

ARTIST OF  
THE MONTH

## Jim Sudal

**J**IM SUDAL CREDITS Muhammad Ali with helping save his life. When Sudal was depressed over a breakup last year and ready to throw in the towel, he received a commission for the former World Heavyweight Champion.

Sudal was so down he couldn't even open his studio, Jim Sudal Ceramic Design. The day he did, Carol Ann Mackay (wife of bestselling author Harvey Mackay) walked in the door. She'd been searching for three years for just the right piece of art for Muhammad Ali and his wife, Lonnie. It needed to compete with four original Andy Warhol paintings and complement the décor of the house. Her search ended with Sudal.

"I was very close to the end of my ropes. But for some reason, that day I opened the door," says Sudal, 47, a Thunderbird School of Global Management alum. "Not only did they save me financially, but emotionally. They don't even know how it helped me to focus my energy every day."

The resulting sculpture put him back in the ring of life. Titled "Butterflies and Bees," the 325-pound sculpture features a clay mural of two large prickly pear blooms. Each flower has 200 butterflies and bees - a tribute to Ali's iconic saying "fight like a butterfly but sting like a bee." It was mounted on a 5-foot square and hung above the fireplace in the couple's Paradise Valley home.

Watch Sudal at work or purchase his designs at Jim Sudal Ceramic Design, 7037 E. First Ave., Scottsdale ([jimsudalpottery.com](http://jimsudalpottery.com), 480-947-2254).

— Dolores Tropiano