noggins full-time since January 2004. Before then she was a painter. "From '91 to '94 I painted in Japan, exhibiting in Tokyo and Kobe. I started sculpting when the '95 earthquake in Kobe hit,



*Several of Dawn's pieces keeping watch in Lakewold Gardens (left and above). "The tallest one is approximately 18" tall and 20 pounds," says Dawn. "I've got one that is quite a bit larger and some that fit in your hand, but most of them are around 12" to 18".*

destroying a lot of my work, and I moved back to the States."

Although she recently won an industry award from *Sculptural Pursuit Magazine* for her alabaster figurative sculpture, her focus for now will remain on her comical garden faces.

"It's just really fun," she says. "I'm at my studio just laughing sometimes—having the best time. When I wake up in the morning, I can't wait to get to work." 🍷

*Clare Dohna's mosaic sculptures include birdhouses and birdbaths and nests with eggs, some measuring over 7 feet across.*



## Tom Wolver

At a glance it's easy to see that Alaskan and Native American cultures have had an influence on Tom Wolver's work. "I'm influenced by the African and Mexican cultures as well," he says.

The sculptures in Tom's yard are what he terms "ritual totems." Up in the hills near Santa Cruz, Calif., his redwood

that Tom and his wife own, there are seven different totem groups containing over 30 different sculptures. Each was hand-carved using a mallet and chisel, and decorated with clay masks and other accoutrements.

Tom would love to see others embrace his totem sculptures, but people seem to shy away. "Many people find them too dark," says Tom. "For me, you have to get through the darkness to get to the light, and this is the journey."

Tom's been a professional artist for 40 years. Although he's never taken an art class, he's taught a fair number. Presently he's teaching clay and wood sculpture at the Corralitos Art Center. He's also teaching "Art, Madness and Transformation" workshops, which focus on creativity

through accessing the unconscious and the shadow. "I enjoy exploring the dark passageways that connect mind, heart and spirit," he says.

Tom's yard and his totem sculptures will forever be an ongoing project. "It is my intention to go on creating ritual totems for the rest of my creative life." 🌀

*Hand-carved from redwood and adorned with clay sculpture, Tom Wolver's ritual totems reflect a darker side.*

## Andrew Carson

When you look at Andrew Carson's wind sculptures, you see bits and pieces of his past—the seven-year-old fascinated with the wind machines near his Colorado home, and the teenager who worked in a bicycle shop, fiddling with gears and learning to weld. You'll also see a couple of the men who have influenced him, like Jules Verne and Dr. Seuss.

Andrew earned a degree in photography and spent ten years as an illustrator before he turned his talent, energies and inspirations into fascinating and whimsical sculptures.

"I'll admit, I'm extraordinarily prolific," says Andrew. He employs three craftsmen at his shop in Seattle to help him keep ahead of not only his orders but also his ideas—from com-



plicated wind sculptures to elegant bronze fountains.

"I love the process, and design each piece," he says. "I sketch them first. It's hard for people to understand, but I believe the challenge for all artists is to be willing to 'destroy the fantasy.' With each sketch the ideal you had in your mind becomes less of a reality. Once the piece is finished, the destruction of the fantasy is complete." 🌀



sculptures blend with the redwood trees surrounding his house and studio. "My hope is that the totem would evolve as a natural outgrowth of the existing landscape—an expression of the primal heartbeat of nature rather than as statement of humanity's prefabricated ego."

He began work on his ritual totems in 1999, but he'd envisioned them for 25 years. On the two-acre piece of property



*Andrew Carson's kinetic sculpture is a creative mix of engineering acumen and artistic whimsy.*

## Nosivad

Not everyone is comfortable with big slabs of steel and a welding gun. But for 25 years Nosivad worked in fabrication and heavy equipment repair, unaware that the welds he was using and the different types of steel and process would be later put to use in his art.

"My wife had always said I should give it a try," he says. "When I did, it just sort of took off." Took off is somewhat of an understatement. Within a relatively short time, he was in 13 galleries and working close to full-time on his sculptures.

Nosivad's art requires, among other things, a continuous supply of large pieces of steel. Because of his contacts in the fabrication business, he's able to recover remnants from big jobs. The materials find their way to his St. Paul, Oregon shop, where he cuts and welds to create wall mounts, fountains, fences, gates, lamps and freestanding sculptures.

Over the years, he's been commissioned to do several garden pieces. When working on them he likes to go into the client's home to get a feel for the art they have inside their home and hanging on their walls. "I try to create a piece that fits," he says. "So far I've been lucky to be turned loose creatively. And so far they've all been happy."

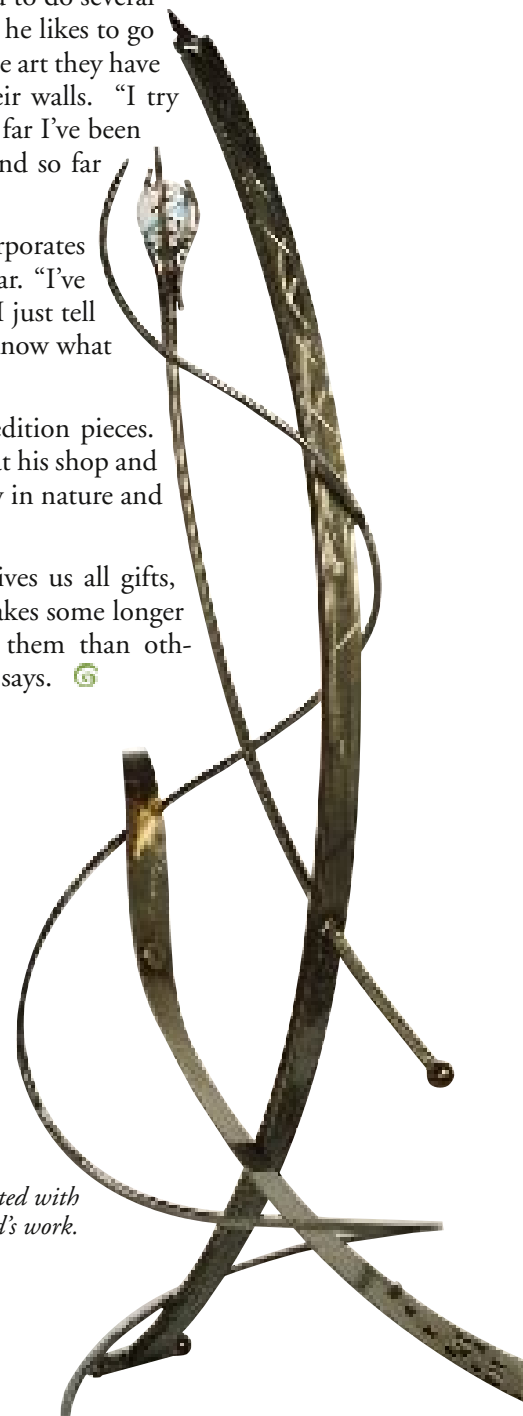
Each piece is one-of-a-kind that incorporates steel, wood, blown glass and even rebar. "I've been told by some you can't use rebar. I just tell them, I'm not a trained artist, I don't know what you can't use," he says.

Nosivad is considering some limited edition pieces. For now, though, he's content to work at his shop and to let each piece be inspired by the flow in nature and where his mood takes him.

"God gives us all gifts, it just takes some longer to find them than others," he says. 🌱



*Graceful lines of steel sometimes punctuated with elegant glass pieces are a hallmark of Nosivad's work.*



## To see more...

You can find **Clare Dohna's** pieces exclusively at DIG Nursery on Vashon Island, Wash., phone 206-463-5096. She also does tile and mosaic installations, 206-463-5427.

For more information on **Dawn Sorrell's** sculptures, visit [www.rocknoggins.com](http://www.rocknoggins.com) or call her directly at 253-826-5918. Limited editions will soon be available.

You can see **Nosivad's** work at his shop in St. Paul or by visiting his website [www.nosivadart.com](http://www.nosivadart.com)

For more information on **Andrew Carson's** sculptures you can log on to his website [www.windsculpture.com](http://www.windsculpture.com), check out his work at the Bellevue Arts & Crafts Fair or stop by Gallery Mack in Seattle.

More of **Tom Wolver's** work can be found on [www.tomahawksculpture.com](http://www.tomahawksculpture.com).