Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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MUSEUM
of SONOMA COUNTY
ART • HISTORY

Museum of Sonoma County Presents

Bruce Johnson: Sculptor

June 28 – November 30, 2025

Opening Reception: Saturday, June 28 From 5–7 PM | Free with paid admission

Santa Rosa, CA – [May 21, 2025] — The Museum of Sonoma County is honored to present *Bruce Johnson: Sculptor*, a landmark exhibition celebrating the life, vision, and legacy of one of Sonoma County's most revered artists. On view from June 28 through November 30, 2025, the exhibition marks the first major museum survey of Johnson's work since his sudden passing in 2023.

Known for his monumental sculptures hewn from salvaged redwoods, Johnson transformed ancient wood into meditative forms, breathing new life into trees that stood for centuries. Working from his studio above Timber Cove along the rugged Sonoma Coast, Johnson carved out a career that spanned decades and continents, while remaining deeply rooted in the local landscape.

This retrospective, curated in collaboration with Johnson's daughters Kendra and Tori Johnson and guest curator Catherine Daley, traces his evolution from craftsman and builder to master sculptor. The exhibition showcases a carefully selected range of works: from whimsical early pieces like a handmade rocking goat for his children, to spiritually resonant sculptures influenced by Shinto shrines, to *Raven Fights Fire*, created in response to the 2017 wildfires.

Two of Johnson's monumental works will anchor the Museum's outdoor courtyard, including *Jura*, a 9,000-pound sculpture whose powerful interlocking forms evoke both prehistoric force and human ingenuity. Johnson once wrote, "I love the scale and mass and energy of this piece

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of redwood and the way it leans and locks together." His words—and works—reflect the raw wonder that shaped his creative life.

"Bruce approached his work with enthusiasm and an impulsive curiosity," says guest curator Catherine Daley. "The creative process brought him great joy. We hope this exhibition fosters a deeper appreciation of his process and spirit—and that it inspires visitors to look at the natural world, and themselves, a little differently."

In honoring Bruce Johnson's life and legacy, the Museum offers an exhibition that invites the community to reflect on the enduring beauty of art shaped by hand, by heart, and by place.

Check out our website for upcoming exhibition programs including artist demonstrations, a poetry reading by Elizabeth Herron, author of *The Poet's House* and an exclusive trip to see Bruce Johnson's studio in Timber Cove. https://museumsc.org/events/

Museum of Sonoma County

425 Seventh Street
Santa Rosa, CA 95401
707-579-1500
www.museumsc.org

Museum Hours

Wednesday - Sunday, 11 am – 5 pm

Admission

Adults: $10
Seniors 62+, Students, People with Disabilities: $7
Museum Members: FREE
Children 12 & under: FREE
Through Museums for All, those receiving food assistance (SNAP benefits) can gain free admission for up to four (4) people to the Museum of Sonoma County simply by presenting their EBT card.

About the Museum of Sonoma County

Located in Downtown Santa Rosa on Seventh Street between A and B Streets, the Museum of Sonoma County (MSC) presents exhibitions of modern and contemporary art and local and regional history. MSC is open year-round with changing exhibitions, public programs, school tours, and special events. MSC preserves and manages a regional art and history collection of over 18,000 objects, the region's largest object documentation of Sonoma County's history and culture.

Mission

The Museum of Sonoma County engages and inspires our diverse community with art and history exhibitions, collections, and public programs that are inclusive, educational, and relevant.

Smithsonian Affiliate

The Museum of Sonoma County has been a Smithsonian Affiliate since 2009. Smithsonian Affiliations establishes long-term partnerships with museums, education and cultural organizations to facilitate the loan of Smithsonian artifacts and traveling exhibitions, as well as to develop innovative educational collaborations locally and nationally. Created in 1996 by an act of the Smithsonian Board of Regents, the program is overseen by the Smithsonian's Assistant Secretary for Education and Access and is one of the pillars of the Institution's national outreach efforts. There are more than 200 Smithsonian Affiliates in nearly every state, Puerto Rico and Panama. Affiliates represent the diversity of America's museum community—size, location and subject— and serve all audiences. More than 8,000 Smithsonian artifacts have been displayed at Affiliate locations for the past 20 years.

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Exhibition Images (click here to view and download)

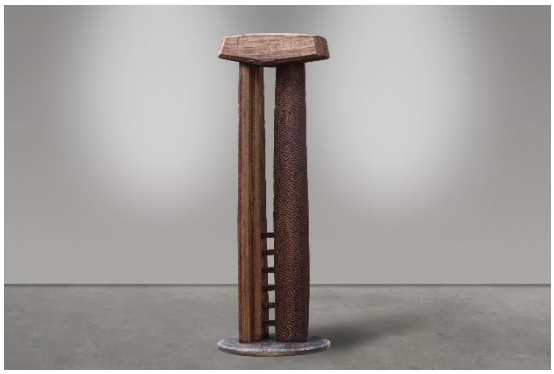
Bruce Johnson
photo by Philip Barlow

Bruce Johnson working with a chainsaw, 1983
photo by Evan Johnson

Bruce Johnson, *Jura*, 2014
redwood, copper and steel
photo credit Mark Wegner

Bruce Johnson, *Journey*, 2020
locust wood and steel
photo credit Mark Wegner

Bruce Johnson, *Raven Fights Fire*, 2020
osage orange and steel
photo credit Mark Wegner



Bruce Johnson, *Untitled II*, 2021-22
redwood and copper
photo credit Mark Wegner

Bruce Johnson, *Uprising*, 2009
redwood and copper
photo credit Mark Wegner

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