

Northbrook's Sindler finds passion, success with his latest work

ELIZABETH MANASTER
Freelance Reporter

Just having returned from his latest plein air painting event in Traverse City, Mich. the day before, local Northbrook artist Brian Sindler makes his way to the counter at Starbucks on Cherry Lane and orders a cold press coffee with almond milk.

A tall, unassuming gentleman, Sindler takes a seat and for just a few moments sits back to reflect on the success he's recently enjoyed.

A small, humble smile forms on Sindler's face as he digests the morning's news of yet another award he is receiving — his fourth in as many days.

In total he has been the recipient of 14 awards over the years since he began his painting career, nine of which have been awarded this summer. The awards include, but are not limited to The Robert Sanstrom Prize and Gold Medal, Best of Show at the Paint Grand Traverse and Master Class Winner at the Art Muse Painting Contest.

He is becoming a well-known voice in the plein air Community and his artwork has even graced the cover of Plein Air Magazine. Last year Sindler acted as one of the judges for Northbrook's first Plein

Air Painting Festival put on by the Northbrook Arts Commission, and he is an active participant in the plein air circuit throughout the country.

Although he has traveled as far as New York and California, much of his work is done at events in Wisconsin and Michigan.

But the life of an artist was not always Sindler's path. In fact, he did not start painting until well into his 30s. After graduating from Columbia College in Columbia, Miss. with a degree in psychology, he went back to music school for a year and then worked as a musician.

He began working part time as a broker at the Mercantile Exchange and then continued full time for 16 years, meeting his wife Giulia during that time and starting their family in Northbrook with children Adam and Elena.

"When I started to have a little money, I got interested in art and started buying some stuff," Sindler said. "One of my friends told me about an artist that was sought after at the time and I went to look at the work and thought to myself, 'I can do that.'"

So Sindler purchased some art materials and never turned back.

"I went back to art



Northbrook resident Brian Sindler works on a painting during a plein air event in Cedarburg, Wis. Sindler has won numerous awards for his plein air work. PHOTO SUBMITTED

school at 40," he said, referring to his days at the American Academy of Art in Chicago. "I started out painting abstract figures and still life."

But after graduating from art school, Sindler began turning more toward landscapes and found his focus in plein air, which in French literally means painting in the open air.

His earlier works were more reminiscent of early French impressionists, but as his personal style developed his artwork has taken on a more tonalistic approach with darker colors

and brighter highlights.

He attended his first plein air event in 2007 and the events he has frequented since are friendly and non-competitive.

"It's like a circuit," he said. "You see a lot of the same people year after year. Everyone has their own style. Some people will work on the same painting all week, but I usually work on one painting anywhere from one to three hours and then I move on. The paintings are usually no bigger than 16-by-20."

Sindler stresses the fact

that it's not about the competition or the end results at these events.

"You just want to feel like you're putting out better work than your last," he said. "I'm not overly concerned about the market or the judges. I just ask myself, 'did I put out good work? Did it hold up to my standards?' I'm the first judge. There's a long game and a short game and I'm a big believer that if you focus on the long game you're going to be a better artist."

Working on his media platforms these days,

Sindler has an Instagram account ([brian_sindler](#)) that will lead viewers to his website ([www.brian-sindler.com](#)).

"As an artist it's important to have a platform to show what you've done recently," he said. "On Instagram people can constantly see what I'm doing and that's important to draw them to my website."

He also believes that editing work is extremely important to maintain a cohesive body of work and not merely a random, representation your art.

As a working artist, Sindler also keeps busy giving critiques and reviews online, and occasionally teaches workshops with the North Shore Art League in Winnetka.

As well as on his website, Sindler's work can be purchased at three art galleries; Primitive in Chicago, Water Street Gallery in Douglas, Mich. and Edgewood Orchard Galleries in Door County, Wis..

But as Sindler admits, it's impossible to know what will sell. That, however, is also not his focus.

"It's art, that's the bottom line," he said. "There should be some mystery, some emotional response. If there is a little mystery or vagueness, people will find what they like and fill in the blanks."

MUSEUM

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tures they owned to a local venue.

"When we told the children our plan, we explained how wonderful it will be for all museum visitors to share this beautiful piece of work," Jason said. "We hope in making

the donation that there will be an increased love and respect for the natural world from those that see and enjoy the sculpture. We also hope that the donation will encourage public officials, private interests and the public to work together to make responsible decisions in our communities regard-

ing preservation of our environment and natural habitat, which we and future generations can be proud of.

"It didn't take us long to determine that [Kohl Children's Museum] was the perfect place to donate the sculpture because of their commitment to children and the environment."

Stephanie Bynum, vice president of programs, explained that the museum plans to integrate the sculpture into a natural setting at the southeast corner of the grounds, allowing the sculpture to be visible from Patriot Boulevard and to the guests entering the museum. The sculpture will also be vis-

ible from Habitat Park, the museum's outdoor creative and physical play space.

"We are thrilled that in the spring of 2019, we will be able to install the John Kearney sculpture because of the generosity of the Schmitz family," Bynum said. "We believe the giraffe sculpture will inspire

children to dream big. The museum is a silver-level, LEED-certified building (Leaders in Energy and Environmental Design), and the message of recycling and reusing materials — especially in art endeavors — aligns directly with the museum's philosophy, making this sculpture a perfect fit for us."