

ARTIST PROFILE

State of the Art Gallery

Nathan Snyder: *Our World Breaking Open*

By Andria Watson / CASA

WHILE SHAPING METAL AND EXPANDING IMAGINATION,

sculptor Nathan Snyder takes a closer look at the world around him and challenges the public to not only interact with a piece of art, but to create a relationship with a symbol for change at the 5th State of the Art Gallery exhibition on State Street through November 15th.

"I wanted to make something modern that reminded people there is more to life than commerce," Snyder shared. "For the State of the Art exhibit, I wanted to



Nathan Snyder

convey a new-world philosophy, and have viewers generate their own interpretations about the piece. It's about something coming undone and something new coming together."

Snyder's stainless steel sculpture, *Our World Breaking*

Open, located by the Granada on State Street, took him approximately three and a half months to complete using a technique known as hydro cutting.

"This is a unique opportunity," Snyder explained. "State of the Art thrusts artwork into the public domain, and I hope my piece has the ability to inspire. I want to provide a moment away from daily life; deliver a slice of beauty in the midst of traffic. To me, public art is vital to the community, because it turns on lights inside our minds."

The Honolulu native used to race home from elementary school to sketch birds and other animals from his imagination. Because of his fascination with sculpting and creating things with his hands, Snyder later told his parents he had dreams of becoming a reconstructive surgeon.

"I was very interested in medicine and the human body. I felt like a reconstructive surgeon bridged the gap between art and science," Snyder said. He attended Punahou Preparatory School until college. After graduating from Punahou, Snyder found himself at the University of Oregon as a pre-med student, experiencing a change of heart.

"I was sitting in my chemistry class and I had this realization that I wanted to be



Our World Breaking Open by Nathan Snyder

Photo by Kimberly Kavish

an artist, plain and simple. So it was back to the drawing board, and I moved back to Hawaii."

After he returned, Snyder opened two restaurants that he hoped would be a catalyst to showcase his art. After seven and a half years maintaining two restaurants, Snyder felt that the business aspect of his project was monopolizing time to produce art. His mom had been working as a fundraiser for various events and organizations in Santa Barbara at the time. When she met the sculptor Aris Demetrios, she convinced him to have Snyder work as his apprentice. Three days later, Snyder was on a plane bound for California.

Art career underway, Snyder, with the guidance of Demetrios, began to embrace large scale sculpting, and soon became interested in public art. State of the Art Gallery will mark his first public art commission.

"I've been here for four years as a professional volunteer at Santa Barbara City College, where I also have my studio," Snyder shared. "I know with every fiber of my being that I'm supposed to be an artist."

For the fifth annual State of the Art Gallery exhibit, eight artists were selected from a call for entries by Dean Anes, Director of the Acme Gallery in Los Angeles, to present their sculptures in a public forum. Other State of the Art Gallery sculptors include: Richard Aber, Jeff Elings, Edward Inks, Bill Malis, Rafael Perea de la Cabada and Matthew Woodford, Jeff Sanders, Helle Scharling-Todd, and Jeff Kaiser. For information, call the Arts Commission at 965-9663.