

A.J. “Buddy” Obara Explorer, Sportsman & Wildlife Sculptor

By Emma Adair

Buddy Obara is without question one of the world’s best bronze wildlife sculptors. The artist’s private studio sits along the banks of the Brandywine River in Chester County, PA. Every square inch of the studio’s great room is filled with wildlife bronze sculptures, paintings, taxidermy mounts, Native American artifacts and clothing. The contents of Buddy’s private collection would open wide the eyes of any museum curator or private collector. Within this room are photographs of the artist and his many clients of the past thirty years. The impressive list of international clients includes actors, CEO’s of Fortune 100 companies princes, presidents, kings and queens. Some notables are Presidents Ford, Reagan and George H. W. Bush, Sigourney Weaver, Paul Newman, James Stewart, Tony Bennett, Queen Elizabeth, Prince Philip, UK, King Juan Carlos I of Spain, King Fahd of Saudi Arabia, Princess Charlotte of Luxembourg, Princess Alexandria of Austria as well as members of the duPont and Rockefeller families, to name a few.



Buddy in his studio with Bison sculpture

Buddy began sculpting in 1972 after attending art classes as a child at the Delaware Art Museum in Wilmington. He admired Frederick Remington's genius for capturing a moment and Charles Russell's forward approach of defining cowboys in the saddle. Buddy developed his own unique style, placing an animal in its natural surroundings. His sculpture of a bald eagle in bronze, commissioned by President Reagan for the Oval Office, now resides at the Reagan Library. Another unique sculpture is a French Angelfish, which floats over a branch of bronze coral. Buddy's bronzes are so realistic that many sculptures of fresh water fish, marine mammals, sharks and sea turtles are held in the collections of the International Game Fish Commission and the Cousteau Society. Buddy has also generously donated to many wildlife organizations over the years.



All of Buddy's sculptures are cast as limited editions of five, ten or fifteen pieces. There is a high demand for his work, and sportsmen and wildlife art collectors around the globe are eager to add an Obara sculpture to their collections. One of Buddy's famed commissions was the jungle gym for Michael Jackson's Neverland Valley Ranch in California. Buddy worked for over three years to complete an eleven-foot tall Boabob tree with a cavity in which children can play hide and seek. Within the tree's twenty-five foot span are frogs, lizards, insects, a toucan and spider monkey hanging from a branch. A 25-foot long python winds through the tree branches for children to hang from. Under the tree sit a life-size Galapagos tortoise, zebra, giraffe warthog, orangutan, ostrich, crocodile and pygmy hippo.



Buddy's jungle gym as been hailed by Gary Blakeslee of the Blakeslee Gallery in Palm Beach, Florida, as "the greatest children's sculpture since Central Park's Alice in Wonderland by Jose de Creft." This bronze is once again available for sale.

An avid explorer and adventurer, Buddy travels the world to observe and research wildlife in their natural settings. He belongs to several professional organizations including the National Arts Club, NYC; Salmagundi Club, NYC; National Sculpture Club, NY; and Explorers Club, NYC. His work can be viewed at www.ajobara.com