

From Surgery to Sculpture: The Art of Joel Ernster

Retired ENT surgeon and longtime Kissing Camels resident, Joel Ernster, has traded scalpels for sculpting tools—bringing movement, faith, and playfulness to life in bronze.

From the precision of the operating room to the creativity of the sculptor's studio, Kissing Camels resident **Dr. Joel Ernster** has carved out a fascinating second career. A retired ear, nose, and throat surgeon, Joel has spent the past several years growing his passion for figurative bronze sculpture—transforming ideas, memories, and moments into lasting works of art.

“I’ve always been drawn to the human form and to the way movement and emotion can be captured in bronze,” Joel explains. Inspired by the great French sculptor Rodin, his work blends classical technique with a playful, sometimes dramatic edge.

Sculptures with Stories

Each of Joel’s pieces tells a story—some personal, others spiritual, all deeply human.

• Pickleball Players

As a devoted pickleball player himself, Joel recently completed two sculptures capturing the grace, power, and joy of the game. “They’re a little over-the-top,” he laughs. “More muscular and dramatic than most players—but that’s what makes them fun!”

• Pirate

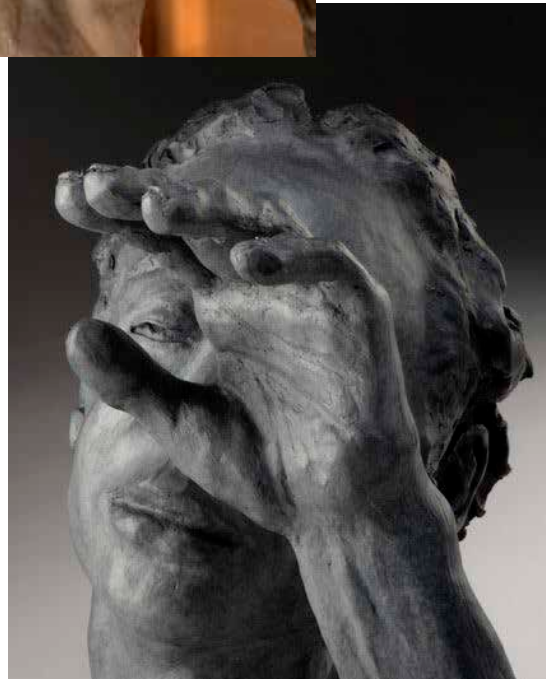
A tribute to St. Mary’s High School, where both Joel and his sons attended. The pirate mascot, immortalized in bronze, represents family pride and legacy.

• Saul on the Road to Damascus

A powerful religious piece depicting Saul’s dramatic conversion to Paul. “It’s such a strong metaphor for mid-life crises or life-changing events,” Joel shares. “Being shocked into seeing the world in a new way.”

• Dog

A golden retriever, full of personality, forever eager for a walk.



• Surgeon

A candid bronze portrait of surgeons in the lounge, quietly reflecting before a long day in the operating room.

From Medicine to Art

For Joel, sculpture has been both a creative outlet and a natural extension of his medical career. “As a surgeon, you spend years studying anatomy, movement, and detail. In many ways, it’s not so different from sculpting.”

SHARING ART WITH THE COMMUNITY

Joel’s work can be explored online at jernsterart.com, where visitors can see a gallery of his pieces, read about past projects, and learn more about upcoming works. He also welcomes conversations with fellow art lovers here in Kissing Camels.

Phone: 719-332-4985

Website: jernsterart.com

Know a local artist, hobbyist, or neighbor with a story to tell? We want to feature them! nicholas.ellison@n2co.com 720-271-1290 Help us celebrate the creativity and stories that make Kissing Camels unique!