



John Lopez combines cast iron and other scrap farm machinery with bronze castings. Shown above is a draft horse sculpture called Black Hawk.



His one-of-a-kind sculptures include this Wild West buffalo.

Western Sculptures Combine Bronze Castings With Scrap Metal

John Lopez has found a use for cast iron and other scrap farm machinery and equipment. He combines it with bronze castings that he is noted for, turning it all into one-of-a-kind sculptures, often with an agricultural theme.

"I started out doing sculptures cast in bronze," says Lopez. "That has transitioned as I began incorporating the bronze into scrap iron."

Lopez grew up going to brandings and roundups around Lemmon, S. Dak., where he now lives and works.

"My job is to flesh out stories that tell our history here," he says.

His work is like no other. From a distance, the often larger than life-size sculptures may look like a horse, buffalo or Longhorn steer. Up close, the eye is drawn to the individual pieces of iron that have been used. Black Hawk, a draft horse sculpture created in 2013, includes a single bottom plow that could have been pulled by a real horse.

"Black Hawk really touched a nerve with a lot of people," says Lopez. "When you see

it's really made out of tractor and equipment parts, that gives it another dimension."

From a distance, the draft horse at work is evident. Up close the mane and hair on the fetlocks become chain and the head, body and legs become an amalgamation of equipment seats, shovels, discs and more. A neck rippling with muscles becomes lengths of roller chain and steel cable blending with a pattern in silver forks.

Lopez starts by sculpting a figure in clay. He then uses a caliper to take measurements, carefully transferring them into life-size or larger pieces. He never knows what pieces of scrap will go into a sculpture. Sometimes a piece goes off in a different direction. "It means a lot to me when a rancher gives me a piece of equipment he worked with," he says.

Lopez does only a couple of pieces a year. When he gets an idea, he researches it and creates it. Only then does he look for a home for it. Black Hawk was purchased by a private collector who put it on public display at a farmer's market in Kensington, N.H.



Lopez's latest work is this Longhorn steer made from parts representing the state of Texas.

"What fits me best is doing a piece I want to do, pouring myself into it and then taking it out and selling it," he says.

His latest piece is a Longhorn steer with parts that represent the state of Texas. Components include a model of the Alamo and a small bust of Sam Houston. A guitar is in sheet metal outlined with roller chain, with more roller chain for the frets and bolts for the tuning keys.

"It looks like leather and silver from a distance," says Lopez. "It's designed to represent all of Texas. It's priced at \$200,000, and I hope to find a home for it in the Austin, Texas area."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, John Lopez, 19493 Railway St., Lemmon, S. Dak. 57638 (ph 605 209-0954; johnlopezstudio@gmail.com; www.johnlopezstudio.com).

Wooden Eggs Are This Artist's Canvas

Alan Traynor paints pets, horses, barns and portraits from family photos on wooden eggs. Sealed with 15 layers of polyurethane, the finished paintings appear to be encased in glass.

The Orlando, Fla., artist has rightfully earned the name "The Egg Man" after painting eggs for more than 22 years. He expects to have painted more than 50,000 eggs by the end of 2014.

He got started after breaking 2 real eggs he attempted to paint for an egg-collecting friend for Easter in 1991. Someone suggested painting on wooden eggs, which are available in craft shops and through national suppliers. They worked out so well he painted a few extra eggs for women at work.

Traynor says he enjoys painting barns, covered bridges, farmhouses and rural scenes. Because of the process, eggs take about three weeks to complete.

Traynor drives a nail at the bottom of the egg so he can turn it while painting. When the artwork is done, he dips it in polyurethane and places it in a rack that holds 300 eggs. Each egg is dipped every 4 hrs. for a total of 15 coats. It's a challenge to convince people that they're wooden and not delicate glass, Traynor says.

Most of Traynor's eggs are in the \$20 to \$50 range with prices based on detail. Detailed pictures and custom orders sell for more. Floral designs are the easiest. Buildings, pets and faces are more challenging to get the right

perspective on the oval shape. Eggs come with a wood egg stand, information card and a gift box he designed. About 15 percent of Traynor's work is custom, based on photos. He sends photos of the completed egg to the customer to make sure they are satisfied before shipping it.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Alan Traynor, The Egg Man (ph 407 352-3654; EggManArt@earthlink.net; www.EggManArt.com).



Alan Traynor is known as "The Egg Man" after painting eggs for more than 22 years. Sealed with 15 layers of polyurethane, the finished paintings appear to be encased in glass.

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