Featured Artist: Ulrich Pakker

Ulrich Pakker's stainless steel sculptures derive as much from process as from inspiration. Where one stops and the other one starts is a fruitless conundrum. It is the physical act of creating the work that decides its final form. So when Ulrich doesn't have his hands on the metal for a specific sculpture, he doodles in whatever metal he finds. As the work goes from amorphous piles of metal to the first tack welds, the materials meld with the geometries floating about in his imagination. “It's like a conductor in front of an orchestra and the piece he is conducting is only a few notes on a page. It is up to me, the conductor, to coordinate the medium, the hot flow of metal, the winches, come-alongs, and braces and the numerous tools to make it whole. And like music, it has melody and rhythm, crescendos and refrains.”

Ulrich Pakker explains the creation of Spheresques: So what does a metal artist do when there are no commissions currently in the studio, you are waiting for the next one to start and your hands are idle? You look around the studio for an intriguing piece of scrap. A large piece of 7 gauge stainless steel catches your eye and starts you thinking. Out come the tools. Something is germinating in the nest of cut stainless steel, plasma cutters, and power tool cords. As you cut the shapes, the concept grows, first in your mind and then in your studio. It seems that my subconscious had been working on this germ of an idea for a long time because once it was given a chance, it exploded into life. A confluence of opportunities, materials, time and inspiration created an exciting new series of shapes: In 2012, it was Spheresques. These spherical sculptures multiplied easily until the grouping reflected back the concept of organic growth that instigated the first one.

Resting on pedestals scattered around the studio, the curvilinear sculptures looked uneasy to me, ready to roll off and start on their own journey. What to do? I created the hardware and set them aloft and in motion as a kinetic sculpture.

A short video of the flying, spinning spheres can be seen at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NRcBmPBJJ0Y

In July 2012, these sculptures were accepted into the Bellwether 2012 Biennial: regeneration, not as a kinetic sculpture but as a sculptural installation into Bellevue’s Downtown Park. There the sculptures took root in the lush lawn like hi-tech tumbleweeds, alien metal spores, the seed pods of a gargantuan flora. It was here the sculptural grouping took on the title of Elementals 1, 2 and 3. The grouping was one attempt to answer the question: What is growth and where does it start? It's the original chicken-and-egg question. There is no answer, so as an artist, I created my own. Working with media that is both ancient and next-century, Elementals 1, 2 and 3 represent my reply.

Elementals constitute the precursors of growth, the physical foundations of further evolution and the sources of all energy, be it personal, societal or subatomic. From the simplest beginnings comes enormous complexity. This universal observation has its reflection in the physical world as well as in the world of economics, of relationships, and even of revolutions. A point becomes a line becomes a circle becomes elegant, complicated spheres full of life. These spherical forms could be seen as the most basic manifestation of a living, coordinated structure as well as the seed for propagating these same forms. When we peer through a microscope as well as look at the planet, there is an abundance that is daunting and beautiful. The series reflects our human society's systems as well as the biological systems. I began with simple geometric forms, and developed their inherent complexities.

Elementals 1, 2 and 3 will be on view in Bellevue’s Downtown Park until October 21.
President’s Message
By George Heath, Acting President

As there was no August meeting, I’ll move right on to thanking Joe Pogan for hosting the September meeting. Joe welds creatures together out of forks and wrenches. If you have never seen a barrel of forks, now is your chance. You can also ogle his welding equipment. Thanks, Joe, for having us. Joe’s website is: www.joepogan.com.

I tend to hole up. Literally. I work in the basement. At least it’s out of the rain, and there is a radio, but it’s still a basement and a bit isolating. So a few hours demonstrating at Art in the Pearl was a nice change of pace. This year we had no gallery, just the demo booth. To tell the truth, I think it worked better. It put the focus on us as an organization that educates. I heard several people expressing interest in classes and membership as well as techniques being demonstrated. Rick Gregg was responsible for coordinating and likely did plenty of the physical labor to set up and tear down. Carole Murphy was there the whole weekend as well—still sore but healing. The word stalwart comes to mind for both of ‘em. We looked good due to their efforts. Thanks, also, to all those who demonstrated. We made some excitement there.

The PNWS board is looking for a secretary. Susan Levine is moving out of state. I am most unhappy about that as she has been a rock and a most sensible board member, and she makes good coffee. She has also been the board secretary since Ken passed away. She will be greatly missed. The main task of the secretary is to keep the minutes of the board meetings. In a sense, the secretary serves as our memory. For this job, a laptop and a copy of Word is a big help. Board meetings are held once a month, and there may be an annual weekend retreat where note-taking is also required. Board meetings generally last about two hours, and we are a nice bunch, so it’s not an unpleasant task. Contact any board member if you’re interested.

Wendy Dunder is working on a plan to partner with various regional wineries so that a sculptor or two will have a highly visible display at each participating winery. In this way, people touring the wineries will also be touring sculpture exhibits. Given the demographics of the peoples who tour wineries and those who admire sculpture, this could be an excellent partnership. Please contact Wendy if you would like to be involved. For now, we need people to help put it together. This involves various tasks from record-keeping to visiting wineries. Volunteers will be certain to make some good connections. I began my career in Sonoma, and there is no doubt in my mind about the connection between wine and art.

Finally, I note that only about half of us have an image on the PNWS Website. The cost to members is zero. If you have a piece you’d like displayed, just contact me at: gheath6006@msn.com. It’s easy and you’ll get some good exposure.

Cheers and thanks to all,
George Heath
Acting President

Upcoming Meetings

All meetings are POTLUCK. If you can’t bring food or beverage, come anyway. Portfolios and works-in-progress are always welcome!

September Meeting - Potluck - BYOB
Wednesday, September 12, 7 pm
Hosted by Joe Pogan
5465 SW 196th, Aloha, OR 97007
503 642-3165
www.joepogan.com

October Meeting - Potluck - BYOB
Wednesday, October 17, 7 pm
Hosted by Todji Kurtzman
1915 SE 39th Ave., Portland, OR 97214
503 957-7899
www.todji@todjikurtzman.com

November Meeting - Potluck - BYOB
Wednesday, November 14, 7 pm
Hosted by Jen Ellsworth
15243 Loder Rd., Oregon City, OR 97045
503 866-5228
www.fairyforge.com

New Members

Michael Tieman
503-717-3071
mit@artistsgallerie.com
www.artistsgallerie.com
Bronze & stone

Jessica Staia
Mixed media

Annual Membership Renewal

Thank you to those who have renewed your membership early. We look forward to another great year with our sculpting friends at PNWS. Memberships are good through September and can be renewed on our website under the membership tab.
From the Caswell Gallery Blog: The Art of Lost Wax Casting

It is somewhat a wonder that we still use a material that was discovered thousands of years ago. More astonishing, though, is that artisans and even industrialists continue to use the lost wax method of bronze casting. This method of production is loved by artists, jewelers, and machinists because it maintains even the smallest detail. For you curious ones, here is a little more info about this fascinating process.

The first step in the process is to carve the sculpture. An oil based clay is often used because it will stay pliable and allow the artist to leave the piece for an indefinite amount of time. Most pieces are supported internally by armature, which can be made of any number of materials—special foam, wire or even aluminum foil. The finished clay sculpture looks exactly as the artist intends, with all the details in their final form.

The next step is to make a mold of the original, out of which the bronze will be cast. The clay sculpture is divided into sections and silicon rubber is poured over each section creating a soft layer. This layer is then encased in plaster making it rigid and, in turn, more stable. Referred to as the “mother mold,” it is now the exact negative of the original sculpture. Molds are generally two sided, so when both sides are complete, the mold is opened, and the original clay sculpture is removed. This mold will be used repeatedly, unless it is a limited edition, at which point it will be destroyed once the full edition has been cast.

The mother mold is now ready to receive the molten wax. The melted wax is poured on the inside of the mother mold and rotated to create a uniform layer. This step is repeated using a cooler layer each time, until the desired thickness is reached, usually about 1/8 inch. This dimension also determines the wall thickness of the final bronze. The wax liner is now an exact copy of the original. Once it is removed from the mold, the wax is then “chased” using a heated metal tool, which will help smooth out any unwanted marks or seams. The wax now looks like the finished piece.

A wax tree-like structure, known as gating, is then created by attaching “paths” and a “cup” to various spots on the wax model. The gating provides open pathways for molten bronze to flow and will be removed later in the process.

After the gating is complete, the wax model is dipped alternately into slurry, then into a silica sand material, allowing the piece to dry in between. The process is repeated until the shell is at least ½-inch thick. This is repeated as many as 10 times and can take weeks to complete. The bigger the piece, the thicker the shell needs to be. Once dry, the piece is then placed in a kiln to harden the coating and melt the wax. What remains is the negative space, formerly occupied by the wax, hence the term “lost wax casting”. When the shell is cool, water is poured through to expose any cracks or leaks and then patched if necessary. After this, it is finally time to pour the bronze.

The bronze alloy is melted in a vessel known as the crucible and then poured through the cup into the heated shell. The pouring process takes place very quickly and requires a team of several people. The bronze cools rapidly and may be handled as soon as one hour after pouring. The investment (the hard shell mold) is then broken open, revealing the final bronze. At this point the gating is removed. The piece is sandblasted to remove any residue from the investment; pits are filled and the piece is chased to remove the seam, welding, and other marks. It is worked on in this manner until it looks exactly like the original sculpture. From there patinas are applied and the sculpture is finished.
Member News

Eric Boyer at Annie Meyer Gallery
“The Spectral Body,” an exhibition of Eric Boyer’s sculptures in steel wire mesh, can be seen at the Annie Meyer Artwork Gallery in the Pearl for the month of October. It opens First Thursday, October 4 from 5pm–9pm, and runs until October 28. It features Boyer’s figurative sculptures and abstract pieces alongside Annie Meyer’s paintings and monotype prints. The Annie Meyer Artwork Gallery is located at 120 NW 9th Ave. in Portland.

Michelle Gallagher at Local 14
Michelle Gallagher will be showing her work at the L.O.C.A.L. 14 Art Show and Sale. The show is at the World Forestry Center and runs October 4–7. The opening gala will be held Thursday, October 4, 6pm–9pm. The $10 entry fee benefits Local 14’s scholarship fund and gets you in for a “First Look, First Night, First Bite.” Show hours are Friday 10am–7pm, Saturday 10am–5pm, and Sunday 10am–5pm.

PNWS “Sculptural Conversations” Draws Crowds to Salem

Our PNWS summer show “Sculptural Conversations” at the Bush Gallery in Salem was quite impressive with a varied and wide range of expressions. The show was well attended over its seven-week run. In fact, the opening reception was almost overwhelming: Huge numbers of visitors and a cello ensemble sometimes made it difficult to carry on a conversation. The show was very well-received by Salem and the greater valley basin as a whole. I was impressed with the expanding directions and talent displayed by so many of our members: Jim Talt taking encaustic to 3D, LeRoy Goertz moving into larger abstracts, Tamae Frame just getting more amazing all the time, and on and on. What a great group of artists! What a good looking show!

—Rick Gregg

PNWS Members Featured in 2012 Portland Open Studios Tour
Jeanne Henry, Maria Simon, Sara Swink and Jill Torberson are among the 100 artists opening their studios during Portland Open Studios this fall. Studios are open two weekends, October 13–14 and 20–21, 10am to 5pm. To purchase a tour guide, contact one of the participating artists or visit New Seasons Markets, Art Media or www.portlandopenstudios.com.

Swink Works Selected for 10th Around Oregon Annual
PNWS member Sara Swink has had three pieces accepted in the 10th Around Oregon Annual at The Arts Center in Corvallis. Juried this year by Arthur DeBow of Oregon College of Art and Craft, this statewide exhibition demonstrates the quality and diversity of fine art produced in Oregon. The exhibition runs October 4 to November 17. The opening reception is Thursday, October 11, 5:30pm to 7:30pm. The Arts Center is located at 700 SW Madison Ave. in Corvallis. (541) 754-1551 www.theartscenter.net

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While PNWS didn’t show artwork at Art in the Pearl this Labor Day weekend, a handful of members did demos at our old Flanders and 8th St. location. As usual the event was very well attended, and those of us doing the demos had a great time, talking with the crowd, with each other and just having fun with the whole thing. The three-day event can be exhausting, but it puts our organization out there and was really well-received by the public.

Participating this year were Gonzo Gonzalez, Paige Lambert, Wendy Dunder, Denise Sirchie, Rick Gregg, Lyn Simon, Maria Simon, Carole Murphy, George Heath, and Bob Foster. Didn’t get pictures of everyone, but all had fun.

—Rick Gregg
When my daughter Molly was a little girl, I endlessly read her a cloth picture book about barnyard animals. I also read rhymes and lullabies. The way I remember one of my favorites is:

**Hushabye**

Don’t you cry.
When you wake
I’ll buy you all the pretty little horses.
One will be red, one will be blue, and one will be the color of Daddy’s shoe.

I’m a sucker for sentimental old songs, and I think this one is particularly rueful because it juxtaposes a child’s dreams with the father’s hopes for his child’s happiness. Probably because of my 30 years of teaching geology in northwest Wyoming, I think horses are the most beautiful of all animals. I love to joke about what a great cowboy I am, but I’m not a horseman, and I definitely don’t want to raise them. I just like to look at them, especially in Wyoming, where snow-capped mountains and blue skies surround the vast pastures where they graze. Horses are living, walking, running sculpture—always different, always beautiful.

I am also enchanted by the Native American depiction of horses found in “Ledger Books.” Actual ledger books, that is accounting books with blue and red lines for recording purchases and sales, were given to Indians in white people’s schools and prisons to describe and portray their nomadic lives before they were “civilized.” Indians loved and knew so well the beauty of horses; their depictions of horses are stylized but vibrantly authentic renditions of horses in motion.

I carved these horses out of the kind of dense maple that ads for early American furniture call hard rock maple. It’s not rock hard, but it is much more dense and difficult to carve than walnut. I used maple because the legs are so delicate they would split off if the wood had a less compact grain. This was a difficult carving job because each horse is made from one piece of wood. At least they were all of one piece when they were carved in 1977. Normal dusting and moving since then has meant that I’ve had to glue a few pieces back.

While I was carving them, I realized that it’s the manes and tails that give horses much of the beauty I admire. I knew I could never carve appropriate manes and tails. At first, I thought it was childish of me to use pieces of unraveled rope for the tails and the mane. I was fearful that someone would scoff at my horses and think they were mere toys. But as I worked and reflected on the manes and tails, I told myself: “What the hell. They are toys—they’re toys for me.” I don’t play with the horses in the sense that I pick them up and move them around, and I don’t let anyone else play with them either. But I do play with them with my eyes. Every time I look at them from a different angle, they look a little different, and to me, they look like they are running.

Molly, like every pre-teenage girl, wanted a horse, but she was accepting of the fact that I couldn’t afford to buy her one. And like nearly every pre-teenage girl, Molly also wanted to be a veterinarian. When Molly was a junior in high school, she showed me a brochure describing a private college in Indiana and asked me if she could go there. I told her she could go to any state-supported school in Ohio, but I couldn’t afford to send her to a private college. She said, “I want to go to vet school and I think a private college will help my chances.” I said, “I’ve never heard of this place, and I can’t imagine that it would help you.” “So,” said Molly, “if I can’t go to a good private college, how am I going to get into vet school?”

Not wanting to shatter her dreams, I wrote to Ohio State and asked them what undergraduate schools their freshman vet class had attended. The great surprise was that a large percentage came from the Ohio State College of Agriculture. I didn’t insist that Molly go to Ohio State, but Molly is a very mature and practical person.

Molly ended up majoring in dairy science at Ohio State and after a great deal of hard work, was accepted into vet school as a junior. She graduated with her DVM in 1992. It was while she was an undergraduate at Ohio State that she met Jon Williams, who is now her husband and the wonderful father of my three beloved granddaughters.

When I was a young father, I dreaded that I would be unable to help my children realize their dreams. I’m a grandfather now, and people even tell me I’m an old man, but so far, the future has been has wonderfully kind, and my kids didn’t need me nearly as much as I thought they would.

PHOTO BY ED SOLDO
Art Studio Space for Rent
Share a wonderful SE Portland art studio near the Hawthorne District. The studio is 456-sq-ft. (shared), with windows, a garage door to let in full sun, and garden space behind. There is room for your studio furniture, equipment, kiln, etc.

Very affordable: $212/mo. + ½ utilities (somehow, incredibly minimal!)
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All levels, everyone works at their own pace and skill level while creating an original sculpture.

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Private and small group classes available, too. Classes are held at the sculpture studio of Dean Hanmer on Vashon Island, just a few minutes from Seattle and Tacoma.

Contact Dean at (206) 567-5778 dean@gardenart201.com

Clay Sculpture with Richard Armstrong
Sculpt in clay using the four formative forces (water, volcano, wind, and earthquake). This fun class is guaranteed to open new doors of creativity. Methods inspired by Waldorf methodology, approaching the clay and working without preconceived ideas. Schedule will be determined by interest: possibly evenings or weekend days; for four two-hour classes, pay $20 per class. Limited to four students.

Richard Armstrong, (503) 477-8808 or email armstrongstudio@msn.com.

Maria Simon: Studio Workshops
Carving Bas-Relief Ceramic Sculpture

A carving workshop for all levels of experience. This is the technique I use in my current work. It is fun, compelling, and meditative. Leave your judgments at the door and enter with a willingness to experiment!

Friday, Oct. 26 – Sunday, Oct. 28, 9:30–4 $295 + $40 for materials, tools, and firings

Surface Techniques with Terra Sigillata

Terra Sigillata is the material I use on my work that is quite different from glazing. It yields a soft, sensual gleam but is not glassy. Pre-requisite: previous ceramics experience or past/current enrollment in Bas-Relief Class.

Friday, Nov. 9 – Sunday, Nov. 11, 9:30–4 $300 + $25 for materials and firing

Location: 2216 SE 50th Ave., Portland, OR 97215 (5 blocks south of SE Hawthorne)

Contact: 503-236-8589

Registration: To register, please send a check for $100 to Maria Simon. 2216 SE 50th Ave., Portland, OR 97215.

www.mariasimonstudio.com

Bill Bane Sculpture Workshops
I am planning to do a series of sculpture workshops beginning in September 2012. Each workshop will vary in length and subject matter, beginning with the portrait in clay.

Other workshops will include:
• Carving the portrait in marble using thepointing machine
• The figure from a model
• Alternative mold making
• Alternative casting materials
• Anatomy
• Enlarging

I am an Elected Member of the National Sculpture Society with work included in the National Portrait Gallery of the Smithsonian Institution; National Health Institute; Purdue University; Oregon Health Sciences University; Portland International Airport; City of Portland; City of Anaheim; and Evergreen Aviation and Space Museum as well as many other public sites.

If you are interested in the workshops and would like additional information, please send an email to bbane@mac.com with Workshop in subject line.

Bill Bane
R.W. Bane Studio, LLC
Newberg, Oregon 97132
www.billbane.com

Sculpting Classes with Carole Murphy
Create in a form of aerated cement that is considered “green” by the construction industry. Follow your own vision, even if sculpting is new to you, with help from a teacher that supports you in discovering it.

For more info and to see a video of classes, go to www.carolemurphy.com or use your phone to QR to the website. 1405 SE Stark. Contact Carole at (503) 235-7233 or Sculptor@CaroleMurphy.com.

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Sculpture or Lions in PDX? Yes!

I’ve always admired lions. This gorgeous 8’ x 4’ bronze relief of a group of lions graces the back entrance to the Portland Art Museum. It was made in 1911 by a sculptor with a most distinctive name: Alexander Phimister Proctor (1860–1950). This detail is just a hint of this masterful work located one-half block from SW 10th Ave. and SW Main St. Go check it out and enjoy!

—Jim Ayala

PNWS Sculptor Spotlight

Laurie Vail

I normally work with steel to create my sculptures but recently decided to broaden my horizons media-wise as well as have a little adventure. The medium I chose was terra cotta, and the adventure was a trip to Prague with Olinka Broadfoot (also a member of PNWS) to attend her workshop “Art Making in the Czech Republic.” The workshop was held at a tile factory that provided the clay and studio space. The studio was a 120-year-old retired kiln! “Dancing Chicken” is one of the pieces I made at the workshop. The clay, once fired, is rough and brick red. The surface was primed with milk and then painted with acrylic paint.

View Laurie’s work at www.pnwsculptors.org/juriedvail.htm

Dancing Chicken, 12” x 14”, terra cotta

Pacific Northwest SCULPTORS

4110 SE Hawthorne Blvd #302
Portland, OR  97214

Sculpture or Lions in PDX? Yes!