A Community of Sculptors: Fire Arts, Inc.

By Janice Langland

I am writing from Fire Arts, Inc. in South Bend, Indiana, where a group of 18 sculptors began to look for a single building where they could create a community sculpture studio. It was fortuitous that the city had a cement block and brick building scheduled for destruction, not because the building had any structural problems, but because it had been empty for seven years and it was cheaper to tear it down than to guard it. We were given free use of the building for an indefinite amount of time, but we would probably have two years before we had to get out, maybe more. That was seven years ago, and we recently became its new owners.

The founding sculptors were all bronze casters, although several also made pottery and jewelry. With an 8,000-square-foot building, there was room for all of it, and other potters were invited to join us. Everyone brought whatever tools and equipment they were willing to share with the group, and one of the high school art teachers was able to furnish the place with tables, chairs, shop equipment, and office furniture that her school was throwing out. The community heard about us, and suddenly more useful items arrived from basements and garages—a forklift, a refrigerator and kitchen cabinets, even an oxy-acetylene welder left behind by someone’s former renter. It was an exciting time. Then it got better.

Because we were the new action in town, television and newspaper reporters arrived, and then visitors came for our Tuesday Tours—every Tuesday night at seven, no appointment needed. Schools brought children to see how sculpture and pottery were made. Celebrity is demanding, but it’s also fun.

The advantages of a shared studio can be subtle as well as obvious. You sit in the lounge area wondering how to solve a problem, and four people come out with solutions you hadn’t considered. You’re having trouble with a task, and another artist has just the tool to make your work easier and more accurate. One artist gets an invitation to a juried show, and everyone decides to enter and to share the transportation. You need to pour bronze, so there is always someone available to get on the other end of the shank. The potters decide they need wooden storage shelves, so everyone gets together and makes them in record time. Sharing the expense of tools, sharing ideas and solutions, and sharing career information are all advantages of a community studio. It is well known that people who exercise together will exercise more because they don’t want to let down their friends. The same is true of artists sharing a studio. You show up out of habit, even if you’ve having a bad day, and soon you’re hard at work and enjoying yourself.

A collection of artists in one active space brings good surprises. Someone calls to see if anyone can repair a Civil War statue, and the stone carvers get a job. An artist we’ve never heard of is commissioned to make a portrait and then comes to us for help casting it, and suddenly we have a new friend.

We keep a high profile at Fire Arts, holding community events, having exhibits in our showroom, participating in all community art walks—anything that will bring the public in to see, or make, or learn about 3D art. Recently we have started spring and autumn lecture series and workshops. Because we provide art experiences for the public, the public comes to us when they need an artist.

We have a cement block kiln room that is half for pottery (electric and gas kilns of various sizes) and a bronze foundry. There is a stone carving area, a woodworking area, and a metalworking area with three kinds of welders, sand blaster, grinders, etc. Best of all, we have a large open area in the back of the building that we leave clear for special projects, parties and events.

When Tuck Langland needed space to work on commissions involving 12-foot high figures, he would normally have rented a building for a month, if he could have found one for that short a time. With a community studio, he just had to reserve half the big back area for a month, and the problem was solved. Another sculptor, Beau Bilenki, creates large abstract sculptures (metal, cement, glass, tiles, mirrors) in that space every January-February so he has something to photograph and enter into those shows where you get a stipend for loaning your sculptures for a year. One of our former resident artists was commissioned to paint 150 chairs in bright Mexican themes for a local restaurant, and the
President’s Message

By Carole Murphy

Hello everyone!

There is something wonderful about the members of PNWS, and there always has been. Perhaps it is the art itself that fosters the strong connection, although I tend to think it is something in the artists themselves.

As a group we have always been inclusive, welcoming all to the fold whether they are well-established or just starting out. In our endeavors as an organization, we value the opportunity to meet and share monthly, and we work for and with each other in putting together a newsletter and organizing shows. And beyond this are the many other member benefits that all can partake of on an ever-expanding basis.

This year we will be playing a major role in the Lake Oswego Arts Festival and will be featured in their show publication. And once again, we will be a part of Art in the Pearl.

All of this work depends on the involvement of the members of our family. The Board has decided that it’s time we devoted some of our energy to looking at rethinking, regrouping, rejuvenating, refurbishing and reinventing the very force behind and the direction of PNWS. Circle Meetings are being organized, and we hope that you will join us when you receive an invite to do so. These meetings will enable more wonderful things to happen in PNWS, and we hope that you will become a force behind this movement forward. Together we will be defining the future direction of PNWS and shaping the methods of gathering the energies and finances to create what we collectively envision. Your role will be to come and add your valued opinions and thoughts as we look at what is possible together.

Your prez,
Carole

Upcoming Meetings

All meetings are potluck. If you can’t bring food, come anyway. Portfolios and works-in-progress always welcome! — Rick Gregg

April Meeting — Potluck - BYOB
Saturday, April 23, 1:00 pm
Hosted by Nicky Falkenhayn
(503) 203-7995
Metal & glass, www.nickyfalkenhayn.com
915 SW Briar Lane, Portland (but park on 83rd)
Directions: From town take Burnside west (becomes Barnes Rd.). Just before Oregon College of Arts & Crafts turn right on Leahy, then right on 83rd. Second house on right. Walk gravel driveway to studio.

May Meeting — Potluck - BYOB
Wednesday, May 18, 7:00 pm
Hosted by Jeanne Henry
(503) 232-9473
Clay, mixed media, www.jeannehenry.com
3290 SE Harrison, Portland. 3 blocks south of SE Hawthorne & 5 blocks north of SE Division off of SE 34th

June Meeting — Potluck - BYOB
Wednesday, June 15, 7:00 pm
Hosted by Olinka Broadfoot
(513) 307-0325
Mixed media, www.olinkabroadfoot.com
2505 SE 11th @ Division. In Ford Bldg basement, Suite B024. Ample parking in lot & across street.

July Meeting — Potluck - BYOB
Wednesday, July 20, 7:00 pm
Hosted by Joni Mitchell
(503) 349-7898
Marble & stone, www.jonimitchell.com
14479 SW Arabian Dr., Beaverton
Meet outdoors next to studio.

Laurie Vail’s Newest Sculpture Series

I am working on a series of chickens made from found objects and scrap steel. I don’t know which came first: the idea for the sculpture or my desire for fresh eggs and the plan to acquire real egg-laying chickens. Whatever the case, I am now making chickens that lay eggs. My first chicken laid its egg when you pushed down on its back. The photo shows the second chicken. You open a latch on its back and put in the egg. Then you pull one of the tail feathers, and the egg drops out of the bottom into the dish. The third one, which I am in the process of making, has a round wire basket inside the chicken body and when you rotate the wing and consequently the basket, the egg falls out of the bottom. I got that idea while watching a bingo game, where the balls with the numbers are tumbled about in a rotating wire cage and then one ball is released. I will keep making chickens until it stops making me laugh.
Jocelyn has been badgering me to write about technical items she thinks I KNOW something about, and I've been resisting. In part I've been reluctant to write because I know better than she how little I really KNOW. But I've also hesitated because I didn't think I should dare to expose myself to everyone who has been doing so much more for so much longer than I have.

Well, one of the tasks I've set for myself this year is to “get out there,” so I'm starting with part of a conversation I have with myself often in my studio.

I create works in glass. But I also work in wax and clay and plaster and tape and nails and wire and wood and paint. And sometimes I just work in confusion. I spend time in my studio every day. We built the studio as part of the house, and it's right across the threshold from Jocelyn's office. The studio has all of my tools, materials, partially finished projects, a TV, a radio, a CD/DVD player, several speakers, and a Papasan chair that sits in the corner across from the kiln.

I just devested three pieces this evening, and while I was evaluating (what a nice word) my work, I thought about Carole's request for an article. As I picked plaster from glass, I reviewed my process and, once again, made resolutions to “Do Better.”

When I started working in kiln-cast glass (taking classes, attending seminars, using clay, sand, plaster, urethane, and so on), I soon realized that I could not possibly remember everything my mistakes were teaching me. My studio is like a science lab: There is more to learn (much more often) from the actions that produce unintended results than from the plans that work just like I knew (ha!) they would. Because of this, I keep a Kiln Log.

Because of mistakes I have repeated (and can identify because of my forms), I have created some rules for my studio. I repeat them to myself often. You may not find these necessary, but I find them helpful, and I'll share.

**Put it away. NOW**

If I don't put my tools or materials away now, I WILL look for them later. I or it will be in a different place, and I will need to retrace my actions and their locations and maybe even their timing, rather than just reaching to where it “always is.”

**Label every closed container.**

Labels must be legible (computer printed, if possible) and big enough to read from halfway across the studio. The rule should be that containers of any size, transparency, or shape must be labeled as soon as the first thing is placed in them and before the cover is put in place. This rule is sanctioned by the Washington Underwriters of Sacroiliac Saviors, and the Organization of Washington Workers in Workshops.

More, later…

**Weigh the wax. NOW.**

I usually work in wax because it saves me a step. But if the finished piece is to become glass, I will be adding sprues and vents and, perhaps, even supports that I later carve out of the glass.

If I'm smart, I weigh the finished piece (and record it), I weigh the sprued/vented piece (and record it), and if I'm really smart and NOT lazy, I determine the volume of water it displaces (and record it).

You may wonder why I advise myself to do so much weighing (and recording). It is because my mother was right: "There's many..."
Member News

Ken Patton at Avalon Gallery
Ken Patton is one of three featured artists currently featured at the Avalon Art Gallery in Battle Ground, Washington, where 16 of his kinetic and metal sculptures are on display. The exhibit, which opened in March, runs through April 28.

Centennial Trail Arch
Metal sculptor Joe Powers was selected as the winner of a public art call for an arch over a popular 17-mile walk, biking, and horseback riding trail located in Snohomish County, Washington, 30 miles north of Seattle. The natural setting of the trail inspired Joe’s design of two trees. The sculpture is 17-feet high and 15-feet wide and is made of stainless steel. The design is a mix of both realism and abstraction. Growing up from both sides of the trail, the two trees meet in the middle over the walkway, forming an arch. “I’m very excited about the project and can’t wait to get started,” Joe said. The sculpture is expected to take three months to complete and will be installed in September 2011.

Heather Soderberg Featured on Oregon Art Beat
OPB’s “Art Beat” team of producer Katrina Sarson, audio tech Randy Layton, and videographer Greg Bond spent a day in Cascade Locks watching Heather Soderberg work on clay figures and weld on bronze for a story that aired on February 10, 2011. Heather demonstrated various sculpting techniques and showed how she makes her unique recycled clay. She also took the crew on a tour of her foundry where she showed off her talents as a welder and metalworker. Heather’s episode can still be viewed online: http://www.opb.org/programs/artbeat/segments/view/898.

Welcome New Members!
Diana Rogero (Mekelburg) dianneke@earthlink.net

Eichinger Elected to National Sculpture Society
Martin Eichinger was elected to Fellow in the National Sculpture Society. Fellows are elected from sculptor members by affirmative written ballot of fellows, council members and officers. A professional member of the National Sculpture Society since 2004, Eichinger has been active in their numerous exhibitions over the years, and received the C. Percival Dietsch Award in 2003 for “Best Sculpture in the Round.”
PNWS Members at OPA Showcase
Mark Chapman, Michelle Gallagher, Jeanne Henry, Victoria Shaw, Maria Simon and Sara Swink will be participating in the Oregon Potters Association Ceramic Showcase this year. The annual exhibit will be held April 29, 30 and May 1 at the Oregon Convention Center. It’s the nation’s largest show and sale of pottery, sculpture, garden art, home accessories and other works in clay exhibited in over 150 booths, featuring daily demonstrations, live music, a wine bar, clay areas for adults and children, and giveaways. Open 10–9 Friday and Saturday, and 10–5 on Sunday. Admission is free. For more information visit www.oregonpotters.org/ceramicshowcase.

PNWS Members to Be Featured at L.O. Language of Sculpture Exhibit
Artists selected for the June 2011 Lake Oswego Festival of the Arts, “Language of Sculpture” exhibit were recently announced. PNWS members featured in the exhibit will be Ryan Beard, Mardie Rees, Wendy Dunder, Urlich Parkker, Martin Eichinger, George Heath, Robert GiqLiotti, Isabelle Johnston-Haist, Mike Suri, Robert Foster, Ben Dye, Rick Gregg, Ken Patton, and Alisa Roe.

Maria Wickwire on Art Beat and at Galleries
Maria Wickwire will appear on Oregon Art Beat April 7 at 8 p.m., repeating April 10 at 6 p.m. Her show at Guardino Gallery opens on Last Thursday, March 31, and runs until April 26. Painter, Katherine Treffinger, will be showing with her. Look for Maria’s work at the Springbox Gallery in May, appearing with Maria Simon and H’sin-yi Huang. The opening reception will be held May 13.

Member Discounts
Columbia Art
1515 NE Burnside, Portland 97214
503-232-2216

Georgie’s Ceramic and Clay
756 NE Lombard St., Portland 97211
503-283-1383

LASH Quality Molds and Sculpture Supplies
4702 NE 102nd Ave, Portland 97220
503-251-6959

Stan Brown Art and Crafts
13435 NE Whitaker Way, Portland
503-257-0059

Fiberlay Co., Inc.
3223 NW Guam, Portland 97210
503-228-1222

Quimby Welding Supply
Locations in NW Portland and Tualatin

Mail&Ship
15727 SE Happy Valley Twn Ctr Dr
Happy Valley
503-658-7700

International Sculpture Center
isc@sculpture.org
www.sculpture.org

Southern Oregon Soapstone Co., LLC
541-479-4862
SouthernOregonSoapstone@mail.com
In my segmentation above, a low middle income person is likely to read different magazines and books (okay, that’s so last century, but you get the idea) than the upper income person. The former might read *Willamette Week*, while the latter might read *Portland Monthly*. An undifferentiated approach leaves me either not knowing where to advertise, or needing to advertise everywhere. It will be both costly and ineffective to try to reach all of the potential customers in every segment.

The same goes for where people purchase. One segment might buy all of their art at crafts fairs, another might only shop in exclusive galleries in Carmel, California, or on Maui. Once again, understanding your target market will help you manage the placement of your art to assure that your target buyer has the opportunity to see and purchase it.

A multisegment approach is likely equally infeasible. The multisegment approach implies that you are putting together a distinct marketing mix for every segment served. This is fine for huge companies like Proctor & Gamble, but it’s probably not practical for the common artist.

For practical purposes, most of us are going to use a concentrated approach, selecting one or two target markets, then creating a marketing mix for that (or those) segments.

Remember that the above example is only that. There are literally dozens of ways that you could segment your own market. Students and clients have often said to me, “So, what’s the right way?” The answer is that the right way is the way that works for you and your studio business.

The example below is the segmentation I drew up when last I revised my own business plan. In doing so, I played another trick: assigning unique and memorable names to the segments as a way to help me think about them and their style. This is especially valuable when using the type of psychographic segmentation (segmentation based on motivations and taste) that I did here. Glancing at these segments, it is easy to imagine that certain segments would be attracted to one artist and repelled by another.

**Target market:** Art buyers for home and business

**Segmentation Model:** Demographic by income. Psychographic by style/taste in art with segments as follows:

- **Poster trash** Low income with little attention to quality. Will buy anything that covers walls. Shop for art at Target.
- **Crafties** Middle income. Buy for craft quality rather than artistic statement or investment value. Shop at Saturday Market, craft shops, etc.
- **Kinkaidians** High income art buyers with significant brand consciousness, but little knowledge of the design or history of art. Purchase art at “high-end” galleries while on vacation. Buy Thomas Kincaid, etc.
- **Investors** High income art buyers who buy solely based on potential investment value. Purchase at auction houses or at “high-end” galleries.
- **High crafties** Knowledgeable buyers who seek out the finest in craft. Are not as interested in artistic statement as craft quality and aesthetics.
- **Bleeding edgers** Interested in artistic statement above all. Shun classical art. Artistic statement and design far more important than craft quality or brand.

Once this type of segmentation is performed, the final step in the segmentation process is to develop segment descriptors. Although there is some of that above, ideally I want to know what my target segments read, where they shop (especially for art), how much they spend, where they dine and where they vacation. I’m not looking at the specific individual case but in the generalized segment sense.

Next installment: the marketing mix and its components.
Offered by PNWS Members

Sculpting Classes with Carole Murphy
Sculpt in Pozzolanic stone, a form of aerated cement that begs to be sculpted. Create in a material that is considered “green” by the construction industry and is new to the United States, although it has been around Europe for a century.

Follow your own vision or have that vision awakened in you. The class is kept small enough to make it viable for each student to follow their own personal direction.

To see a video of Carole Murphy’s classes and for more info on classes and student works, go to www.carolemurphy.com/workshop.htm

Three classes will be running at her studio at 1405 SE Stark. Contact Carole at (503) 235-7233 or Sculptor@CaroleMurphy.com.

Creative Process Workshop
Cultivate connections of image vocabulary and style, mine the riches of the unconscious, play and explore, and deepen your artistic practice. Valuable for practicing artists, but no art experience needed. May 14 & 15, 10 am–5 pm, West Linn; $165 includes materials. For more info, please email sara_swink@frontier.com or call 503-638-9890.

Seeking Homes for Sculptures
I’m seeking permanent homes for several sculptures (reliefs and free standing) made by a well-known Bay Area artist, Douglas Holmes. He’s very generously willing to donate them if acceptable homes can be located. The themes of the work range from the environment to the Irish conflict, themes that resonate strongly in Oregon.

Douglas was my teacher and mentor in graduate school in San Francisco during the 1980s. He has a very extensive resume, available on his website linked below. In my humble opinion, Portland would be very lucky to have even one of these works.

www.dholmes-sculpture.org
Available works:
• The Memorials
• Derry Suite
• Mine Balance (See Other Work – 80’s)
• Reliquary, Remembered, with Relic (See Other Work – 70’s)

If you can be of help in locating a permanent installation space, I’d be more than happy to meet with you any time or to send additional information and/or photos.

Renée Oberdorf
503.366.9652 home
503.351.2305 cell
www.aieetareenee.com

Sculptural Welding Class: Oxygen-Acetylene Torch with Rick Gregg
We’ll begin with a brief review of safety and handling of the torch and then cover basic welding, weld filling, armatures, metal building, sculpture forming, metal moving with the flame, sheet metal applications, the cutting torch, surface treatments, and more. Each class is small, limited to three or four students, to allow close one-on-one teaching. It’s fun and it’s intense.

Classes are held at 3601 SE Division, up the short driveway from the Metalurges Gallery in Portland, OR.

The cost is $135. All tools, equipment, supplies, and materials are provided. Wear work clothes—no synthetics.

Ongoing classes are held about every six weeks. Call or email for next class schedule.

I look forward to hearing from you. Please call with any questions any time.

Contact Rick at rickgregg@centurytel.net, (541) 905-6046, or visit www.rickgreggstudio.com.

Summer Workshops in Prague
This is an invitation to join me for a sculpture workshop in the Czech Republic next summer. You will have an opportunity to work and trade ideas with other sculptors from all over the world and to develop or enhance your own techniques. The program will be offered from May 15 through September 30, 2011, for a minimum two-week session, which you may schedule at any time within that five-month period.

Your work will be displayed at a gallery connected to the Jan Deyl Music Conservatory for Blind Children in Malá Strana, Prague with the intent to auction this work off for the benefit of the school.

Participants who come for at least two weeks will visit Cesky Krumlov and other places of interest outside of Prague.

The cost for a one-week session is (US) $950, including unlimited materials, firing and transportation to and from the Prague Airport. Cancellations will be accepted until May 15, 2011, and tuition will be refunded minus a $100 handling fee.

Email me at obroadfoot@gmail.com with any questions you may have and to receive your application.

Olinka Broadfoot, Sculptor
www.olinkabroadfootgallery.com
www.granzstudios.com

THE STEEL YARD
Is Ready to Serve Your Needs
HOURS 8–5 Monday–Friday
8–12 Saturday
Retail and Wholesale Distributors of A Wide Variety of Industrial Products
• ANGLES • CHANNELS • FLATS • STRIPS • ROUNDS • SQUARES • REBAR • EXPANDED • GRATING • SHEETS • PLATES • BEAMS • SQUARE, ROUND & RECTANGULAR TUBING • PIPE • MORE!
BUY • SELL • BARTER • TRADE • CONSIGNMENTS TOO!
6880 NE Columbia Blvd.
Portland, OR 97218
Phone (503) 882-9273
P.O. Box 4828
Portland, OR 97208-4828
FAX (503) 282-7490

www.dholmes-sculpture.org
Jim Ayala

There are several reasons why "The Pearl Ear Ring" is, for me, a breakthrough sculpture. First, the fictional portrait is abstract and somewhat art deco-like in style. This is a significant break from the realistic, figurative sculptures that I have made over the years. The second reason this piece is significant is that it is a relief (two dimensional). Having only worked in 3D, I found making this deep relief surprisingly easy. I was delighted to discover that reliefs (at this scale) require very few of the compositional and structural considerations inherent with “in-the-round” sculpture.

And this piece was cheap to make! After making a mold of the original, I poured the piece in Durham’s Water Putty and Hydrostone. Both are a fraction of the cost it would take to make this sculpture in bronze. And finally, it only took a week to complete, including making the mold and pouring the first piece! Without a doubt, "The Pearl Ear Ring" has been a series of new and positive experiences for me from start to finish!

The original was made using J.F. McCaughin’s Classic Clay, an oil-based clay/wax medium. I used Silicone RTV (available at TAPS in SE Portland) to make a mold. The “mother mold” to support the very flexible RTV silicone was made with plaster. I poured the first piece using Durham’s Water Putty, which is extremely hard and has a yellowish tint. However, I switched to Hydrostone (the most durable form of plaster) because of its white, stone-like tone.

View Jim’s work at www.ayalascultpures.com

Sculpture or Water Fountain? Yes!

I regularly enjoy walking along the Willamette River and recently came upon this whimsical sculpture, uh, I mean, drinking fountain on the East Bank Esplanade (between the Morrison and Burnside bridges). It could certainly have been created by Picasso, or would look quite natural in a Constantin Brancusi exhibit, but it was made, no doubt, by a local landscape construction company. Go take a look (and a sip) from this curious object of art along the lovely Willamette River. (To locate it on a map, follow SE Washington St. to the river.)

—Jim Ayala