

Baitball Sculpture by Dave Riemer

Hi, my name is Dave Riemer. I've been making kinetic sculptures from copper and brass for 20 years.

The word kinetic refers to motion, a kinetic sculpture is any sculpture that has a moving component. The motion can be powered by water, springs, weights, an electric motor or as with my sculptures the wind.

I first became interested in kinetic work in 2001 while traveling through the west. From the highway you can see various contraptions that ranchers set up to catch the wind in order to power pumps to fill the cattle troughs with well water. I was impressed by their use of so many different kinds of materials - sheet metal, old metal drums, corrugated roofing - it seemed like everything worked to catch the wind.

The sculpture in front of the new Farmville library is called "Baitball." It is a bi-directional sculpture that mimics the way schools of fish will form a ball for protection against predators. Notice how even though the two sections are using the same wind they turn in opposite directions.

To understand how that is possible, imagine that everything you can see is being blown on by the wind coming from the direction of your eyes. The copper cups you can see that are curved away from you will cause the wind to slip around them, to pass with a minimum amount of force on the cup. The cups that are curved toward you will catch the wind like sails on a boat, causing them to be pushed with greater force than the side where the wind is slipping around the cups. The sculpture will turn in the direction of whichever side catches the most wind.

I hope you enjoy viewing my work and the rest of the sculptures in the DownEast National Sculpture Exhibition.