

# BIOGRAPHY



**Stephen Van O'Meara** is best known for his sculptural centerpieces, object d'art, hollowware and curiosities executed in solid silver and gold. As master goldsmith, silversmith & sculptor, Stephen has transformed the concept of silver tableware and sculpture with unique, fresh and contemporary designs grounded in classical inspiration. His work has won numerous awards.

Born February 27th 1954 in Denver, Colorado, Stephen was introduced to silversmithing at age 11 while at camp in the Rocky mountains of Colorado. Upon his return home he erected a makeshift silversmithing bench in his bedroom, and proceeded to make and sell small sculptures and jewelry for friends and family. By age 13, he had his first **"O'Meara Sterling"** hallmark.

At age 14, on an educational trip to Europe, Stephen was awestruck by the famous sculpture of the "Ecstasy of St. Teresa" by Gian Lorenzo Bernini in Rome. Viewing the superb craftsmanship and dynamic composition of the piece, Stephen knew then and there that he wanted to become a sculptor and goldsmith and touch people's lives through art. A year later, Stephen traveled to Russia and Japan, and was deeply impressed by the work of Russian goldsmiths at the Kremlin Museum and Japanese masters in "Mokume Gane" and metal forging. As a testament to the moment that changed his life in Italy, Stephen made a 1/12th scale reproduction of Bernini's "Ecstasy of St. Teresa" in solid 18kt gold and Lapis Lazuli, which took 3 years to build and was completed in 2001.

Stephen began on his artistic quest by studying sculpture with Helen Crosbie & George Carlson and later with Bruno Lucchesi. He sought American & European masters in goldsmithing and silversmithing and apprenticed with them for short periods to gain knowledge and expertise. As such, after many years of study and practice, Stephen is distinguished as one of only a few American artisans who practices every aspect of the goldsmiths and silversmiths craft himself. Uniquely, this enables him to produce each piece from start to finish in his own studio, from hand-raising, to casting, fabrication, chasing, engraving & enameling.

As a young man, still mastering the arts of sculpture and goldsmithing, Stephen opened a gallery in Denver, Colorado, Santa Fe, New Mexico, and then Scottsdale, Arizona, and for 20 years enthusiastically pursued a career as an art dealer specializing in one of his passions: 19th & 20th century American Art. By 1993, Stephen had sold almost thirty million dollars of art, negotiated the sale, transfer or gift of 6,000 items, arranged eight auctions, and was a recognized authority on American Art from the period 1850 - 1950. During this time Stephen also sold his own silver art pieces, jewelry and sculpture in the gallery, hallmarked with the name **"O'Meara Sterling."**

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ART IN PRECIOUS METALS

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Stephen O'Meara (pictured left) American Airlines, 1993 - 2000

Stephen moved the "O'Meara Gallery" to Scottsdale, Arizona, in 1988, and became a private dealer in 1993 in order to pursue a lifelong dream to fly commercially. Stephen has been a licensed pilot since the age of 15, and is a licensed flight instructor. At the age of 39 he obtained a degree in Aeronautics from Embry Riddle University, and enjoyed 7 years flying the Embraer 145 for the regional division of American Airlines. Stephen is a qualified pilot in command on the Boeing 747 airliner, Cessna Citation Jet and Lear Jet.

Although engrossed in aviation, Stephen's artistic career was also flourishing at this time. He started producing "The Legacy Collection" - a series of 1/12th scale object d'art replicating famous antique silver and gold from Europe and America, honoring the legacy created by silversmiths of the past. The series, which includes over 300 handcrafted items in solid silver and gold, was so successful that several important pieces were purchased by American museums, received national and international press, and are still purchased today by collectors worldwide. Every piece is hallmarked "**O'Meara Sterling.**"

himself full-time to his artistic career, and asked Amy to be director of sales and marketing.

The couple expanded the **O'Meara Sterling** enterprise by purchasing the remaining antique & vintage equipment necessary to complete Stephen's lifelong ambition: to bring something meaningful to peoples' lives through the ancient goldsmith's art, like Bernini before him. The **O'Meara Sterling** studio was complete in 2002, with the circa 1910 - 1930's tooling refurbished and painted: handmade lathes, engine-turning machines, a full raising studio with over 200 handmade hammers, casting machine, and kilns.

At last, Stephen could culminate 37 years of goldsmithing knowledge and practice into a body of work befitting his experience. Within the next few years, Stephen produced collections of



Stephen Van O'Meara sculpting "Poseidon"

handcrafted silver and gold for the table, luxury gifts, object art and important silver, the scale of which America had not seen in 80 years. Stephen also founded the "Academy of Master Silversmiths" to promulgate and celebrate excellence in traditional silversmithing.

Stephen and Amy opened their own gallery "**O'Meara Sterling**" in Scottsdale, from 2003 - 2006, and now sell Stephen's handcrafted pieces at juried fine art shows across America and Europe, private by-invitation shows in luxury hotels, and from the artist's studio.



Wedding, Stephen & Amy O'Meara

Stephen's work to date has been featured in several publications, including "Rob Report Luxury Home," "Phoenix Home & Garden," "Arizona Home & Design" & "Arizona Society Magazine." His work has won numerous awards, and he has received important commissions from private collectors.

Stephen's other creative endeavors include poetry, musical composition, art history & conservation, classical Latin & Russian language, aviation, biochemistry, botany, comparative religion & sacred music. His heroes are Galileo, Bernini & Filippo Brunelleschi. Among his favorite artists are Sir Lawrence Alma Tadema & Thomas Moran. Stephen is a member of the National Arts Club in New York City, and has served on the boards of over 15 art museums and organizations. Stephen and Amy's first child, Meaghan Rose, was born March 30th 2009.