The sculpture of **Dan Ostermiller** is usually given the label “animal sculpture.” However, within that field can be found a wide range of subjects and interpretations. From the barnyard to the vast American Great Plains, from the back porch to the Zambezi Valley, Ostermiller’s animals are studies in elegance and power. They are also depictions of their very essence—the lumbering strength of the grizzly, the feline grace of the cat, or the charming vulnerability of the lop-eared rabbit.

His thorough knowledge of animals—acquired from years of experience working with his father, Roy Ostermiller, a renowned taxidermist—is the foundation for his work. And like James L. Clark and Carl Akeley, wildlife sculptors who also began as taxidermists and curators for the American Museum of Natural History, Ostermiller has built upon this foundation by his careful study of animal habits and instincts.

Drawing from his many travels—including expeditions to Alaska, Africa, and all corners of the West—he creates animal figures in context with their natural surroundings. In the tradition of the French 19th-century *animaliers*, Ostermiller’s work is true to the subject. Yet, his work has a realism that is not only an accurate rendering of the subject but also a sophisticated combination of line and composition. He is less concerned with the physique of his subjects than with the moods, personalities, and general shapes of the compositions, and he establishes a fluidity of motion and creates expression by manipulating animals’ features. In fact, the titles of his works indicate not the type of animal, but the individual emotions or characters of the figures. The surface patterns and patinas of the pieces complete the effect as they capture light and lead the eye around the curves and musculature of his subjects.

His thorough grounding in taxidermy lends authority to his designs. But the technique that evolved out of his knowledge of anatomy gives his work spontaneity, setting it outside the realm of mere duplication of an animal’s image. Infusing each design is personality—a combination of the sculptor’s and the subject’s. This spirit, the feeling the work imparts to the viewer, is the hallmark of an Ostermiller sculpture. “If I have a trademark, it’s the character I put in pieces. I incorporate, I hope, strong design. I give people something they can relate to and a good piece of sculpture.

Since his first show in 1980, Ostermiller has rapidly achieved professional and public acclaim. His sculptures have won numerous awards and honors, including the 2010 Leonard Meiselman Award for Real Life Sculpture at the *Audubon Artists of America Exhibition*;and the 2011 and 2012Ranieri Sculpture Casting Award, 2007 Gold Medal, and 2006 Silver Medal at the *Allied Artists of America Annual* Exhibition. In 2016, Ostermiller was awarded the National Sculpture Society’s highest honor, the Medal of Honor, for his contributions to American sculpture.

His work has been included in exhibitions and one-person shows around the country, including the annual Society of Animal Artists exhibition, the annual National Sculpture Society exhibition, the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum’s *Prix de West Invitational*; the Eiteljorg Museum of the American Indian and Western Art’s *Quest for the West Show & Sale*; the Autry Museum of the American West’s *Masters of the American West Art Exhibition and Sale*; and the Fleischer Museum’s 1994 retrospective exhibition in Scottsdale, Arizona, recognizing Ostermiller for his exceptional talent and numerous accomplishments. At the 2018 Masters, he won the Kenneth T. and Eileen L. Norris Foundation Award for Sculpture for his bronze titled Barren.

Among his many public installations is the *Scottish Angus Cow and Calf* monument at the Denver Art Museum, Denver, Colorado, acquired by private donation in 2006. In 2011, Alice Walton’s Crystal Bridges Museum, Bentonville, Arkansas, acquired *Shore Lunch* for its permanent collection. His work has been featured in such publications as *Art & Antiques*, *Art of the* West, *Southwest Art*, *Western Art & Architecture*, and *Western Art Collector*.

Ostermiller has been a catalyst for support and promotion of the arts in his home of Loveland, Colorado. He has been recognized by his peers through election as a Fellow in the National Sculpture Society and the Society of Animal Artists, and from 2011 to 2014 served as president of the National Sculpture Society.

Dan Ostermiller is represented by Claggett/Rey Gallery, Edwards, Colorado; Nedra Matteucci Galleries, Santa Fe, New Mexico; and Wood River Fine Arts, Ketchum, Idaho.

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