

Brian R. Owens – *Biography* 2022

Owens belongs to a small fraternity of artists who use classical techniques to depict contemporary subject matter. Within this is an even smaller group: Artists that have won highly competitive grants, scholarships and commissions – both public and private. And within this, a still smaller group: Artists that can both sculpt and paint.



From Michigan to Florida; from applied scientist to sculptor; Owens has made an improbable journey into the world of art and the continent of his soul. He was born in Detroit, MI in 1958 to Katherine J. Owens, an educator and Carl C. Owens, a freelance illustrator and Staff Artist for the Detroit Board of Education. He grew up in a pleasant lower middle-class neighborhood on Detroit's west side. Carl C. Owens became one of America's first self-employed African American illustrators to contract directly with national corporations such as Ford Motor Company. With his father's assistance, Owens held his first "2 man" exhibit at the age of 16 at a fine art gallery in Detroit. As a young adult, he set his artwork aside and completed a degree in engineering. Years passed before the need to create art took hold again.

Owens relocated to Florida to work for a computer manufacturer in 1981. He returned to art by assisting professional sculptors at their "studio foundries" where he learned how to cast bronze and continued to develop through non-matriculated courses and open studio sessions. Interest grew into obsession until a mass layoff catalyzed the beginning of his art career at the age of about 33.

During the 1990's Owens continued his art education and increased his range as a visual artist by working in oil, acrylic, pastel and pencil. He developed limited edition sculpture based on an exploration of his heritage and was represented by galleries in Atlanta and Orlando. He competed heavily for grants and public art projects resulting in his first major commission by the Corporation for Olympic Development in Atlanta (CODA) in 1996.

In the 2000's Owens changed his focus, preferring to work on commissions rather than on a speculative basis and gradually developed a body of public art. Most of the work is historic, such as the St. Augustine Foot Soldiers Monument that was completed in 2011 and resulted in awards from the Portrait Society of America and the Florida Historical Society. Owens' client list includes Volusia County, the City of Atlanta, Birmingham Board of Education, MSU College of Law (with co-sculptor Richard Bennett) and NAACP St. Louis. Current commissions include work for the Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville in Jacksonville, FL and Fort Monroe Authority in Fort Monroe, VA.

"Art is not something I do, it's who I am", said Owens. "I didn't choose to be an artist, it chose me. William H. Gass predicted my own feelings when he said that people like myself are here to add to the world's objects and ideas those delineations, carvings and symphonic spells as ought to already be there. To make things whose purpose is contemplation and appreciation.

Brian R. Owens, DBA Brian Owens Art
Studio: Longwood, FL
(cell) 386-956-1724
BrianOwensArt@gmail.com
<http://BrianOwensArt.com>

Mail Address:
P.O. Box 520573
Longwood, FL 32752