

Arty Girl: Michael Cajero at Eric Firestone Gallery in Tucson

By Lilia Menconi in [Arty Girl](#)
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Courtesy of Eric Firestone Gallery

"Jorge" by Michael Cajero

You know I wouldn't tell you to haul it to another city unless I thought it was really worth it.

Well, Michael Cajero is definitely worth a trek to Tucson. I originally saw his work at the Eric Firestone Galley in Scottsdale about [a year ago](#). I'll never forget walking in there. It was one of those holy-crap-where-am-I-this-is-amazing knock your socks off moments.



Photo by Nina Carapetyan.

A very pretty girl soaks up the angst at last year's Cajero show.

Cajero is a papier-mache sculptor. He wraps his skeletons of bendable aluminium wire with discarded wrapping paper, corugated cardboard and other used paper products. He then paints or stains the form.

Sounds simple enough, right?

If it's so simple, then why does *this* make me want to cry?



Courtesy of Eric Firestone Gallery.

"Sad Red Dog" by Michael Cajero...someone get me a kleenex.

Cajero's figures communicate so much angst, despair, drive, survival, isolation and heart...name a heavy emotion and Cajero can sculpt it. He uses figures of animals and humans to achieve visceral responses among his viewers. And he does this extremely well.

Cajero was born in Tucson in 1947. He went to U of A for a BFA in painting and then went on to Kent State for a masters in Art History and Sculpture. He's been the recipient of Visual Arts Fellowships from the Tucson Pima Arts Council in 1994 and 2001 and a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship in 1993. All well deserved, in my opinion.

This year's show in Tucson is called "Michael Cajero's Wild Kingdom". In it, he shows his animal sculptures and aims to create a 3D contemporary version of [*The Sleeping Gypsy*](#) by [Henri Rousseau](#), a Post Impressionist masterpiece (and also one of my all-time favorite artists).

Unfortunately, Eric Firestone confirmed that the show will not be travelling to the sister gallery in Scottsdale.

Cajero + Rousseau = get in the f*cking car, we're going to Tucson.

PS

If you absolutely can't make it to this show, you can see a couple of Cajero's pieces in the below-ground floor of the new wing of the Phoenix Art Museum...they are a part of the museum's permanent collection (the Tucson Museum of Art also owns his work) and I spied them there the other night.

Michael Cajero's Wild Kingdom is up until June 13th at the Eric Firestone Gallery, 266 East Congress in Tucson. Call 520-577-7711 or visit www.ericfirestonegallery.com.