

# MAKERS

## THE SHAPE OF A LIFE

Sculptor Joel Shapses flows with his talents

By Justin Paprocki

**When Joel Shapses was in dental school at Temple University, he sculpted a tooth out of marble. It was the combination of two of his passions; the New Jersey native minored in sculpture during his undergraduate days. The sculpture ended up being a hit on campus, and it even won him an award at his first-ever art show.**

He had a successful career in dentistry, establishing his practice in Fort Lauderdale. But he kept sculpting. He moved to Naples about 17 years ago and runs Joel Shapses Gallery & Studio in the Naples Art District. He's won more than 70 awards for his sculpture, and his work has been collected worldwide, among the most notable being the abstract pieces commissioned for Saks Fifth Avenue stores in Michigan and New York.

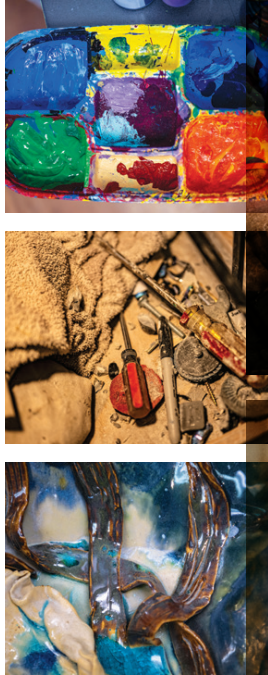


Kevin Brea



From chiseling marble teeth in dental school to exhibiting internationally, Joel Shapses has carved out a second career defined by creativity and innovation.





Joel Shapses works in his gallery and studio in the Naples Art District, where he still carves stone most days and shares his expertise with aspiring sculptors.

Karen Bires



With more than 50 years of experience sculpting, Shapses still is working in his studio most days, carving stone or trying something new, such as the recent sculpture that consisted of painted canvases connected into cubes.

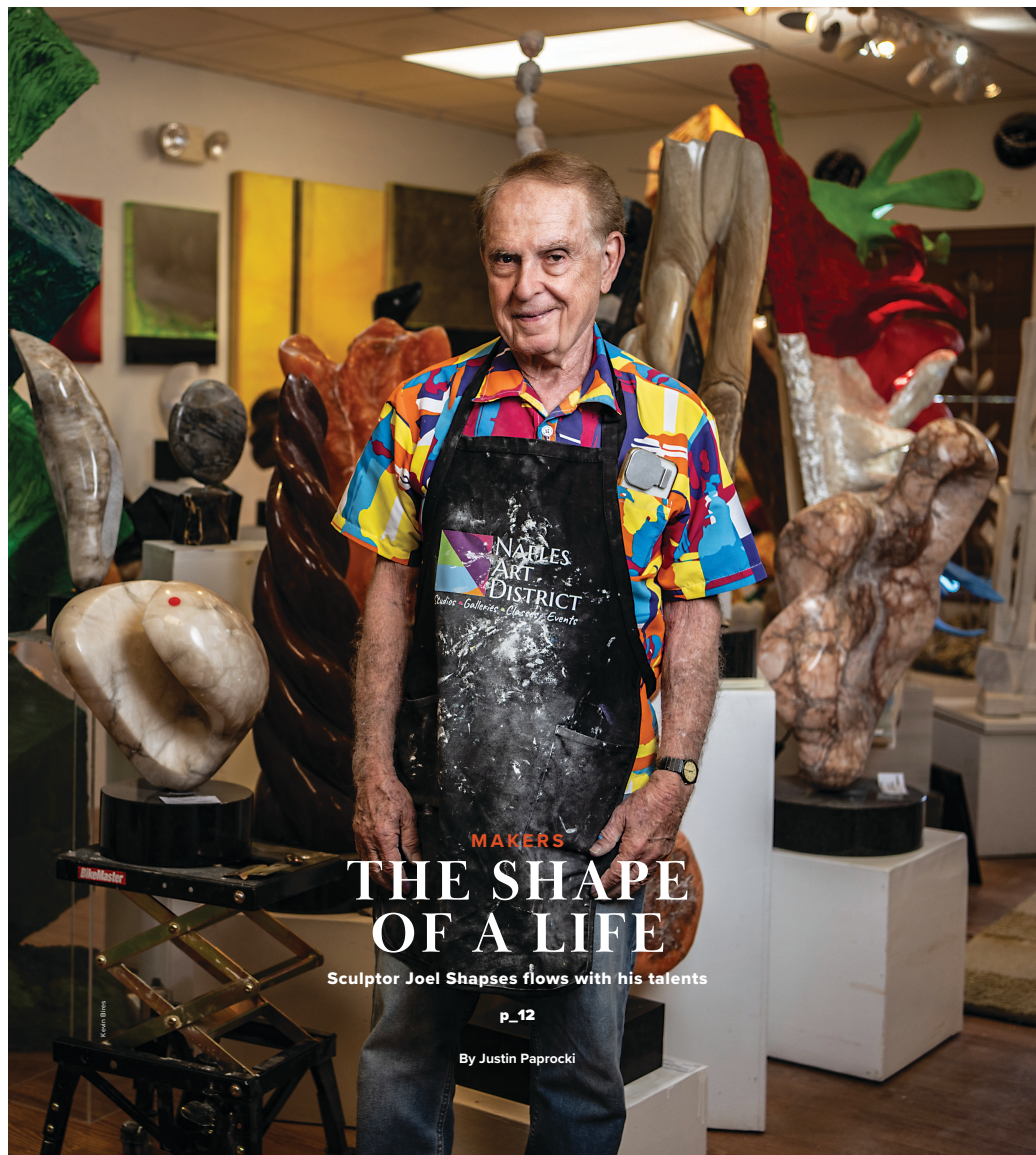
He sells primarily through the Naples shop ([joelshapses-studio.com](http://joelshapses-studio.com)) and through online galleries that stretch his appeal worldwide. He occasionally does commissions, but most of his work comes from his own artistic vision. Shapses enjoys the challenge of trying something new — and hopefully a potential buyer finds it as appealing as he does. “I’m always thinking outside the box,” he says.

He teaches sculpting, as well, working with students at the Marco Island Center for the Arts. His advice: Have trust in yourself. “Anything is possible,” he says. “If you have talent, it will flow through your fingertips.” ●



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