

Harold Holden

While working at a silk screen company in Wichita, Kansas, Harold Holden decided he wanted to illustrate for *Horseman* magazine, so he quit his job, sold his three horses, and used the money to move to Houston, where the magazine was published. While waiting to get a job with the magazine, and in order to eat, he hired on with a company that made bags.

When Holden did get hired by *Horseman*, he handled the art and production for the magazine and for books that were published by the company. When he got to the point that he could support himself with his art, Holden left *Horseman* and moved back to Oklahoma.

Born and raised in Enid, Oklahoma, Holden spent many hours as a young boy drawing and making clay models of cowboys, Indians, and football players. "My mother still has a whole football field and set of football players I did," he says. After attending the University of Houston and Oklahoma State, Holden enrolled at the Texas Academy of Art, then worked in commercial art before joining *Horseman*.

When he returned to Oklahoma, Holden's art was 70 percent painting and 30 percent sculpture. "Today that's reversed," he says. "Bronze comes a lot easier for me than painting. With painting, you have values and colors. Clay is just one thing. I enjoy doing it. I've done a couple monuments; then it really gets fun—the bigger the more fun. You can get your whole body working. It feels more free. The small pieces get more tedious."

Holden's primary subject is the contemporary cowboy because that's the kind of life he lives. "I've been roping for about 20 years and still rope two or three times a week," he says. "I practice roping and go to jackpots, where we get a bunch of guys together, put up a bunch of money, and rope with a partner. I don't lose a lot of money, but I don't win much either."

Holden usually starts his pieces with a sketch, although he occasionally does a small model first to get the composition the way he wants it. If he needs additional research, he'll photograph a model, but prefers the freedom of creating action pieces that make use of his imagination. "I try to convey the heritage of the West," Holden says. "I like the cowboy lifestyle and have a real feeling for it."



Green Broke, 21" high

"Green Broke is a horse that isn't broke well yet, usually a young horse. The idea for the sculpture was from a personal experience I had while roping a half-blind calf. I was riding a 3-year-old I raised, who was off the track and not broke real well. My horse spooked and blew up when the calf ran at him. I wanted to sculpt the piece in a vertical position, keeping it in balance and attached to the base with the horse's tail."

