This was the second meeting we’ve had at Chas Martin’s studio. At the first Chas spoke mostly on materials and structural methods. This time he spoke concerning intent; using 3D space to create suspense or imply a story. I did not take notes so won’t attempt to recreate his words but will say he spoke on how he uses space to tell or imply a story and on the sources of his inspiration. The natural world plays a part in that inspiration as does myth. In Chas’s words:

“We get it when we look at a sculpture. We see the form. And, as sculptors, we see the space too. But are we using space to create questions? I believe a sculpture is successful when the viewer has to ask her/himself, ‘What’s going to happen?’ That’s what’s engaging. That’s what keeps someone’s attention long past the initial mental conclusion of understanding the form. Yes, the form is important. Space is what engages the viewer’s imagination.”

**Upcoming Show:**

Chas Martin has a show at the Multnomah Art Center at 7688 SW Capitol Highway, Portland opening Friday, January 5. Reception is from 7-9:00 pm. He is also giving a talk about “space” on Saturday, January 13 at 11am.

**Upcoming Class:**

Martin is also offering a full day workshop: “Visualization to Realization.” on Saturday, February 10 from 9 to 5pm. There is room for 4-6 participants. He will share his creative process for conceiving and developing raw ideas into something tangible. Through a series of interactive exercises participants will learn through a former creative director’s process how to dissect the question and discard obvious answers to reach truly unique solutions. Everyone will explore their own path.
Welcome New Board Member Chas Martin

As you likely know by now, Isabelle Johnston-Haist, our secretary and Paul Haist, her husband and former newsletter editor, are moving to France, to a country place near the French Alps, a short drive from Geneva. It is a beautiful area and I am most happy for them. They have earned it and go with our best wishes. The unfortunate news is that I am doing the newsletter. We will see how that goes. I hope to make it presentable. I am using one of Paul’s newsletters as a guide and have become very aware of how skilled he was at editing and layout. He made it look easy. Skill will do that.

I want to thank Chas Martin for hosting the November meeting. That was a particularly good one. Further thanks are in order as Chas agreed to our invitation to join the PNWS board and fill one of the two vacancies left by Isabelle and Paul. We are very glad to have him. There is further on that meeting elsewhere in this newsletter.

In addition attendance at board meetings is up. Two or three members in addition to board members have been at the last few board meetings. That I take as a good sign. It certainly is helpful. Craig Dorety attended the last meeting and has agreed to schedule the member meetings. He’s working on a couple now that sound intriguing. Stay tuned.

Attendance at board meetings by members is always welcome either in person or by Skype. It is a further chance to hang out with sculptors. What could be better?

If you would like to write an article for this newsletter please contact me at the email address below. I would to have at least one feature each month that discusses tools, methods and philosophy. What it is it that you do that others might find useful or even revelatory?

Happy New Year to All,
George Heath
gheath6006@msn.com

THE STEEL YARD

Ready to Serve Your Needs

Hours: 8-5 Mon.-Fri.
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!

1745 NE Columbia Blvd.
Portland, OR 97211

Phone (503) 282-9273
P.O. Box 4828
Portland, OR 97208-4828
FAX (503) 282-7490
Tools of the Trade

Andy Kennedy

Some rocks, a fork, a piece of wire, a wooden baseball bat. This is a short list of Favorite Tools for creating figurative ceramic sculpture. The rocks are chunks of concrete and asphalt that fit my hands. They are rough here and sharp there. I have memorized their shapes to intuit the best rock for sculpting the clay in the gesture of the moment. When I am deep in the process, this happens without thought. My name is Andy Kennedy and a lump of asphalt has become magical to me.

I asked our Pacific NW Sculptors president, George Heath, what would he like for an article in the newsletter? His reply suggested that I write about my bat; a gray, weather beaten, wooden baseball bat. He had seen me sculpting with the bat last September at the Fall Festival for the Arts in Troutdale. We were both demo (demonstration) artists there along with Dave Gonzales. To digress a little, I really recommend being a demo artist. I have done numerous demo gigs with Pacific NW Sculptors, and being with the public and your art process at the same time can make your art more authentic, more responsive, and more real.

Dave Gonzo got a few seconds of video of me using my bat and posted it to Instagram. In the video, you will notice that I’m holding the bat in the middle of it’s length, where it is balanced. This allows me to toss it in the air slightly and spin it 180 degrees, like a baton. With that flip the bat adjusts from a club to a prod and there is an easy flow to the gesture. Instead of writing more about this tool or the technique of it’s use, I’m going to attempt to refer to the frame of mind that I have out thinking, because there was no conscious intention to flip the bat. I never practiced this trick or considered ideas such as, “Can I do this?” or “Should I do this?” I have the sense that the thinking is accelerated and nonlinear, guided by my focus on crafting the clay figure. I am alert to states of mind that seem suspended, paradoxical, timeless, and irrational. I believe this is what allows an artist to discover new forms and meaning. This is why our work can be considered priceless, because the value of this work should not be measured by a linear metric.

There is also an elegance and solidity to linear thought. This how we engineer our work to stand up against gravity. A thought building on the thoughts that came before, as in an essay. The focus of this essay is tools. The asphalt chunk and baseball bat are both used for blunt force to shape and texture the clay, but for building structure one tool more than any other helps me to sculpt: a fork. Learning to fuse together clay pieces is a most important technical skill for building clay objects. A fork looks like a tiny hand; consider that roughening and scoring into the clay where it is to stick to other roughened clay is like creating a series if hands that reach out to each other to hold fast the two joined parts. Structural strength only results when the two halves are sufficiently blended together by force and fork. Bonus feature: most fork handles can be used as a knife to cut into clay. A common household object useful for adding and subtracting from clay sculpture; definitely a Favorite Tool.

Homeboy - Andy Kennedy
Art Week, Miami
Craig Dorety

Art should be judged subjectively, right? Art means different things to each and every person. Does it speak to me or you? Or does it match my furniture? I have rediscovered, after over a week in Miami for art week, that there is no accounting for taste...even my own. Art in the commercial world, one might think, must also withstand objective scrutiny: Was the work made with a traditional skill, is there a depth of process that indicates mastery of material, will the materials withstand the test of time or exposure to the public, does the work speak to an important social intersection, etc? And one might also think it common to use objective qualities to help judge an artwork’s commercial value. Apparently this is not the case in Miami during art week....anything goes.

This is the largest commercial contemporary art marketplace in the western hemisphere: galleries, consultants, artists, assistants, curators, museums, and collectors. This is a vastly diverse collections of people, many of whom travel from all corners of the world for Miami’s art week. In addition to the main far, Art Basel, there are some 20 plus other concurrent fairs, aka satellite fairs. While in Miami I walked 42 miles (6 or so a day) and every inch was lined with art. I visited 6 art fairs, 3 private collections, and 2 museums.

My work was displayed at the Untitled art fair, a 2.5 acre tent, directly on South Beach mere feet from the Atlantic Ocean: 136 international galleries showing work of close to 1000 artist. There was a wonderfully colorful installation of Carlos Cruz-Diez’ work outside the entrance and in the entry area. Untitled is a few years old, curated by Omar Lopez-Chahoud, and is a well respected fair. I always see a lot of work I like at Untitled. Scope was right next door, also a large tent, and also on the beach: 140 galleries, similar number of artists. By the time I got to this fair, I was exhausted, so I did not see the whole thing. I also found many artworks at Scope that I liked. The highlight Dorielle Caimi’s (sur)realism.

Pulse Miami, at Indian Beach park, hosts over 40 international galleries. Probably the most intimate of the fairs I visited. Pulse seemed to have more well estab-

lished galleries. I always enjoy this fair. Highlights were Jim Campbell and Yorgo Alexopoulos at the Bryce Wolkowitz gallery.

Art Miami is HUGE. I tried to see the whole thing...and much of it seemed secondary market? There was a lot of very large and expensive work here. I was terribly overwhelmed and I only took one photo: Shigeki Hayashi.

Context is a smaller fair operated by the same people that do Art Miami. I LOVED this fair. I found a ton of art that I wish I could afford. The highlight here was Yong R. Kwon’s ‘The Eternal Flame’ which was simply hammered discs of stainless reflecting light onto a white panel.

Aqua (also run by Art Miami) is a smaller fair that takes place in a hotel of the same name. This fair is somewhat frowned-upon by other fairs....And I can see why. The venue is a bit strange as the galleries show their wares in small hotel rooms bereft of furniture. If you are visiting Art Miami or Context, your pas will also get you
into aqua and there is a free, air-conditioned shuttle that will take you there....so it is worth a visit.

I’ve saved the worst (in my opinion) for last: Nada (New Art Dealers Alliance). Maybe I was in a bad mood or hungry while I was at NADA, but I don’t think that is it. In general I found almost nothing of objective quality at this fair. Just because an artist throws shit...ehem, paint at a canvas, doesn’t make it good art. I saw a lot of ugly and distasteful work here. Much garbage. The true artists at this fair are the galleries and sales people that can sell garbage to “art” collectors. I didn’t take a single photo here.

The Bass Museum of Art was showcasing 3 artists. All three installations had me thinking. Ugo Rondinone made a room full of realistic sad clown manikins with beautifully gradated walls. Pascale Marthine Tayou combined his contemporary installation practice with many of the Bass’ 16th century masterpieces and ancient relics for a somewhat offensive, yet still enjoyable contrast of eras. And my favorite, Mika Rottenberg’s “Cosmic Generator” film. 26 minutes of completely surreal commentary on modern international trade and plastics. I haven’t seen a film this good in a long time, and there is no dialog.

The Perez Museum hosted a huge collection of Cuban art. My favorite was a “painting” by Yoan Capote made of over 550,000 rusty fish hooks.

In addition to the fairs and museums, I also visited 3 private collections. I won’t describe the de la Cruz or Rubell Family collections, because I wasn’t excited by them. The Margulies collection, however, blew my mind. They had two enormous installations by Anselm Kiefer comprised of giant paintings juxtaposed with many tens of thousands of pounds of reclaimed concrete. I highly recommend a visit to this collection if you are ever in Miami.

---

International Sculpture Day - Mark Your Calendars!

Meetings in the Works

Board Meeting:
7:00 pm Wed. January 17th at Chas Martin’s studio,
7830 SW 40th - (503) 459-1009

Member Meeting:
Time and Date TBA - Meeting will occur at Manifestation.
2020 SE Bush St, Portland, OR 97202