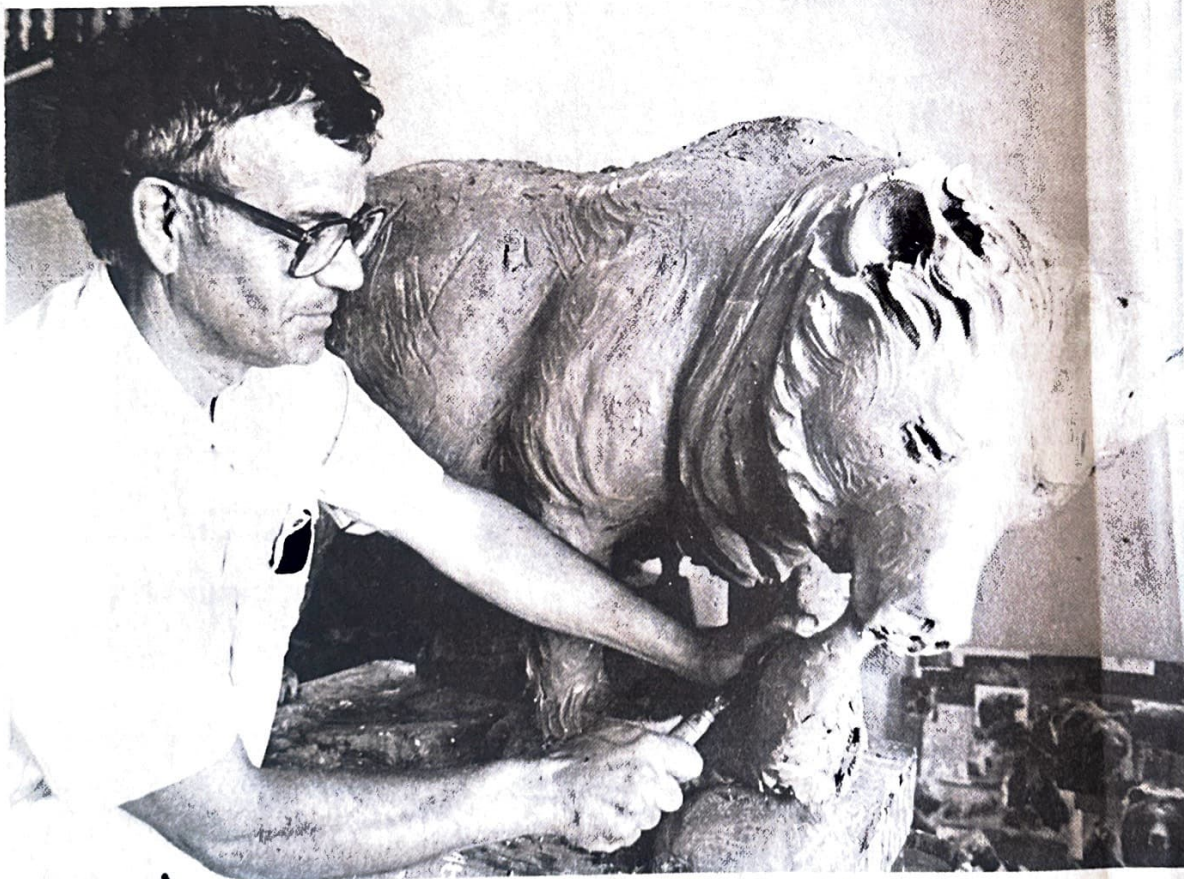


Valley LIVING



Update on artist Franco Vianello

By MARY WALLIS
Valley Living Editor

As a young Italian immigrant to the U.S. nearly three decades ago, sculptor Franco Vianello had great difficulty with the language. But his work has always been universally understood.

Weeks after visiting his Napa studio and home, I am haunted by the "vanished ways of life" he brings out of bronze and lost-wax casting — a brawny Swedish lumberjack, heroic Pony Express riders and fishermen whose strained backs are deadlocked against the frenzied tuna in the net below.

Rather than glorify perfection, Vianello lovingly includes it in his works. He calls attention to the pretty, young ballerina with the ever-so-slight bow to her legs. "I saw the picture in a magazine," he says, explaining the flaw and the ballerina are one.

As an update of this internationally-known and respected art figure, Vianello recently extended new roots into the community by joining the Depot Gallery in Yountville as a member/artist where many of his smaller signature works are on exhibit and for sale.

Currently under way is a bear sculpture destined for Napa Valley College, which the college calls "our first major work of art on campus."

The two-thirds scale bear sculpture depicts a mother about to feed one of her cubs a fish. It will be part of a new fountain near the main entrance and made possible by a \$10,000 challenge grant from Peter Bedford of Bedford Properties and helped by Vianello's donation of labor and profit. The college is seeking contributions from the community. Memorials and donations may be sent directly to the president's office, made payable to Napa Valley College Foundation. More information is available from the college at 253-3363.

Vianello and his wife, Jane, who does his research, came to Napa seven years ago. His works and life-sized statues are displayed throughout the world.

He is also working on a large outdoor sculpture for Hawaii and intends to move next to Biblical figures. In Italy, he says, so much of the country's sculpture was restricted to cemeteries and churches. "You were limited to certain textures and lines and no color," he says.

Commenting on the rich territory of Biblical characters that awaits them, Jane's enthusiasm spills over: "There's one of everything."

At least.



(ABOVE) AT work on a mother bear feeding her cubs to be Napa Valley College's first major work of art, Franco Vianello readies the bronze sculpture to be placed at a new fountain. (AT LEFT) The scale of the college piece is typical of simple animal life by the Napa artist whose works are known and exhibited throughout the world. (Register photos by Bob McKenzie)