

SEDONA MONTHLY

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IT'S MOVIE TIME!

The Eleventh Annual Sedona Film Festival Is Back and better Than Ever!

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HUT!

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HIKE!

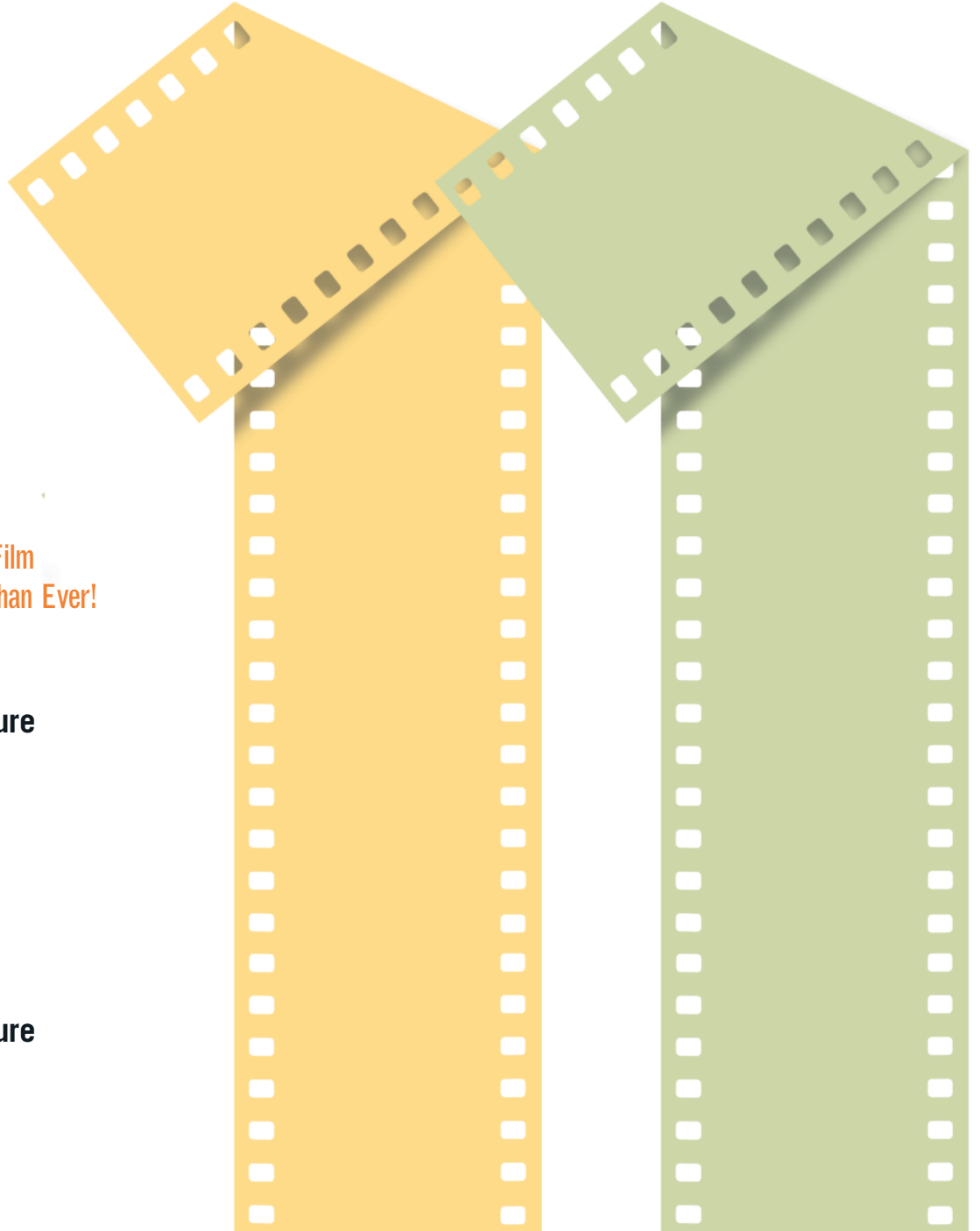
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January/February 2005

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OPEN PORTFOLIO LIAM HERBERT



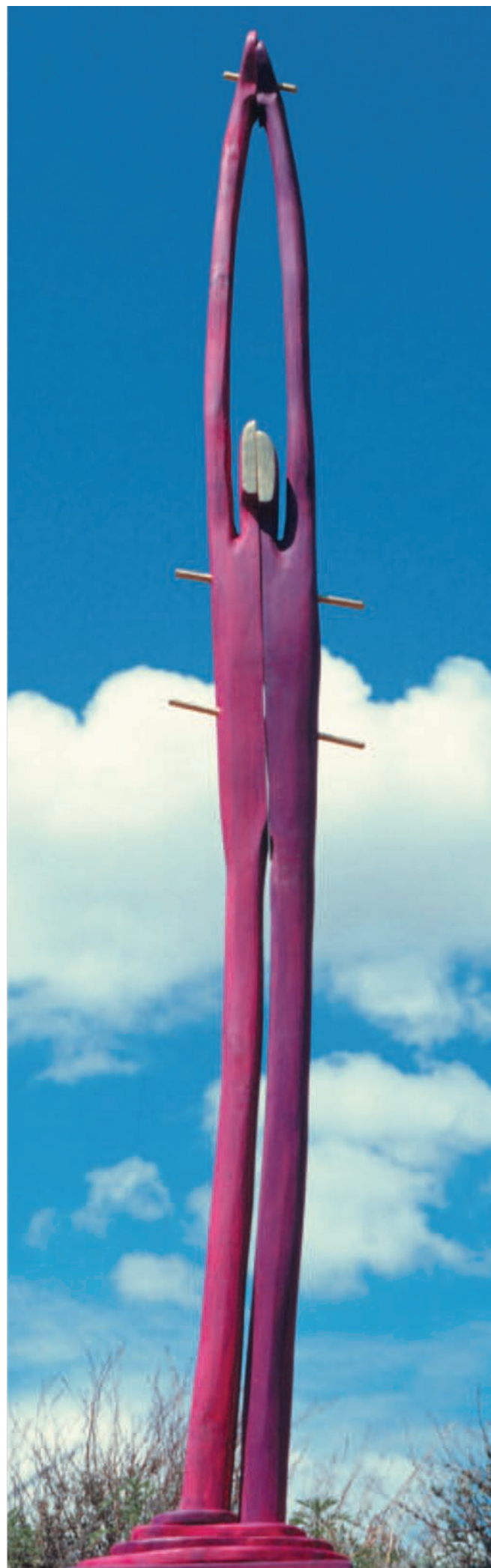
Whoever decided to use the word “wooden” to define an object as “stiff and unnatural; without spirit” should have consulted Liam Herbert for a second opinion. Working primarily with wood from the trees he adores, Liam carves and sculpts simple forms that he hopes will touch viewers on a deep, emotional level. Many of his works stand tall and thin in natural environments around other trees, to feed off the same energy that implanted in him the works’ inspiration. While his conversation about his favorite medium may indeed be intrinsically “wooden,” don’t ever think of describing this 27-year veteran of the Broadway theatre community (he moved to Sedona in 1992) as “without spirit”: “I’m a Gemini, a personality, Art should be emotional, art should be controversial, art should be beautiful. It’s all in the eye of the beholder,” he muses. For more about his work, visit his Website at www.artbyliam.com; for information about commissioned pieces, contact him by e-mail at artbyliam@msn.com.

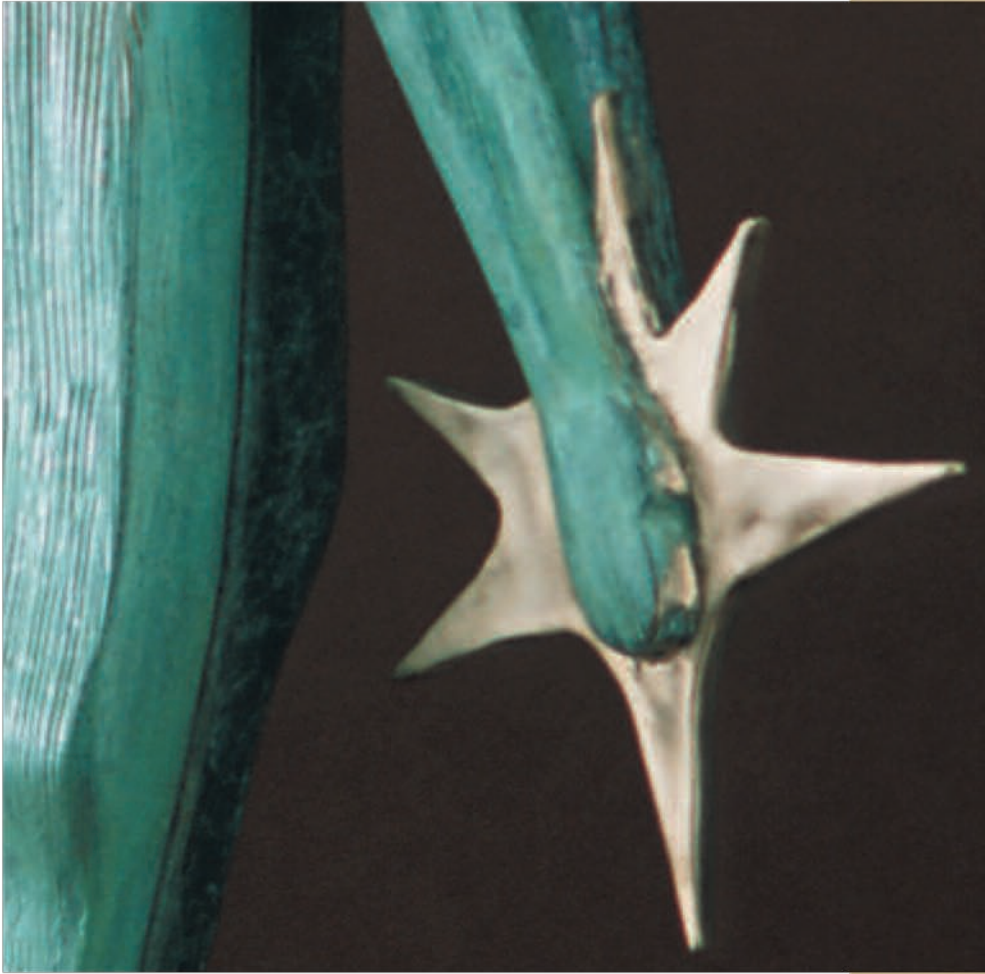
LIAM: “Until I was about 8 years old, my family lived in Woodstock, N.Y., which was an artists’ colony. My grandfather was an artist and we used to hang out at the studio of a sculptor named Raoul Hague [an abstract wood expressionist]. He has works all over the world, including the Whitney and the Smithsonian. I started sculpting in his studio when I was 8; I still have the piece I did then here.

“I was kind of an eccentric kid. One of my favorite things to do was to climb trees; it still is. I used to go as close to the top as I could get and just stare out at whatever was around. I have a connection to trees and wood. I have this saying: “Each tree speaks a special language to me.” Before I do a new piece, I have



to analyze the log, sometimes for a year, because I have a fear of cutting into it due to the grains or the cracks or whatever. Eventually I begin chipping away really slowly. That’s how I start. Even my bronze pieces start from wood – a branch from a tree has a certain curve, and then I start applying clay to it, and

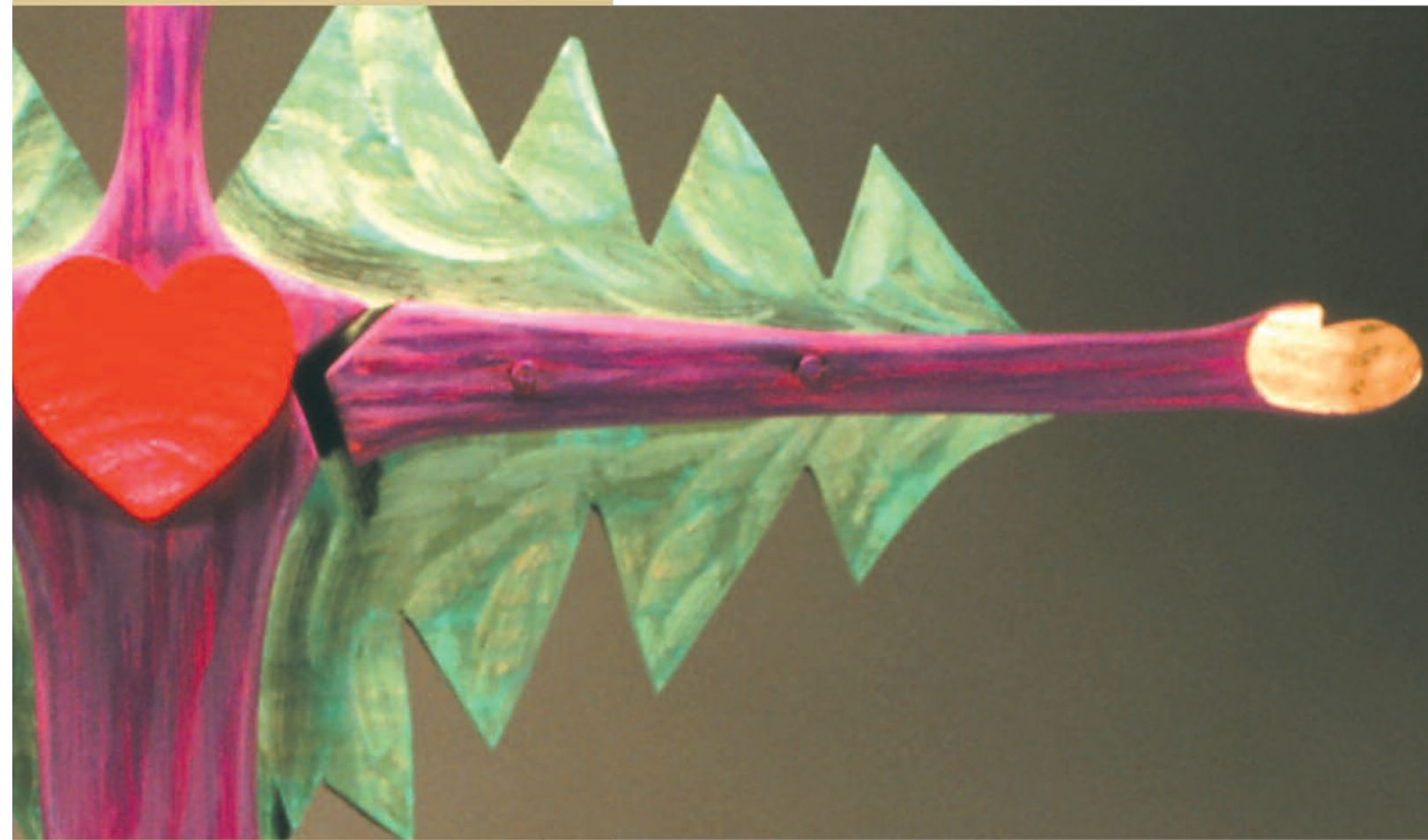




then that's molded. Everything for me springs from the growth of the tree.

"After two years at a community college, I enrolled at the School of Visual Arts in New York; my major, believe it or not, was advertising. But at that time I was also sculpting 20-ft. pieces at my father's country home in Pennsylvania. Some of my instructors felt I should continue doing that. I didn't – I went to work on Broadway as a prop man – but I am finally getting back to it now.

"The fascinating part about my job as a prop man was that I would create props when we couldn't find them. It became a challenge, and kept my creative flow going. I was living in an apartment in N.Y., so I worked on smaller things there, too. I did a lot of collages, I'd whittle. When you are living in a tiny N.Y. apartment you can't work on 10-ft. logs. I used to carve backstage [on Broadway] when there was nothing to do. Everybody thought I was an eccentric.



“In 1992, I decided I wanted to work on my art full time. That’s why I moved to Sedona. My cousin had lived here for a long time, at least 30 years. I feel that Sedona is a very spiritual place, and I feel there’s a spiritual thread that runs through all my work.

“There is a message in all of my pieces. The world is getting colder and colder; we have to get back to our original premise of being more compassionate toward one another. I want to express emotional feelings to people through my art in simple forms. That’s what I strive for.

“I’m working on a piece now called ‘One.’ I came up with the concept when I was watching that lady who was working in Antarctica a few years back and she developed breast cancer and they had to fly her out. When she came back to America this idea popped into my head: a man standing behind a woman. The man’s hand goes over the breast that’s not there, her hand goes on top of his hand, and his other arm wraps all the way around her body and goes over





her other hand, which she has hanging straight down. 'One' signifies a united couple, and also 'One' because of the one breast. It's just a reminder that partners have to go through this together.

"My brother died of cancer, and when Sedona Medical Center opened, I decided to donate a sculpture. It's called 'Angel of Courage.' It sits about 50 yards from where patients get chemotherapy. Some people see it, some don't, because it stands among the trees. That's because that's where the concept of my sculptures started. I hope it gives encouragement to the people who see it.

"At the hospital, it doesn't say this piece is in memory of Kim Herbert. It honors his life and others that struggle with cancer. I don't put any faces on anything. I use gold for the face and gold for the hands because I want the energy to flow from the piece to the person looking at it, so that anyone can identify with it. All it says is 'Angel of Courage.' The angels within and around us." •

