

# The Art of Living Well

By Linda Cordair



Dream Flight by  
Karl Jensen at  
[www.cordair.com](http://www.cordair.com)



Unbound by  
Karl Jensen at  
[www.cordair.com](http://www.cordair.com)



Harmony (in clay  
prior to bronze  
casting) by Karl  
Jensen at [www.cordair.com](http://www.cordair.com)



Flower Basket by  
Karl Jensen at  
[www.cordair.com](http://www.cordair.com)

I don't know anything about art." As a gallery owner I hear this too often. The truth is, we all know what we like, be it in art, wine, food or any of life's meaningful pleasures. Let me ask you: How do you enjoy art? Do you visit galleries and museums? Do you collect? Do you admire art occasionally online, when a friend shares something nice on their Facebook page? You've probably answered "yes" to at least one of these questions.

Hopefully you would no sooner pay money or spend time lingering over an artwork you dislike or one that leaves you cold than you would order an entree in a restaurant that you have absolutely no intention of eating. Art is, or should be, enjoyed the same way. The goal should be to identify what you like and then take the necessary steps to enjoy what your heart desires. Maybe you didn't major in art history or you haven't studied oil-painting technique or you don't know how a sculpture gets its patina—or even what a "patina" is. Not everyone has the time or opportunity or even the desire to learn these things. But your own personal ability to experience joy or sadness or delight or wonder when standing in front of a work of art—that is what is important! In truth, enjoying art is as simple as enjoying your favorite movies or TV shows or your favorite dish at a favorite restaurant.

Most important, always pay attention to and embrace your own response to an artwork, without second-guessing yourself, without worrying about what you think you're supposed to feel or think about a piece according to some self-anointed expert, without worrying about what anyone else's opinion or evaluation of the work may be. Nobody can be a better expert on what you enjoy than you—and it's your own valuation and personal response to the art that should be most important to you. It never ceases to surprise me what people individually respond to in the gallery and what they don't. Even long-standing clients and collectors whose tastes I think I really know will sometimes surprise me by falling in love with a piece I never would have suspected they would enjoy, or contrarily, by responding negatively or feeling flat towards a new piece that, based on their established tastes, I thought they might really enjoy. Regardless, my favorite clients are always the most honest ones: if a person needs an expert to tell them what they should like, they're truly buying art for the wrong reasons.

Yet, the more we learn about art and how it's created, the deeper and richer our art-enjoying experience can be, in the same way that we can better appreciate nuances of food or wine flavors by taking classes or by watching cooking shows or by simply being fully engaged, asking questions perhaps of the chef or server or sommelier about a dish or about a wine we particularly like.

When it comes to art, how do we begin to answer questions such as "What is beautiful?"

"Beauty is a sense of harmony. Whether it's an image, a human face, a body, or a sunset, take the object which you call beautiful, as a unit [and ask yourself]: what parts is it made up of, what are its constituent elements, and are they all harmonious? If they are, the result is beautiful. If there are contradictions and clashes, the result is marred or positively ugly." -- Ayn Rand.

One can look for and appreciate beauty in art, and one can learn how an artist captures and communicates a concept or meaning through his art that evokes a particular emotion or response from viewers. I offer the image of the sculpture below as an example. The artist, Karl Jensen, spent months working the clay with his hands and his sculpting tools with the goal of creating a work of art that—for viewers who respond to the image in the same way he does—certainly evokes a sense of serene happiness. (Joy is now cast in bronze; available in two sizes at Quent Cordair Fine Art.) Do you respond with a sense of joy when you look at this work? If so, imagine walking into someone's home, perhaps your own, and being greeted by this uplifting image. Suddenly your troubles are farther away, you have a smile on your face and a warm, happy feeling in your heart. That's the instantaneous, irreplaceable value of art—the immediate, deeply personal experience that can only be compared to the moment when one sees the face of a special friend again, or of a loved one or a treasured pet after a time away.

The artist, Karl Jensen, has been sculpting professionally since the age of twenty-four. He is self-taught, continuing to pursue his personal artistic goals as an ever-changing, lifelong endeavor. Karl's work embodies an articulation of the human spirit, from serene moments of daily life to those of playful joy. He strives to capture the essence of an expression, a gesture, drawing the viewer into a moment frozen in time.



Creative Fire by Karl Jensen at [www.cordair.com](http://www.cordair.com)



Joy by Karl Jensen at [www.cordair.com](http://www.cordair.com)



Spring Dance by Karl Jensen at [www.cordair.com](http://www.cordair.com)

His sculptures, ranging from small indoor bronzes to life-size outdoor pieces and fountains, can be found in collections worldwide. Karl Jensen was born into an artistic family. His father, Reed Jensen, is a sculptor of note; his great aunt, Elaine Brockbank Evans, taught sculpting at university level and has work displayed across the country. Sensitive portrayals of faces continue to be Karl's trademark, with children being a favorite subject matter because of their beauty and innocence. "Childhood is a carefree time of joy and play," the artist notes, "making it a perfect source of artistic ideas with universal appeal."

Karl attended the University of Utah, where he studied under Angelo Caravaglia. Artistic influences include Ed Fraughton, Bruno Lucchesi, Avarad Fairbanks, and Andrew Loomis. The artist cites living in Utah, a state rich in artistic heritage and natural beauty, as an influence, as an environment fostering artistic achievement. Karl also sculpts adults in poses celebrating what it is to be alive, creative, in love, and free. He recently completed his first adult duo, Harmony. "We are in love with Harmony," one of his collectors responds. "The feeling conveyed is so purely ecstasy."

Dream Flight (see the top image above) is the first sculpture of Karl's that I personally fell in love with when I came to work for the gallery in 2003. I had not experienced a sculpture that moved me this much since I moved to the United States from Europe in 1979. To me, Dream Flight represented the freedom and ability to confidently follow my dreams. I remember telling the artist that I would enjoy seeing a larger version of the artwork created some day, and a few years later, in 2009, Karl sculpted Unbound, the work which won the artist First Place in the Art Renewal Center's 6th Annual International Salon competition. While not identical, Unbound was inspired by Dream Flight's theme. As a larger, even more romantic sculpture, I instantly fell in love with it from the moment I saw it, wanting a casting for my own. The ARC award catapulted Karl Jensen to the attention of collectors around the world, encouraging him to continue pursuing the work he loves despite a depressed economy at the time, which would last several years. Fortunately, he has persevered and, to this day, continues to sculpt figures that inspire and evoke emotion. His collectors range in age from 8 to 88.

I encourage you to take time to enjoy the art around you. Let it move you and give you something to reflect on. Purchase only the art that you will look forward to seeing every morning when you open your eyes or when you return home after a long day at work. When possible, consider acquiring art for your office that would inspire you as well, or suggest to an employer that having more uplifting art in the workplace is a sure way to increase productivity (see my Luxe Beat article The Importance of Art in the Workplace in the July 2014 issue). Blank walls and empty corners are boring! Ugly or meaningless art is worse than depressing and off-putting to co-workers and clients. Don't settle for art that doesn't lift your soul. In one's home and workspace, the art is not supposed to match the couch—it is supposed to match your personality. We have clients who have designed new homes around their favorite artwork and commissioned pieces.

I recommend spending less time worrying about how much you know about art and more time finding art that makes you happy. Of course, an education in art history is a wonderful thing to have, but it is not a prerequisite to being an accomplished art appreciator or collector. There are experts like myself available when you need a little advice such as value, bonded or cast bronze, original or reproduction, etc. What's truly important is what the art does for you, how it reflects your own mind and soul, how it makes you feel. I invite and encourage you to be as personally choosy and selective about your art as you are about your food—on those special occasions when you really want what you want, and nothing else will do.

Karl Jensen's available work and portfolio are on display at Quent Cordair Fine Art in Napa, California, as well as on the gallery's website at [www.cordair.com](http://www.cordair.com). To purchase any of Karl Jensen's sculptures or to discuss commission possibilities, please contact the gallery at 707-255-2242.

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New Friends by Karl Jensen at [www.cordair.com](http://www.cordair.com)