

14, 15 Rikki Morley Saunders

b. 1951



NUREYEV, 2011
Bronze, variegated green and brown patina
49 x 53 x 22 inches; Edition of 7/12

Peacocks are not a sometime thing for Rikki Morley Saunders. Elegant poseurs every day, in bronze they become her arresting sculptures. Saunders declares peacocks funny, mischievous, and joyful. Best of all for her the birds lend color to the winter that descends as regularly as you might expect on her farm in southwest Pennsylvania.

Sasha, Sergio, Alexander, Nureyev, her peacocks' names ring out as do their calls in the early dawn—a scream that startles some but for Saunders is reassuring. Daytime, male peacocks are partial to attacking cars, which often results in more damage to the peacock than the car. Nureyev became a Saunders pet and studio model after she found him on the ground, his leg broken. With his leg soon encased in a splint and hopes high, he was named for Russian dancer Rudolf Nureyev, famed for acrobatic leaps and turns. Nureyev the peacock has not reclaimed the mobile grace of Nureyev the dancer but he enjoys roosting in the farm's crabapple trees, and in the studio moves Saunders to capture his indomitable spirit in her carving.

How do you sculpt the lightness of a feather in bronze? The mysteries of mesh, sodder, and wax, plus Saunders' countless hours observing these birds from life and hearing their language enables her to turn avian energy into art and broadcast her message, "I want others to get joy from my work and to get insight into these magnificent creatures."



ALEXANDER, 2010
Bronze, variegated green and brown patina
74 x 23 x 17 inches. Edition of 9/9

Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Jesse D. Saunders
Photography: Jim Graham