

September 15, 2016



Cathy Ferrell *Otter Delight* 2016, Bronze, edition of 12, 13x26x12 inches, © Cathy Ferrell
Otter Delight shares the joy found in our area, and I hope inspire others to care for and treasure our lagoon and creatures.

**Art in Advocacy:
Environmental impact and recovery**
Cathy Ferrell

I have been a sculptor my whole life and have used it to share an intense love for our wild places and beauty, hoping to inspire others to truly see, appreciate, and protect our treasured natural beauty. I chose sculpture because, as one of the visual arts, it transcends language, culture and time. The work from ancient times and cultures still speak to our hearts, spirits and minds as clearly as when they were created. The mediums, stone and bronze are timeless and enduring. My frequent travels here and abroad to areas of natural beauty keep the ideas and work vital and meaningful.



Cathy Ferrell *Rejoice II* Bronze, 9x6x6 inches, © Cathy Ferrell. *Rejoice II* sprang from a morning spent with dolphins that played in our bow waves as we crossed the Bahama Banks. Found here as well, they face challenges.

The Indian River Lagoon is our home, bounded by the Atlantic Ocean on the

east. We have seen many changes in the years we have lived on it, both for the good, and the current problems. Somehow, when most have thrown up their hands in despair, the natural world surprises us, and nature begins its healing process in mysterious ways.

The blue green algae bloom that garnered [national news coverage](#) earlier this summer is the latest in a series of algal blooms affecting both marine and terrestrial life. The blue green algae is unusual in that its liquid consistency changed as it entered the waterways from the Lake Okeechobee waters. It seems the agitation of passing through the spillways may have caused it to form dense mats, causing severe hardship for the creatures, and unhealthy breathing issues for all.

It has affected the Stuart areas and the counties directly connected by canals to the lake. At this



Cathy Ferrell *Great Blue Heron*, 2016, Bronze, edition of 12, 36x36x28 inches, © Cathy Ferrell. Found everywhere on the lagoon, the heron finds a wide variety of food choices.

time we are seeing high discharges from the local canals, but none connected to the lake.

Solutions lie in the cooperative efforts of the business, technology, and the public. One example, The Indian River Initiative, is comprised of all the counties bordering the lagoon, with the research, university, oceanographic and business communities united in the fight.

We are seeing results.

The business world is bringing technological solutions to bear immediately, and several companies are currently at work removing the algae in Stuart and treating the water very effectively with new methods in the development stages.

My husband and I work with all the above, and with our elected officials at local, state and national levels to help bring the resources and action together to solve these ongoing problems.

As an artist, I had never expected to be involved in this way, and at first actively avoided it, but, as an artist focused on our natural world, have found art a very effective way to bring together people, ideas, various organizations, and resources to help tackle the problems. People are more than willing to answer heartfelt questions and share their concerns, and in doing so, a

bridge is built—in itself a work of art in process. My husband and I take great joy in helping people and causes connect, and I learn so much in the process.



[Cathy Ferrell's](#) sculpting style is expressionistic and impressionistic, reminiscent of the sculptures of Degas and Bugatti. She seeks to capture the essence of her subject in a pleasing and joyful sculpture. She uses a variety of materials, and has worked in wood, stone, bronze and precious metals. She currently works in bronze, in very small editions, matching technique and material to the inspiration and subject.

Her art studies began in Delray Beach in grade school, and more seriously in Palm Beach at Palm Beach Day school. Her sculpture and paintings won awards at the Society of the Four Arts, Palm Beach throughout secondary school. She studied in the School of Architecture and Design, the University of Michigan, Sculpture and received her BA from Florida Atlantic University. She holds an MA in sculpture from the University of Miami. Commissions done in Pietrasanta and Carrara, Italy went to collections in Milan, West Germany, and Paris. She apprenticed with Luis Montoya Studios International, and has actively continued her studies with the top sculptors.

Ferrell is an Associate Member of the [Society of Animal Artists](#) and currently resides in Florida with her family.

This post is part of the [MAHB's Arts Community space](#)—an open space for MAHB members to share, discuss, and connect with artwork processes and products pushing for change. Please visit the [MAHB Arts Community](#) to share and reflect on how art can promote critical changes in behavior and systems and [contact Erika](#) with any questions or suggestions you have regarding the new space.

MAHB Blog: <http://mahb.stanford.edu/creative-expressions/art-advocacy/>