

101 NORTH

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SCOTTSDALE & BEYOND

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WHEN ANIMAL ARTIST RON BURNS looks into a dog's eyes, he sees unflinching loyalty, hope and unconditional love. Through the magic of paint, he brushes those intangible traits onto canvas.

"I try to capture all the love and energy and emotion that they give to us unconditionally day after day," says Burns, whose wildly colorful animal paintings and his own dedication to homeless animals have earned him a treasured role as artist-in-residence for the Humane Society of the United States.

His work has appeared in such shows and movies as "Déjà Vu," starring Denzel Washington, ABC-TV's "Extreme Makeover" and the soap opera "All My Children." He is also the artist behind the specialized pet-friendly Arizona license plates that help fund spaying and neutering programs.

Burns, who lives in North Scottsdale with his wife, Buff, and their dogs, Rufus and Loganberry, uses a mixture of styles including abstract, pop and realism to create his fun, fanciful animal paintings.

Inspired by Henri Matisse and Andy Warhol, Burns, 52, turned to painting about 15 years ago after tiring of the corporate world and its grueling pace. He quit the design firm he founded in Los Angeles and began splitting his time between Scottsdale and Sedona. Now a full-time Scottsdale resident, his work is exclusively represented at Vessley Fine Art in downtown Scottsdale.

A tireless fundraiser for animal causes, Burns has painted some famous mugs for charity, including a signed, limited-edition painting of Sirius, the bomb detection dog who lost his life on Sept. 11. Pet therapy and shelter animals rank high on the sentimental chart for Burns.

"In my life I've been through ups and downs, and I can always depend on my dogs and cats to love me unconditionally," he said.

For more about spay/neuter license plates, visit www.servicearizona.com. ■



animal artist

Ron Burns captures canine's inner dog on canvas

BY **Susanne Tso** PHOTO BY **Anna Peña**

CORRECTION

In the Diversions section of our April issue, an Out & About event featuring the Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art was incorrectly described. The photos were from the museum's opening reception for two new exhibits: *Celebrity*, and *Celebrating Freedom: The Art of Willie Birch*.