



The History of Sand Sculpture

Momentary Glimpses of Artistic Expression

Building sandcastles on the beach is a favorite activity for children and adults alike. Quite often, while walking on our beautiful beaches, you will come across a playful attempt at sand art from a creative child or one made by a true sand-sculpture artist. Some may be huge mounds of sand in the shape of a fish with sculpted fins and scales overlaid with seashells, while others might look like accurate representations of castles surrounded by moats with bridges made of sea grass and turrets with flags made from bird feathers. From simple designs to the most ornate sand art, people of all ages enjoy this creative recreation.

Did you ever wonder how this captivating pastime got its start? Research suggests that the first reference of sand sculpting dates to the 14th century in India. Poet Balaram Das was known for creating devotional sand sculptures. Most common is the belief that in the late 19th century, Atlantic City, New Jersey, was the building ground for the initial artists to become known and be compensated for their work. People strolling along the boardwalk offered money to the artists as they enjoyed the sand show.

These are shown at contests and promotional events that draw thousands of people.

Today, most seaside towns enjoy having playful sand designs on their beaches, while others host major sand sculpting events in which hundreds of participating artists compete against each other to create the masterpiece of the day! In our

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Later in the 1970s, sandcastle contests began to experience popularity as California became the stage for incredible sand sculptures. Gerry Kirk and Todd Vander Pluym of Sand Sculptors International (SSI) established a model for this particular artform by creating and organizing teams of artists that design massive and detailed reproductions of legendary castles and whimsical architecture.



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part of the West Coast of Florida, we have sand sculpting events galore, including the Pier 60 Sugar Sand Festival in Clearwater, the Siesta Key Crystal Classic, the American Sand Sculpting Championships held on Fort Myers Beach, and the International Sand Art Competition that is hosted in Key West. Although most of these events are held in November to take advantage of

the cooler weather, one event, the Siesta Key Amateur Contest, celebrating its 50th anniversary this year, is held the first weekend in May. Since 1972, it has provided beginner sand artists with a venue to hone their skills and build fantastic creations crafted out of sugary white sand. For more information about these events, log on to SandsculptingEvents.com.

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