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Giant Horseshoe Crabs Invade Naples Beach » Naples Daily News



NAPLES — It's a rare and delightful sight to see horseshoe crabs on a Naples beach, but imagine seeing them 10 times their size. That was the scene one recent afternoon as local artist Ed Koehler unveiled his latest larger-than-life sea creature sculptures.

While most boys were playing baseball, Koehler, a Naples-based artist, spent his youth exploring the exotic



reef habitats of the Florida Keys. That experience and the fond images his young mind captured are the inspiration for what is now the foundation of his latest artistic

vision. Koehler's latest one-of-a-kind sculptures transform nature into larger-than-life works of art and introduce a new way to enjoy visual art.

"I sculpt art larger than life because as a child I explored the intricacies of nature's elements: leaves, water, stone and sea life. And I just loved the details of their structures, colors and shapes," said Koehler. "So as an adult, I naturally bring that wonder out in a larger way to fulfill our childlike curiosity and amuse our adult memories of what it was like to see small things in a big way."

Like a magnifying glass over nature, Koehler's sculptures infuse organic detail with functional design. He has produced pieces as small as 12 inches tall and as large as 34 feet long. Many locals might remember his 16-foot fish that was the focal point in Aqua Grill. Now retired to a private home collection in the Hamptons, that fish set the

stage for pieces like his giant horseshoe crabs.

What's most unique about Koehler's art though is that in addition to being visually impressive, they are also a sensation to touch. He's made floor lamps with legs that mimic mangroves complete with crab claw marks, and chandeliers that look like a piece of rare fire coral illuminated by the sun's rays. But it's his sea creature pieces that demand the most skill and garner the most attention by designers today.

"Sculpting things like fish and crabs is fun for me because each one has a different personality," said Koehler, whose art has been featured in galleries from Rodeo Drive to New York City. One of the horseshoe crabs is currently on display at Jalan Jalan, a design showroom in the heart of Miami's Design District that features exotic art and furniture by international artists and designers. Koehler also works with many local interior designers to create custom art with function and has several pieces on the floor at Robb and Stucky.

Life has always centered around experiences that brought Koehler closer to nature, and included work as a crew member aboard yachts that traveled around the world, and cross country road trips to deliver and sell his art to

numerous galleries between Las Vegas and New England.

Koehler's creations are so life like that they reflect a depth of creativity teetering on the surreal. With details that could only be imitated through familiarity, Koehler uses steel, aluminum, resin and epoxies to create his organic sculptures and then applies several types of paint applications or natural elements like shell or wood to make the final piece truly one-of-a-kind. Take a journey through nature as captured by the artist at www.edkoehlerdesigns.com.