

## **Tell us about the creation of your piece.**

The stone is very special. It is from Gateway, Colorado. It is wind-created sandstone and is heavily bedded with different striations and values of sandstone. The rock formation is huge, 300' thick in some places. It was not easy to acquire. First, I had to find the formation; then I had to find a chunk that had fallen that was big enough to work with. Once I found it, I had to locate the rancher who owned the land and work with him to get the stone and move it out of there. It was all worth it. The striations make it look almost like plywood when it is cut and polished.

I knew that the fish would need to be created first, and the stone finished off around them. The fish are made of bronze, and they were a challenge. I first made clay models using a carved Styrofoam core as the armature. I worked hard trying to create the best scales for the fish. I knew that this piece would be approached from all angles, and so I wanted it to appear finished 'in-the-round.'

I was surprised as I started working on this how much math and geometry was involved in the patterns of the scales. One day, Susan and I were standing in the grocery store sketching fish. After we had been doing that for some time, we realized that the fish were on sale, and just took them home to work on. It turns out that, although fish scales are very intricate, they are not very unique, from one fish to another. I wanted each of Josh's fish to have a unique feel so I experimented with some new ideas for scale shape. My favorite to create was the "dot" fish. I made a ton of little balls and squished them on until it got the right visual feel.

This is the first bronze that I worked with a foundry to complete. That was an interesting process. It was initially hard giving up control to others, but I quickly found that those folks are experts in their field, and brought important elements to the finished product.

Left on its own, bronze goes through a natural aging process that turns it dark with turquoise. You see this in older pieces, like the Rodins which have a beautiful blue green hue. The problem with allowing that natural process to take place is that it eventually can be destructive to the piece. The patina of the fish was done with a heated chemical process, and when we got the color we wanted, we stopped the process. Then it was sealed and covered with wax.

Once the fish were done, I had to set them in the stone so that it was still comfortable to sit. You will notice that we added an important detail: a fish-shaped mud scraper. That was Susan's idea, after she noticed the mud around the pond.

## **How do you think your piece reflects its site?**

Sandstone is often made with water. It is warm, not flat. Its colors blend well into this area. The figures reflect the whimsy and innocence of children, learning, and discovery. Sometimes I wonder where the serious artist in me has gone. I know that these fish are not realistic. I wanted to remind folks that fish are not just something to eat. They are