

Support Materials

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Assorted Articles

Prepared by
Brian R. Owens

CONTENTS

I. Shekinah Glory Magazine, November 1998, (now out of print) – 5 pages

III. The News-Journal, West Volusia Edition, Sunday October 8, 2006 – 3 pages

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SPECIAL PREVIEW ISSUE

SHEKINAH

Glory!

November 1998

US \$3.00
Canada \$4.00



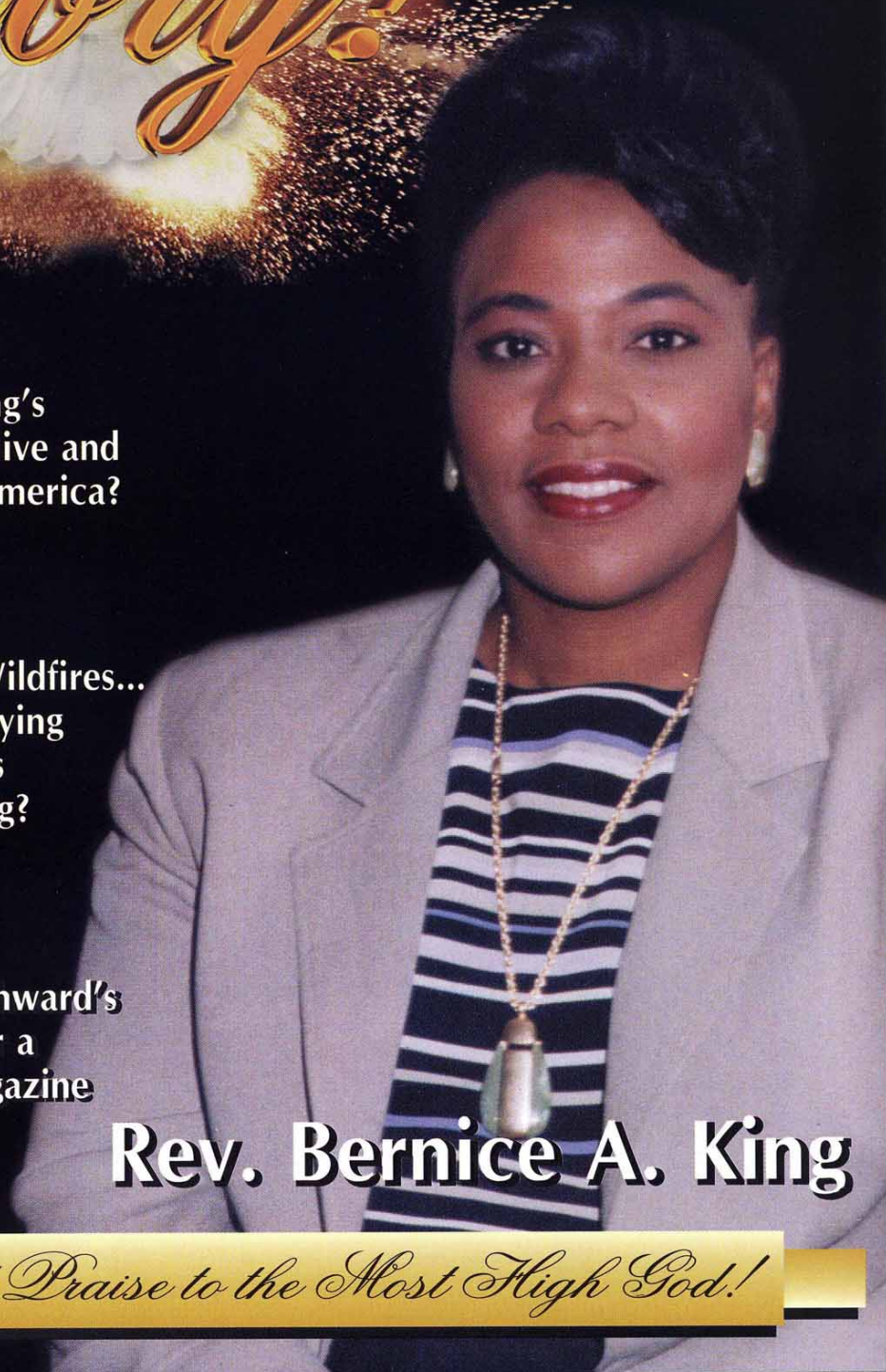
Is Dr. King's
Dream Alive and
Well in America?



Florida Wildfires...
Is God Trying
To Tell Us
Something?



Ken Southward's
Vision for a
New Magazine



Rev. Bernice A. King

Glory and Praise to the Most High God!



As a Man Thinketh

A VISIT WITH SCULPTOR BRIAN R. OWENS

by V. Christell Jackson

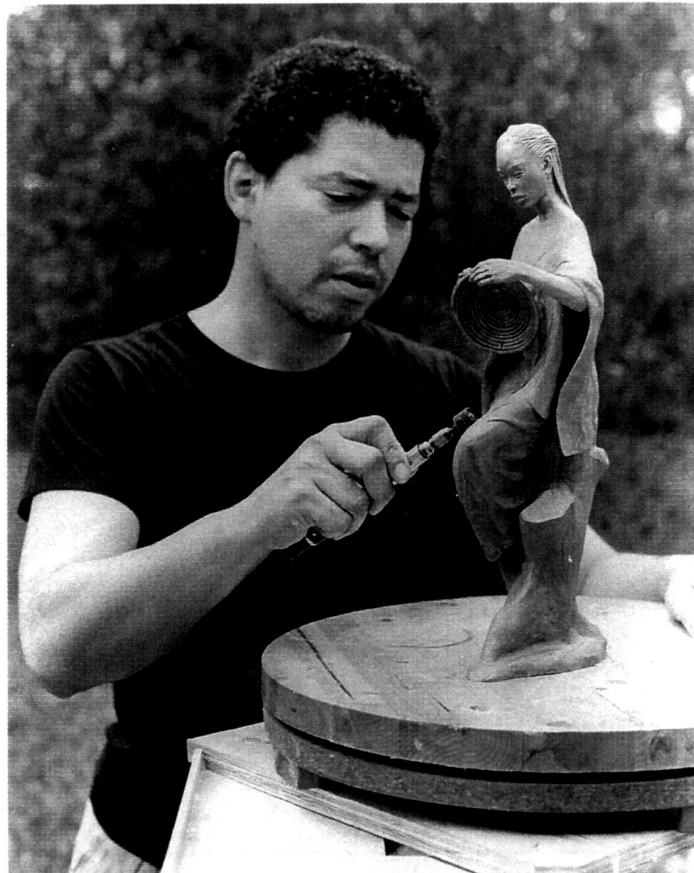
From the look of things, you would have a better chance of finding an alligator than finding a professional sculptor in Deltona, Florida. "I get a lot done here because it is somewhat isolated" says Owens, who lives and works in a house that he converted into a studio. "This is actually a good place to be at the moment because of the way the state is growing."

Owens has an engineering degree but is a largely self-taught sculptor and describes the past eight years as the *wonderful obsession*. "At first I watched sculptors as they worked, then I started working for free. I was drawn by the technical challenge of sculpture and bronze casting." In time he designed and built his own studio foundry, including various furnaces and special equipment in order to cast his own work.

Owens body of work now includes private and public sculpture commissions in addition to his personal work. His personal work is in galleries in Florida and Atlanta and tends to center around the exploration of his heritage. His commissions include two large sculptures designed for the entrance to new libraries in Volusia County, Florida. In 1996 Owens completed an historical project commissioned by the *Corporation for Olympic Development in Atlanta* (CODA). This was part of the City's

development campaign in preparation for the Olympic games and is now a permanent part of Atlanta. Other patrons include Virginia Power, Inc. and multiple commissions for private clients in southern Florida. His work is in the collections of the City of Atlanta, Saginaw Valley State University, J.M. Moran Family Enterprises and the Black History Museum and Cultural Center of Richmond, VA. Owens has twice won

Owens' studio has none of the comforts of home. In a word, it is *stuffed*; stuffed with supplies, materials, easels and work in progress. He describes it as "*relentlessly functional and unsentimental... like a submarine... this place is designed to keep me in the proper state of mind.*" A quote from Shakespeare is painted over a doorway. It reads, "*All things are ready if our minds be so.*"



His largest commission thus far is the work done for CODA. Four bronze reliefs of historical figures are mounted on six foot tall granite pylons located at various points on Auburn Ave. in downtown Atlanta. The four figures include entrepreneurs James Tate and Wesley Chapel Redding, educator Alice Dugged Cary and Carrie Steele Logan who founded an orphanage. "These people had a serious effect on the shape of history" says Owens, "fact is, they were just the tip of the iceberg." Of the four, Owens favorite subject is James Tate who is regarded by many historians as the *father of black business in Atlanta*. "Tate was 40 years old when they signed the emancipation proclamation" explains Owens,

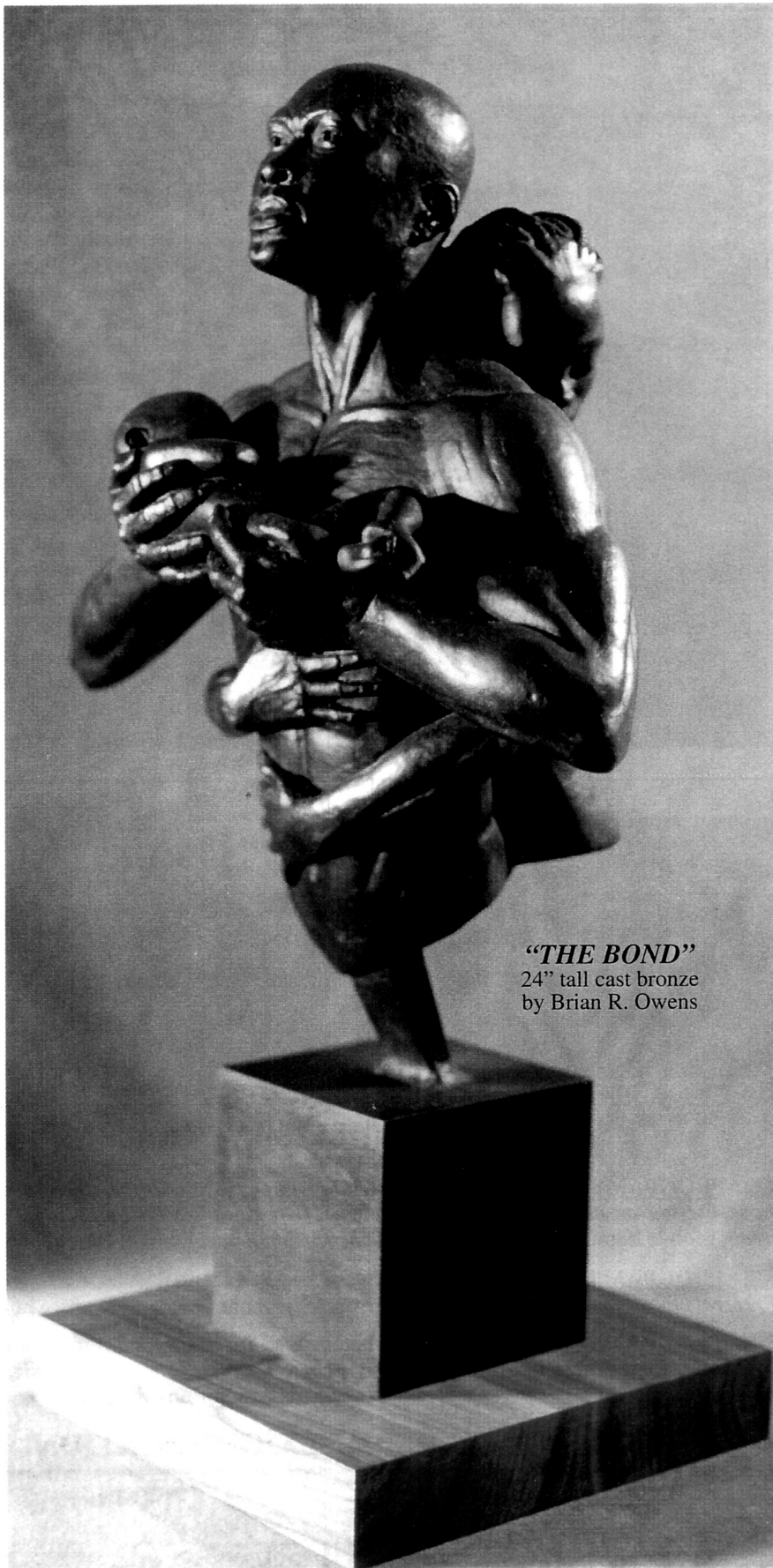
the *Newforms Florida* program grant. He is on the Advisory Board to the African American Museum of the Arts in DeLand, Florida and is a Colleague of the National Sculpture Society based in New York City.

"He had been schooled in secret by his master who was also his father. This was risky business and a very serious offense. By the end of his life Tate was one of the wealthiest blacks in Atlanta, and a source of loans to a

lot of black businesses. Sometimes I wonder what I could accomplish if I had that kind of iron." To Owens, discipline and state of mind are just as important as talent. "We still have to get an education, acquire skills and adapt in a changing world but everything starts with our thoughts and what we believe is possible for us. That's what I like about James Tate. He had been dealt an inferior hand but developed a superior state of mind."

Owens is inspired by the work of such nationally acclaimed sculptors as Elizabeth Cattle, Ed Hamilton and Artis Lane. He claims he is never short of ideas for sculpture, "Ideas come easily. Translating an idea into something real is the challenge. I know I've come a long way but I haven't come anywhere close to exploring my potential yet. I need to see how good I can get over the next 35 years or so. This is what pulls me into the future." Owens adds, "Nobody makes it alone, at least not in this business. Other people have to believe in you. You need to build connections with other people and that's where your state of mind becomes critical because you tend to attract the type of people and situations that match your state of mind."

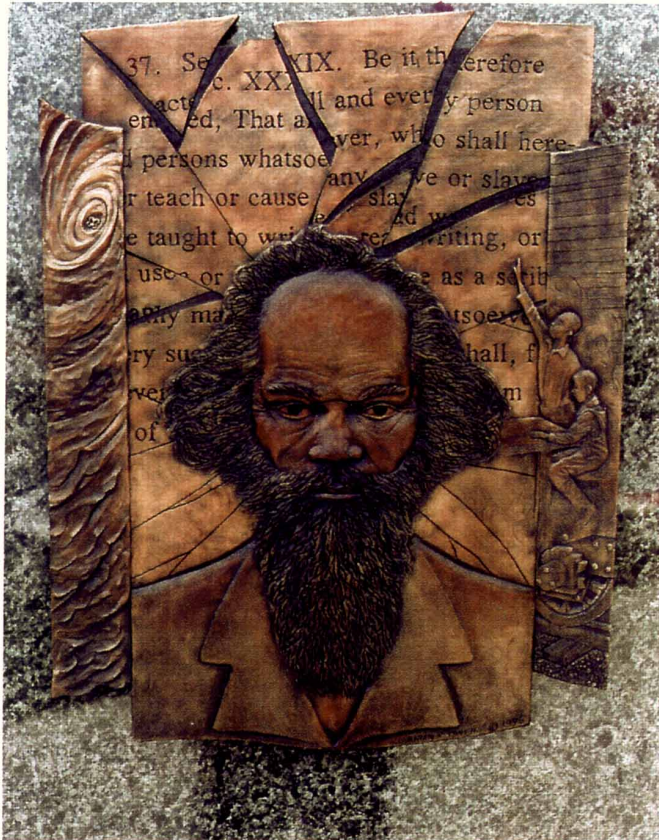
"I feel privileged to live in these times and I believe that history will judge these times as far more important a period than the Harlem Renaissance. On the whole, black artists may not have the best opportunities but that doesn't have to apply to me as an individual. One man or woman can beat the odds." What does the future hold for Owens? "I'll keep creating my personal work as I pursue commissions of larger scope and complexity. I'll expand my skills and explore new materials. The future requires new tools, a new work space and most of all I need to get better at controlling what I think." He smiled and nodded towards a small sign on a shelf. It's a quote based on Proverbs XXII: As a man thinketh, so shall he become. ☺



"THE BOND"
24" tall cast bronze
by Brian R. Owens



"ARCHANGEL"
by Brian R. Owens



“FACED TOWARD THE FUTURE”

cast bronze relief by Brian R. Owens
in memory of Reverend James Tate

Reverend James Tate, former slave from Elbert County, Georgia, was one of Atlanta’s five wealthiest African Americans during the 1870’s. Arriving in Atlanta in the 1860’s, Tate opened grocery stores on Walton and Decatur Streets. Using an old railroad boxcar for a classroom, he assisted in opening the Walton Springs School, the first school in the city for African Americans. Reverend Tate was also one of the original founders of Friendship Baptist Church, the birthplace of Spelman College.

Reverend Tate played an active role in Atlanta policies for two decades. In cooperation with Reverend Frank Quarles, Tate established the Equal Rights Association in 1866. In 1870, Tate ran for the Georgia Assembly. He delivered the Black vote from Atlanta’s Third and Fourth Wards to the Republican Party in the city council race and, in 1879, organized African American Republican Ward clubs. Tate died in 1897 and is buried in Atlanta’s Oakland Cemetery.



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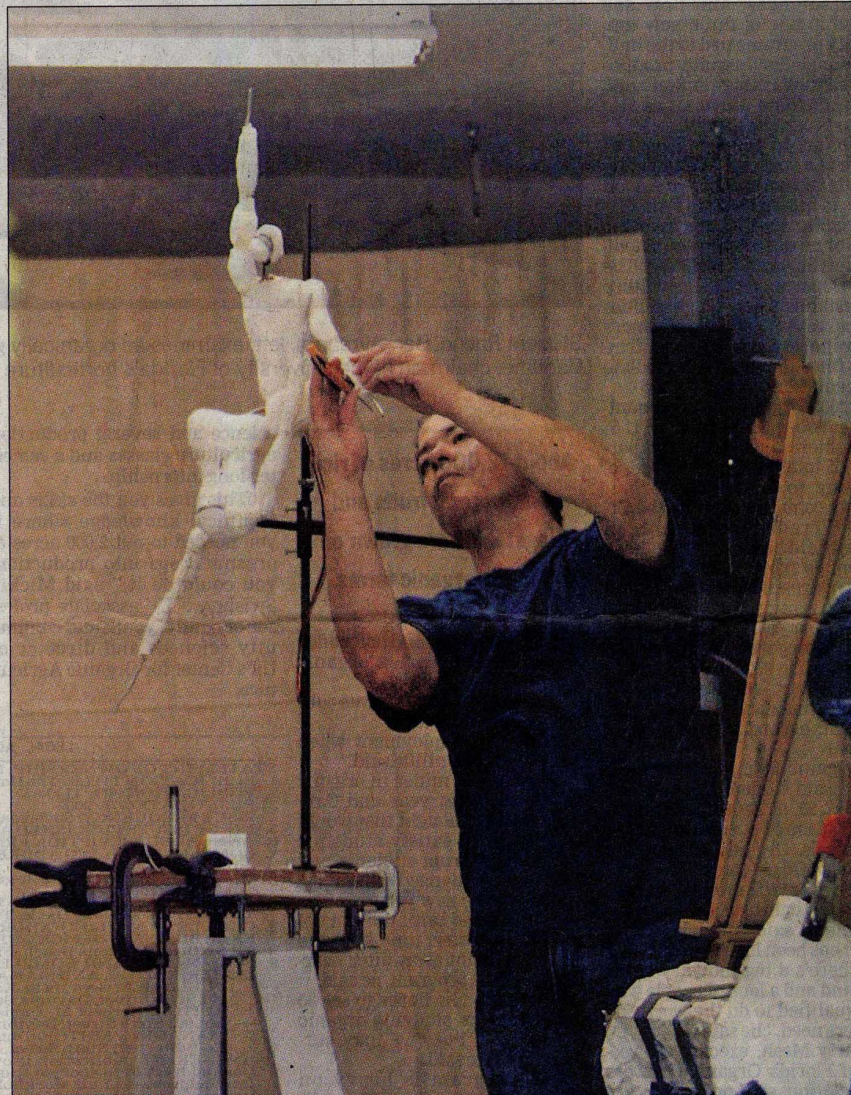
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PORTRAIT OF THE

Sculptor and painter Brian Owens works on a sculpture called Existo, which means "to become" in Latin, at his home in Deltona recently. The scale model is for a public art proposal in Orange County.



A·R·T·I·S·T IN MIDDLE AGE



Local

SECTION C

SUNDAY
OCTOBER 8, 2006

THE NEWS-JOURNAL

WEST VOLUSIA EDITION: NEWS FROM YOUR COMMUNITY AND YOUR STATE

★★

Brian Owens quit his career to pursue his dream

By **LAURA STEWART**
FINE ARTS WRITER

DELTONA — Brian Owens isn't in art for the money — far from it. The sculptor and painter, a Detroit native who moved to Deltona 25 years ago, could have remained in his field, engineering, and be living in a home with air conditioning, at a minimum.

But creating art is what makes life worth living for him.

"Every day is a continuum of choices when I'm trying to be a reasonable adult and still move in the direction of my bliss, to give it a name," said Owens, 48, who is single and has no children. "My grass is long outside because my primary motive now is to meet a reporter and talk about my work. My car needs to be washed, but it can wait.



OWENS

"So far, my experience as a full-time artist has been positive. I just want to make faster progress."

Owens had just returned from a portrait-painting workshop at the School for Visual Arts in New York City, with a grant from the state of Florida, and came back with fresh ideas and techniques for his latest project.

He studied with Marvin Mattelson, who was impressed with his work — and his drive.

"He's very bright and it's obvious that he's very talented," said Mattelson, speaking from his home in Great Neck, N.Y. "I thoroughly enjoyed working with Brian."

"One of the best things about painting is its potential to keep improving — it's not like being an athlete, who has to stop at a young age," he said. "If you approach

SEE **ARTIST**, PAGE 5C

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ARTIST

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1C

painting with a desire for personal growth, as Brian does, there is no limit."

That's how Dr. Catherine Lowe, a physician who is president of Artists Showcase of the Palm Beaches and a collector of Owens' works, rated Owens in a recent letter recommending him for a new grant from the state of Florida.

"Brian aspires to paint large and complex compositions and has temporarily set aside his personal artistic visions in order to master the techniques that he believes will form the foundation of these new works," Lowe wrote.

One new "large and complex composition" challenging Owens is the oil painting that will show the late collector and connoisseur Donald Karshan with modernist sculptor Alexander Archipenko in some long-ago gallery, sharing space with a massive Archipenko bronze. At this early stage, it is a collection of studies and scale drawings. Some lean on his easel while very preliminary oil sketches, one in a warm-toned palette, the other in cooler blues, grays and browns, are push-pinned to the wall.

Owens isn't working on commission, and isn't guaranteed a patron for the painting. If someone happens along to support his efforts, fine. If not, fine, too. Owens' goal is to explore art avenues that open, to follow where they lead and make discoveries as he goes along.

Freelance commercial projects keep his car on the road and the lights — but not the air conditioning — running in the home/studio that looks crowded but is carefully arranged for maximum efficiency.

An old iMac sits on a desk in one corner of a living room loaded with books, magazines, portfolios, electronic equipment and, of course, art. An easel stands in the small breakfast nook, lights overhead and painting materials spilling onto the countertops in the kitchen.

His lifestyle is set up to suit the role he defines clearly.

"Our economy is driven by people who identify a need and then make a product or service that fills the need. But the artist, in general, creates something for which there is no immediate need," he said.

"Louis Kahn said, 'Nobody needed Beethoven's Fifth Symphony until he created it. Now we can't live without it.' Artists tend to move in opposition to the people around them. They pro-

Money... Maybe

The Cultural Council of Volusia County is offering a total of \$45,000 for individual working artists.

WHAT: The Individual Artist Professional Development Grant Program for practicing, professional artists residing in Volusia County offers grants of \$500, \$1,000 or \$2,500.

WHEN: Awards will be made in November with funds disbursed after Dec. 1. Applications must be postmarked by Oct. 13.

DETAILS: Complete information and application forms available at <http://celebratingculture.com/grant.htm>

of years when I didn't make anything at all.

"When I was approaching 30, I started taking unaccredited courses in art and found that there were a number of people casting their own sculpture, and it became an obsession.

"Around 1991, when I was working on my 'African Diaspora Series,' I declared I was a professional sculptor, and left engineering," Owens said. "My 'business' as an artist experiences heavy turbulence at times; sometimes it crashes and flips over. Then I have to get out and set it all upright again.

"The artist is in a Catch-22 situation. He lives in a civilization that expects him to pay his bills," he said. "So the artist is in a struggle between a desire to create art that suits his needs and the need to make a living, however minimal — that's the choice. And I chose to put my art first," Owens said.

When Volusia County decided to institute grants for artists, they told Owens and others like him that they would actively encourage them.

"That message is as valuable as the money. It changes the artist's outlook and belief in what is possible for him," he said.

"It's been hot this summer, but I'm not tempted to go back to engineering or other full-time work because that would mean an end to the art career. It's not a temptation; it would be an alteration to the course of my life. And my life is centered, deliberately and intentionally and completely, around art."

ceeded from a different base of assumptions about life. They are not practical. Sometimes they are so different that they appear on the surface to be disconnected from the culture they live in."

Owens grew up in a home filled with art, both by a father who was a full-time painter and a musician mother who taught in the local school system.

"I've always been an artist. I started drawing before I had any conscious memory of what I was doing; it was entertaining to me," he said. "But children don't want to be like their parents, and I went through periods

Clin