

First temporary art installation debuts at Royal Poinciana Plaza

NEWS By Jan Sjostrom - Daily News Arts Editor



Unigami will be on display through the end of April.

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If you've strolled through the east courtyard of the Royal Poinciana Plaza lately you might wonder, what are those meteor-like shapes scattered on the lawn?

They're **Nathan Slate Joseph's** *Unigami*, the renovated plaza's first temporary art installation. The 11 copper sculptures were installed Tuesday and will be on view through April.

"Hosting public art on the property adds yet another element to the guest experience at the property," said Lori Berg, the plaza's general manager. "The Royal Poinciana Plaza is a global destination for true luxury, good food and community events, and arts and culture are no less important."

The plaza plans to host more temporary art installations, she said.

Berg found out about Joseph's work when she ran into Ben Leone, son of **The Breakers'** CEO Paul Leone, at **The Honor Bar** in the plaza during the December holiday season.

Leone, who has a degree in studio art, has been working with Joseph, who has a studio in the Hamptons, for two years. He and Joseph set up a studio in West Palm Beach where they can work during the Hamptons' off-season.

"Palm Beach and West Palm Beach have this new, exciting energy," said Leone, who grew up in Palm Beach. "It's a great time to come down here."

Berg was charmed by Joseph's and Leone's description of the sculptures as "whimsical," she said. "We knew at



Artist Nathan Slate Joseph, left, and curator Ben Leone install sculptures in the courtyard of the Royal Poinciana Plaza for the ... [Read More](#)

that moment the art would be a befitting aesthetic for Royal Poinciana Plaza — a place of whimsy, discovery and idyllic nature."

Joseph moved from Israel to New York City in the 1960s. Like his contemporaries Frank Stella, Carl Andre and John Chamberlain, he developed an affinity for industrial urbanized materials, simplified forms and found objects.

In the 1970s, he developed a method of applying pure pigment to metal and exposing it to the elements so it acquires a patina reminiscent of centuries-old frescoes. Once nature has done its work, Joseph completes the sculptures in the studio.

Joseph's work has been installed at Inagiku at the Waldorf-Astoria in New York, Jean-Georges at the Trump International Hotel and the Seafood Bar at The Breakers. His art decorates the lobby and every guest room of the Dan Eilat Hotel in Israel. His collectors have included fellow artist Chamberlain, singer-songwriter Joni Mitchell and chef Jean-Georges Vongerichten.

The sculptures at the plaza are faceted like gems and have exposed seams and bolts. In most, rusty oranges blend with the mossy greens of oxidized copper. A work painted bright red and another finished in yellow stand out like stoplights in the forest.

Nature hasn't finished its work on the sculptures, Joseph said. "They change with nature. If it rains, they change color. When the sun comes out you can watch the colors change as they dry. You can almost tell the weather from the colors."

The sculptures range in size from about 18 inches to 6 feet.

Joseph's "paintings," made of thin rectangles of pure pigment and oxidized metal and small metal orbs that look like balls of confetti, are on view in the newly opened Fritz Gallery in the plaza.

Leone is delighted to be showing Joseph's art at the plaza. "Growing up here it was something I wanted to do — bring the work here and show it off," he said.