

*“My subjects are swimmers.  
My medium is water.”*

## A Profile of Carole Feuerman

Story by Camille Cline

“The premier sculpture show in the world is the Venice Biennale. It is held every two years in Venice, Italy. Two Carole Feuerman sculptures, owned by the Tetrault Foundation, are being shown there,” philanthropist Roger Tetrault told an audience of family and friends during a soft-opening luncheon just days before the September public opening of the Peace River Botanical and Sculpture Gardens. “They will be returned to the States later this year and will become part of our permanent collection in January 2018. We are grateful to the Carole Feuerman Studio for lending us two replacement sculptures while our sculptures are being exhibited in Europe.”

The studio loaned “City Slicker,” which basked in the first of several cascading infinity pools at the Gardens. Across the lily pond, Feuerman’s “Monumental Fire & Harmony” arched dramatically into a grand battlement en rond that fit with the elegance of the setting.

Kirk Stirton, former President of the Arts Council of New Orleans and current Director of Sculptures on the Board of Directors for the Gardens, is responsible for bringing artist Carole Feuerman of Hartford, Conn., to the project years before the Gardens opened. In January, “Bibi on the Ball” and “Next Summer” will finish their journey from Venice, Italy, to be installed at the Gardens.

“I have been focused on outdoor public works and pieces in parks for many years,” Feuerman shared with HARBOR STYLE.

David Brown, Director of Carole Feuerman Studios, told her about the Gardens. “Roger wanted two pieces for the Gardens, but David told him they had to go to the Venice Biennale, which helps their provenance, so we loaned the two other pieces.” Feuerman sculpted “Bibi on the Ball” and “Next Summer” specifically for the Peace River Botanical and Sculpture Gardens.

“I met Roger in New York City when I had a show at 55 Broadway. He came to the opening. What a wonderful guy!” Feuerman said. “Bibi on the Ball” and “Next Summer” were completed by then. I told him I want these pieces to be special for visitors in Southwest Florida.”

According to recent press, they have already experienced acclaim. Feuerman shared that the two sculptures are the most reviewed of all her pieces.

“The Venice Biennale ends on December 5, so the pieces will be shipped after Christmas to be installed for the big opening in January. David and I already have our tickets!” Feuerman said.

According to her website ([carolefeuerman.com](http://carolefeuerman.com)), Feuerman is recognized as a pioneering figure in the world of hyperrealist sculpture. Together with Hanson and De Andrea, Feuerman is one of the three artists that started the Hyperrealism movement in the late '70s by making sculptures portraying their models in a life-like manner. Dubbed “the



reigning doyenne of super-realism" by art historian John T. Spike, Feuerman has solidified her place in art history.

Feuerman's prolific career spans more than four decades and four continents. Through her sculptures, she creates visual manifestations of the stories she wants to tell of strength, survival, balance and the struggle to achieve. Feuerman has produced a rich body of work in the studio and the public realm. By combining conventional sculptural materials of steel, bronze and resin, with more unconventional media like water, light, sound and video, she creates hybrid works of intricate energy and psychology.

*"Swimming and water have fascinated me for as long as I can remember, and as a result, have become the essence of my inspiration for my pieces,"* Feuerman explains on her website. *"I loved the beach as a child and many of my fondest memories are of playing in the sand and jumping the waves at Jones Beach on Long Island. I remember with great detail how the delicate water droplets covered my arms and face after returning from a swim, and the patterns that formed on my skin captivated me. I noticed how the human figure radiates a healthy glow while in the water and coming out, and how the water seemed to rejuvenate the body while instilling a sense of harmony, both internally and externally."*

*"Since 1958, I have concentrated on swimmers and figures with water elements. Through my sculptures, I explore classicism and beauty, which are subjects that have been taboo in contemporary art. My swimmers have their own personalities and tell their own stories. Their titles are derived from islands around the world that I have visited and gained inspiration from over the years."*

*"For example, in 1976, I went to the Isle of Capri, Italy, in the Mediterranean Sea and created a sculpture called 'Capri,' named after that special island. In 1979, inspired by the blue horizon of the Pacific Ocean, I envisioned a swimmer emerging like a phoenix from*

*the sea with water droplets streaming across her face, which took form in my creation of 'Catalina.' She appears as a proud survivor, beautiful and strong. In 2005, I made a monumental version, 'Grande Catalina,' which John Spike installed in the center of Florence, and that was the beginning of my major public sculptures."*

*"After 56 years of creating swimmers, I continue to be fascinated with the figure in the water with water patterns on them. I love the mechanics of water and its presence as an enduring symbol for life. The symbolism of water is far-reaching and profoundly deep. Water cleanses and purifies. Water touches all people, animals and things. Water connects one land to another. Water moistens and revives. I observe, photograph and sculpt swimmers because we are all swimmers."*

Feuerman's works are exhibited in private and public collections, galleries and museums worldwide. Malcolm Forbes, Bill Clinton and the Emperor of Japan, among others, are Feuerman fans. Her works are often integrated with architecture and landscaping in the creation or renovation of buildings and sites. An especially important example is her monumental "Double Diver," spiraling 36 feet in the air and permanently sited in Silicon Valley, owned by the City of Sunnyvale, Calif. "Survival of Serena" has been exhibited by New York City Department of Parks & Recreation and was also recently chosen to be installed in Central Park for their celebration, It's Happening! 50 Years of Public Art in NYC Parks. Currently, it is being exhibited publicly in the Piazzetta in Capri, Italy.

The 2017 Venice Biennale featured Feuerman's solo exhibition "Personal Structures, Open Borders" in conjunction with the Venice Biennale and included 10 of her iconic outdoor painted bronze sculptures in Giardino Della Marinaressa. The bronze-and-stainless steel sculpture "Bibi on the Ball" features a woman sitting on a beach ball, which will be perfectly situated on the sands near the lower pond of the Gardens Community Center. Also arriving at the Gardens this month, "Next Summer" shows a woman laying on an inflatable ring and is sculpted in bronze and stainless steel. Appearing to "float" in the upper pond of the Gardens Community Center, it was inspired by a very special island in Michigan called Summer Island. ■■

