

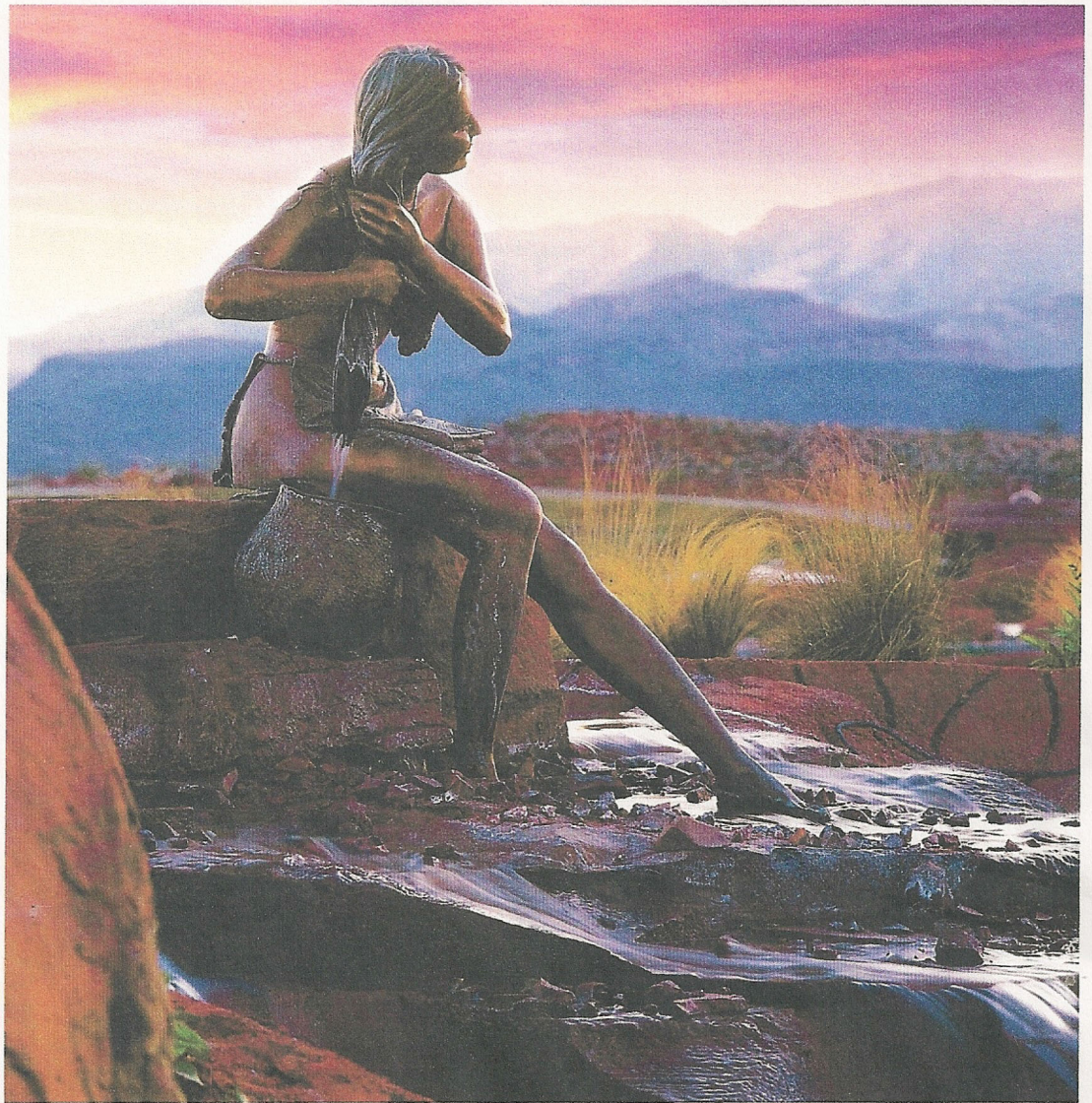
Grandeur Beyond the Gates

TEXT BY
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ART ISN'T ALWAYS ABOUT CREATING SOMETHING THAT STANDS OUT OR DRAWS ATTENTION.

Recently, I attended an art unveiling ceremony in the St. George, Utah, community of Entrada. In the Kachina Springs section of Entrada, Split Rock Development Company has created a round-a-bout with a large, very artistic rock structure, along with bronze sculpted mountain lions positioned strategically across the formation. The newly unveiled work of art stands 60 feet across, over 18 feet high, and is the fifth of six planned major exterior art pieces in the Entrada communities. The rock was not real (known as faux rock), but had been crafted to mimic the surrounding terrain.

Jean Gwartz is part of the Split Rock creative team that spent nearly one year developing the rock art within the round-a-bout. While it is difficult for a woman to work in a male dominated field, she says being the only woman on the team isn't a big deal because of the cooperative nature and matching personalities of her fellow artists. "When we can all work together as a team and everything blends, that's when we know we succeeded," she says. Jean indicates that she has learned a lot from John Carlson, who leads the faux rock creative team.

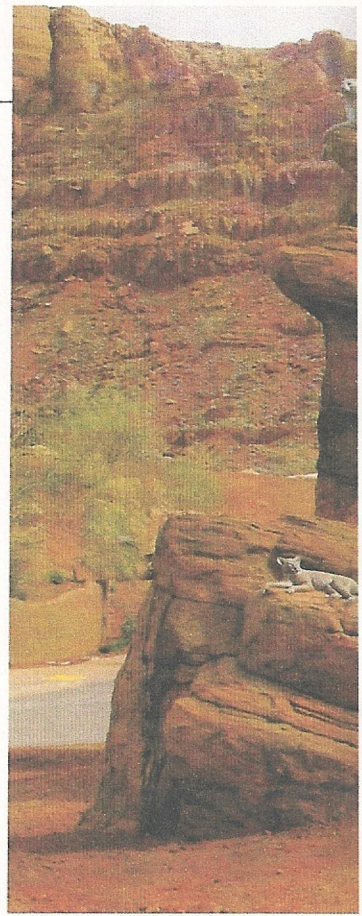


"A Morning Bath"

Jean has always worked independently as an artist, focusing mainly on painting and creating murals and carvings. In 2003, she saw some faux rock pieces at the Parade of Homes in St. George and quickly realized the potential for taking on art as a full-time occupation. Here, she surmised, was something new where she could combine her talents and interests. "You have to really love rocks," says Jean with a laugh. "We look at rocks constantly to get ideas, how they crack and form. Everything must imitate nature so it looks real." The team treks through the surrounding mountains to study the rock formations and build models of ones that stand out. Once the formation is built, they produce a stain that will match the colors of the surrounding cliffs. Jean carefully stains the rock and paints on lichens to make them appear more realistic, imitating the patterns she finds on rocks in the area.

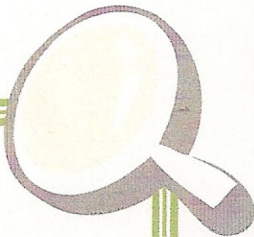
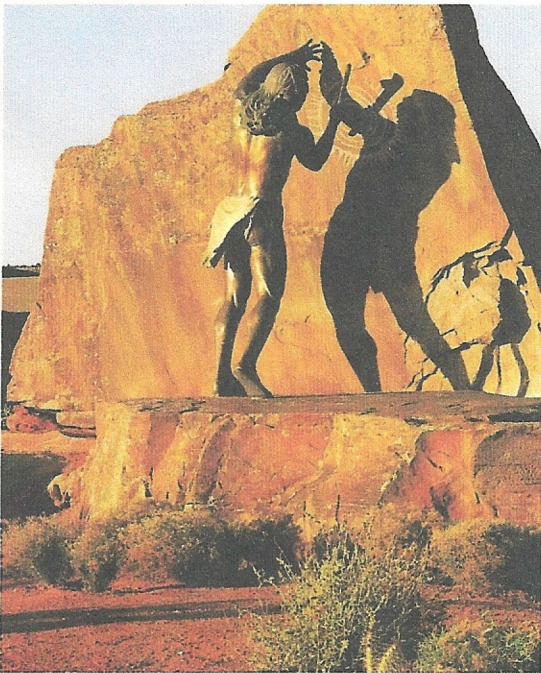
While many people may not consider faux rock an art, the design comes from studying nature, crafting the material with your hands, and using your imagination to make your masterpiece look so real that it blends in perfectly with its surroundings and sometimes, it even surpasses the beauty of nature. "We get to use our imagination a lot. It's neat to do (faux rock) in homes because people let you use your imagination and we can build their fantasies," says Jean.

Faux rock is incorporated into many of the interior and exterior art pieces at Entrada. In many cases, bronze sculptures have been added to enhance the rock by bringing out the true nature of the area's heritage. Local artist, Ed Hlavka, created the bronze cougars that were placed within the recently dedicated round-a-bout. The addition of the cougars to the faux rock is a representation of a natural and harmonious world. There are also four other sculptures that were funded by Split Rock and other partners. Each focused on an aspect of the Anasazi culture that once made this beautiful area their home. All together, about \$2 million has been spent integrating these sculptures into the Entrada communities.

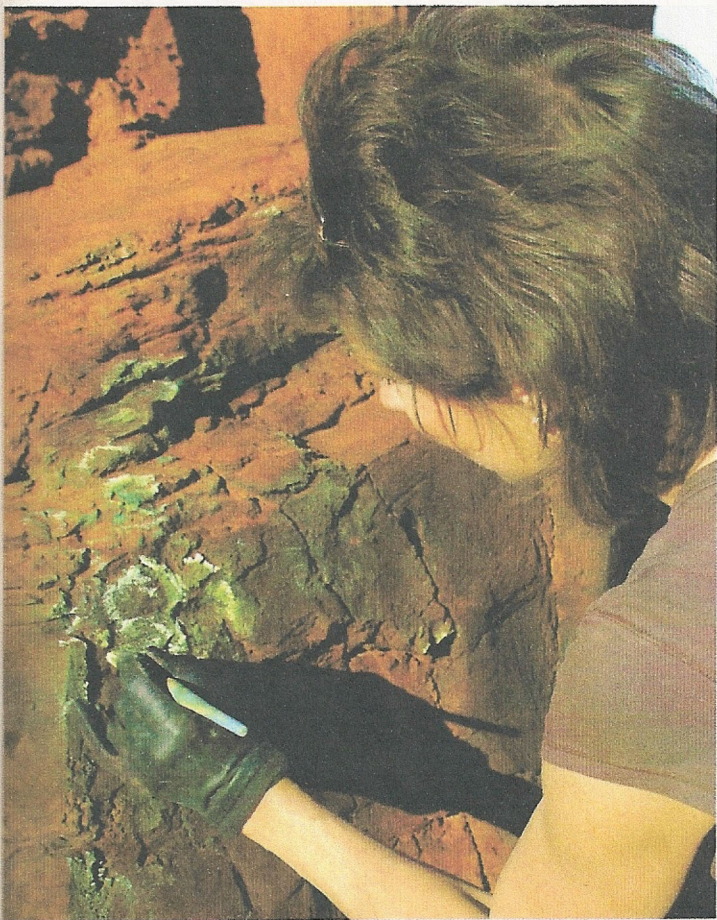


"Home"

"First American Artist"



See the art: The Entrada communities are private but anyone can enjoy the artwork. There are two ways to access the community. One is to contact Entrada real estate and the second option is to visit The Inn at Entrada, which offers some of the best accommodation packages available in southern Utah. Visit www.innatentrada.com for more information.



Artist Jean Gwartz

In touring the various communities that make up Entrada, I was continually impressed with how well everything fit into its natural surrounding. Entrada claims to be the most artistically designed community in the state of Utah and everything I saw, from the detailed landscaping to the unique architecture, verified that statement. According to Split Rock Creative Director Kent Bylund, the goal has always been to "create a unique community that would be recognized as a place that embraces and celebrates its natural surroundings." This appears to have been accomplished through the use of intricate water features, natural foliage integrated with well-designed landscapes, and the blending of Native American culture into the design. The best natural art, as Bylund puts it, blends in and is barely seen. "Many will come into this project, see the beautiful rock sculpture, and totally miss the cougars. This is why it works."

Split Rock will unveil the next piece of faux rock and bronze art at Entrada in October and it will always be visible to the general public in its location at the new round-a-bout on Snow Canyon Parkway. This work of art was not paid for by the city, but was donated by Split Rock and their partners to the Ivins community. Final touches by Jean Gwartz and the John Carlson faux rock crew are being applied now. *e*