

Western Horseman magazine features Wyoming artist Chris Navarro

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MONUMENTS MAN

Artist [Chris Navarro](#) uses his experience riding bulls and broncs to depict stories about rodeo and the Western lifestyle in bronze monuments and sculptures. By Jennifer Denison

Chris Navarro is best known for his larger-than-life sculptures of horses, cowboys, Native Americans and rodeo legends. Molding clay into monuments with his hands, he puts more than his time and talent into each bronze, he also adds subtle details from his connection to the Western lifestyle as a team roper and bull rider, and a profound passion that can't be seen but is felt when you stand below one of his towering bronzes.

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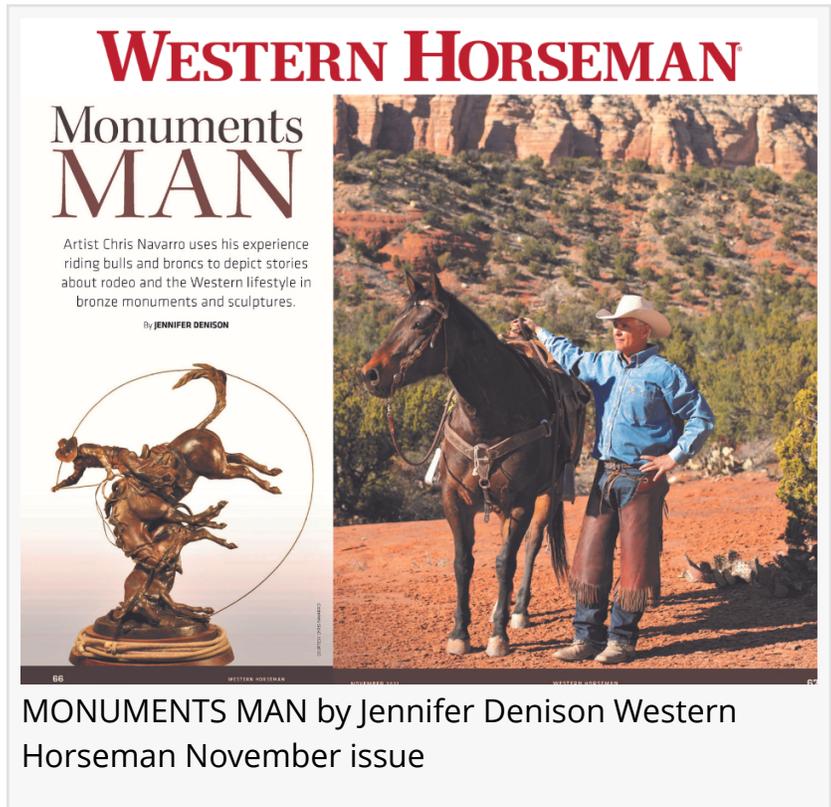
“Art requires having passion for what you're doing, taking chances, knocking on doors and remaining dedicated to your dream, even when others don't believe in it.”

Chris Navarro

“I tell others being a bull rider was great training for being a professional artist ... the two things you need to be a good bull rider are confidence and belief and those are the same exact things you need to make it as an artist or in anything else. I did not have much going for me when I started rodeo or creating art, no money or formal training. However, I did have a belief that what I lacked in talent and knowledge I could make up with effort and determination.”

“My work has always been intertwined with my life,” says

the artist from his gallery in the Tlaquepaque Arts Village in Sedona, Arizona. “Family, horses,

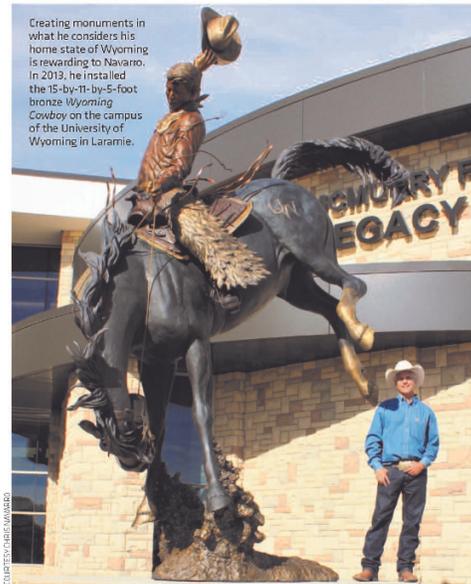


rodeo and art have been my driving passions, and I hope others can see that in my work.” – Chris Navarro

In May, he received a Bull Riding Hall of Fame Legacy Award for his dedication to excellence and a commitment and contributions to the BRHOF. “Riding Bulls and creating art are very similar in nature,” he says. “To give your very best, you have to put your heart and soul into it.

Respected for his visual story-telling abilities and connection to the cowboy culture, Navarro’s latest commission was to sculpt a monument honoring the buckaroo. Born a Buckaroo was dedicated in June in Winnemucca, Nevada. Though he’s best known for his monuments and Western art, Navarro says he doesn’t like to be categorized as only a “cowboy artist.” His latest interest involves repurposing obsolete wind-turbine blades into monumental art pieces. “After reading an article about the problem of disposing of obsolete wind-turbine blades into my hometown’s landfill in Casper, Wyoming, I was taken aback not only by the scope and size of this problem, but by the image of a large bulldozer burying these blades, covering them with dirt never to be seen again,” he says in a YouTube video he created about the project. “Seeing these large blades being buried in the landfill caused my artist mind to kick into gear and find a way to repurpose these obsolete blades. I wanted to turn them from unwanted garbage into a beautiful piece of art.” Navarro has created models for five sculptures using the blades and is devising ways to gain interest and funding to pursue them. “It takes only one person, one moment and one idea to start a ripple of change that creates a difference in this world,” he says. After all, it took just one time experiencing a horse, bull riding and sculpture, and the right people, to make the life changes

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Creating monuments in what he considers his home state of Wyoming is rewarding to Navarro. In 2013, he installed the 15-by-11-by-5-foot bronze Wyoming Cowboy on the campus of the University of Wyoming in Laramie.

COURTESY, CHRIS NAVARRO

Artist Chris Navarro with monument Wyoming Cowboy

WESTERN HORSEMAN



The larger-than-life bronze, *Born a Buckaroo*, by Navarro, was installed in June along Interstate 80 in Winnemucca, Nevada, as part of the Nevada Department of Transportation Winnemucca Landscape and Aesthetics Project.

COURTESY, CHRIS NAVARRO

Born A Buckaroo monumental bronze sculpture by Chris Navarro Winnemucca NV

that have given Navarro the passion and purpose to pursue his dreams and share his struggles and successes through art.

Chris Navarro

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