

BODY OF WORK

The Art of Richard MacDonald Presented By Cirque du Soleil is a gallery unlike any other where sculpture captures the beauty, athleticism and human spirit of acrobats and performers.



Blind Faith, Heroic Bronze



Richard MacDonald works with a live model-performer in his studio.



Bullwhip, Bronze

When master sculptor Richard MacDonald was imagining his second Las Vegas gallery at Crystals inside CityCenter, he saw an environment that would give the visitor the opportunity to experience art in more depth than a museum—one that would give them insight into the creative processes of a contemporary artist. It would be a place that contained works that gave people a sense of the passion and inspiration that it took to create art. This would be a destination where, according to MacDonald, “art would move you and touch a place in your heart and soul.”

“The Art of Richard MacDonald Presented by *Cirque du Soleil*” at Crystals captures all of these emotions. The gallery showcases more than fifty bronze sculptures including ten heroic-size works by the artist. His works run the gamut from quarter life size works to large sculptures done on a monumental scale.

“It is important for me to provide a range of work for collectors so that my work can be appreciated at a variety of levels,” he said.

Many of the pieces on display in “The Art of Richard MacDonald Presented by *Cirque du Soleil*” gallery focus on the performers and acrobats of *Cirque*.

The similar life-long creative goals shared by Guy Laliberté, founder of *Cirque du Soleil*, and MacDonald drew the two creative spirits together to present the gallery in partnership where performance is captured by the timeless and enduring art of sculpture.

The fusion began when MacDonald invited several *Cirque* performers to his workshop in Monterey, Calif., to serve as models for a series of acrobatic sculptures he was preparing. In 2004, the artist proposed to *Cirque du Soleil* to exhibit the sculptures and publish a catalogue.

In April 2005, MacDonald met at the Beverly Hills home of Laliberté, where the two expressed a shared desire to work on common projects. Laliberté confirmed to the sculptor that *Cirque du Soleil* could develop creation and exhibition projects on an exclusive basis, and that MacDonald would be the only artist authorized to use *Cirque du Soleil* performers and acrobats as models.

The partnership with *Cirque du Soleil* is not any sort of commission — he rarely accepts commissions — but is a creative synthesis. “We share the same spirit of imagination and artistry and the desire to push boundaries,” he said.

MacDonald works with live model-performers who move on a raised stage in the center of his studio while he circles around them, observing every nuance and sculpting the clay directly to record what he sees and feels.

“I use live models only,” said MacDonald. “I create images that are not depictions of characters. Anything I attempt to do is unique. If I’ve seen it before, I’m not interested in doing it.”

MacDonald started his career as an illustrator, with sculpture as a hobby. He graduated from the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, Calif., and worked as an illustrator for American Express,



Nureyev, Heroic Bronze

AT&T, Coca Cola and Anheuser-Busch. In 1983, he decided to make sculpture his full-time vocation. “It ended up being my profession late in life,” he said. He completed his first major work less than two years later: a nine-foot figure of Christ for St. Patrick’s Episcopal Church in Atlanta. In 1986, MacDonald’s monumental sculpture of Stephen F. Austin was dedicated at the Stephen F. Austin University in Texas.

MacDonald believes it is his responsibility to create objects represented of the human spirit that will last a thousand years. “When you’re able to do something so incredibly well for some inexplicable reason, you open yourself up to it,” he said.

Now, with one of the world’s premier sculpture spaces, the 3,600-square foot gallery at Crystals in CityCenter is a showcase for the artist to share his vision. The space is spectacular with a 40-foot waterfall, split face stone walls and dynamic steel curved niches. All of the works on display are for sale at prices from \$1,000 to \$1 million. Some of the pieces were fourteen years in the making, others took about nine years, said MacDonald. All were labors of love.

“In the end, if the work doesn’t move me, if it doesn’t touch me in some way, then I don’t want to make it,” he said.

Many of his sculptures are cast in bronze, yet, once in a while he’ll create something in Carrara marble, the material preferred by Michelangelo. “Bronze, however, is forever. It is a material that is impervious and when you put in that much work, and when a collector is investing in a work, it should be

quality. Quality is ultimately of the utmost importance,” said MacDonald.

Entering the world of “The Art of Richard MacDonald Presented By *Cirque du Soleil*” is a gift of inexplicable, magical energy.

“The art of Richard MacDonald reveals the infinite beauty of the human body. The characters he creates are playing forever in the theater of life,” says Guy Laliberté. ✨



See “The Art of Richard MacDonald Presented by *Cirque du Soleil*” in Crystals at CityCenter, 3720 South Las Vegas Boulevard or at the Bellagio in the “0” Theatre Lobby. Call 702.583.7581, or www.theartofrichardmacdonald.com. Hours are Monday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to midnight.