

Neal Personeus
ARTIST STATEMENT

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I am drawn to the dunes of the Cape. I began my interest in creating driftwood sculptures as a young boy on the beaches of North Truro in Cape Cod, Massachusetts. My original works were typically pirate ships in the sand made from the various flotsam and jetsam that Cape Cod Bay and the Atlantic Ocean would return to the land. By the time I was in my early teens, my works began to change towards wharf scenes and typical seaside shops perched upon interesting driftwood base pieces. In my early twenties, I became an architectural and engineering draftsman. I rented a beach-side cottage with some friends during the summer of 1984, and spent the entire vacation working at the beach on my sculptures while watching the Olympics. It was during this time that I honed in on the type of works that I would ultimately settle upon. Utilizing my interest in architecture, I would scour the beaches and dunes for beautifully bleached and unusually shaped base pieces, and then picture the style of house that would blend into and compliment the environment of the base piece.

I also design commission sculptures, recreating actual homes in driftwood from photographs and/or floor plans provided by clients (i.e. "Four Follies Farm" and "Setting Down Roots"). My sculptures range in size and complexity, and can incorporate intricate interior detailing. The pieces "Yeah...But The View" and "Smugglers Cove" are good examples of the level of detail that really sets my works apart from anything other artists have presented.

My sculptures are comprised almost entirely of natural materials, starting with wood base pieces that have washed ashore after soaking in the salt waters of the Atlantic Ocean and/or Cape Cod Bay, and then lay in the dry sands bleaching in the sun, thus giving them their silvery appearance. Additionally, sculptures are the blend of the natural base combined with the flotsam (marine wreckage) and jetsam (discarded cargo) collected from the shores of some of the most beautiful spots on the outer reaches of Cape Cod. In addition, I comb the shallows of Cape Cod Bay at low tides to harvest the smallest of the small (shells, crabs, beach glass, etc.).

There are occasions when I have had to resort and rely upon certain out-of-Cape supplies, the most important of which is the mica (schist) that makes up the "glass windows". And, every now and then a shell or two from places in Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, New Jersey or Florida will find a place of honor on a sculpture. However, all told, the sculptures are comprised of mostly Cape Cod beach materials.