



Staff photos by Courtenay Nearburg

First-year Festival of Arts exhibitor Casey Parlette readies wood and metal sculptures inspired by the ocean and a trip to the Amazon for the exhibition opening on Saturday.

Artist Adventurer Hunts for Inspiration in Far Corners

By SUZIE HARRISON

The hunt for adventure from Africa to the Amazon sustains Casey Parlette powerfully influences his mixed media sculptures.

Parlette is one of 35 new artists to join the 154-artist contingent in this summer's 76th annual Festival of Arts juried fine art show, which opens Sunday.

Most likely he is the only artist with the distinction of serving as a Laguna Beach lifeguard for 13 years. It's going to be quite a summer for Parlette, splitting his time between the exhibition and full-time responsibilities supervising guards on the town's beaches.

Parlette knows the beaches well. A native of the town, he comes from a long line of locals who first settled here in the '40s.

"This is my first festival, and



the first time I've applied," the tanned 28-year-old said.

His works are rendered with life-like realism. Large antennae sprout from spin-shelled bronze lobsters mounted on flagstone.

"I forged and welded a sheet of bronze, hammered it out to get texture, and shape it in the same process. Using the torch, I weld different segments together to build on certain areas," he

explained.

"I've been lucky enough to be around good sculptors, and my uncle is a sculptor as well," he said.

His degree in anthropology is reflected in his wide-ranging interest in creatures and making discoveries.

Two fish specimens he discovered are under DNA analysis by a leading fish authority in France, Jean Huber, said Parlette, who is anxious to learn if he might be credited with finding a new species.

His methods are as exciting as his art. Parlette recently returned from an eight-month stint organizing jungle expeditions in Peru. "In real remote areas there's a good chance at night you'll find new species. Looking for new species was an excuse

for me to have an adventure."

A Wahoo, nautilus, Manzanita, octopus and a dung beetle are depicted in works of wood, metal and stone.

Interested in art since he was 7, Parlette's dad is a carpenter, whose tools were always at hand. When his artist uncle showed him how to use the tools he was hooked.

The Festival of Arts, 650 Laguna Canyon Road, opens Sunday, July 6 at 10 a.m. and will close early at 6 p.m. The show has an extensive menu of art education for children and adults including ceramics, artist demonstrations, printmaking, arts education, art tours and more.

Laguna residents are free; adult admission is \$7 and \$4 for seniors and students.