Sculpture and Drawing
Patrick Gracewood

Sculpture takes a great deal of time to create. How do you think through a sculpture? Not just the mechanical/technical process, but the important aesthetic work of meaning. What do you want it to say, and how do you shape a physical object to have emotional resonance for others?

Drawing sharpens both your eye and your hand. To be able to record what you see takes practice. A lot of practice. If you’re a sculptor, drawing also helps you understand what you WANT to see. Drawing becomes the conversation between you and the muse to discover what the art wants to be.

Detailed drawings can be a blue print to follow so that the finished sculpture looks like the original rendering. Drawing can be a detailed map for sculpture, but it’s not the three-dimensional territory. A flat two-dimensional drawing can restrict your spatial thinking. As a sculptor, it’s your job to fully explore every angle, facet and form, even if it’s a bas relief.

These days, I use water colors to think through new sculpture. It’s so much easier to make a bad drawing than it is a bad sculpture. Don’t like it? Make another drawing. Quick drawings and loose washes of color keeps my thinking flexible, open to different possibilities and meanings. Carving feels playful, more exploration than execution. Some of that looseness even makes it all the way through into the finished work!

Look at the drawings of sculptors to see how they use drawing to think through their sculpture. Rodin’s sketches are loose washes of color with lightly drawn ambiguous lines. Think about how the faceted surfaces of his bronzes flicker and bounce light and catch shadows.

Michaelangelo’s cartoons are often detailed blueprints for finished work. Look and see how he’s drawing how light hits a form, he’s thinking about volume and surfaces.

Consider your materials. If you use a pen or brush, you train yourself to see lines, through lines, contour lines, etc. If you’re using a charcoal or soft pencil, you attune...
There it is. Another year gone by. The holidays begin with a frozen turkey stuffed in the freezer.

It is time to begin thinking seriously about elections. Not the one we just had but the one wherein we chose our board members. I would like everyone to seriously consider serving on the PNWS board for a term or two. There is some work involved but there is also reward. That reward while including gratification also includes a broader view of sculptural skills and intent that comes from a closer association with our members and their work. This coming year also promises excitement as we will be involved in the planning for the International Sculpture Conference coming to Portland next fall. That will bring attention to us both as individuals and as an organization. How we present ourselves will be critical.

Thank you Jason Jones for hosting our October meeting. Jason is a stone carver and art restorer whose cavernous studio was once used to build ships. He was happy to answer all our questions and discussed the qualities of various types of stone. He had samples of work in marble and slate and some pieces of raw stone that showed the effects of acid rain on marble. The effects happen quickly even here. The issue is much worse on the East coast. Chose slate then for your gravestone and rest easy.

Member Discounts

Artist and Craftsman Supply
Firebird Bronze
Pearl Packing
Farwest Materials (See your membership packet for password)
ADX
Courtney Frisse Photographer
Fiberlay
George Heath Websites and Online Portfolios
Jenny Stoffel Websites and Online Galleries
Gateway Crating and Packaging Inc.
Southern Oregon Soapstone Co.LLC
Stephen Funk Photography LLC International Sculpture Center
Georgie’s Ceramic and Clay Co. Bronzestone

Contact information for the listed companies can be found at:
http://pnwsculptors.org/discounts.htm
your eyes to nuance of form, shadows, volume. What medium draws you?

Each drawing is another opportunity of composition, editing and thinking. As you draw, you shape HOW you see and WHAT you see. As a sculptor, drawing sharpens all your skills so you can make what you WANT to see happen in three dimensions.

The ISC Conference was fun with tons of interesting people from all over the world! I think about 250 or so, but less than last year. I saw many of the same people that I previously met in Kansas City. Julian Voss-Andreae goes regularly to these things, knows more people than me so is fun to hang out with him in the bar late at night! It took place at Moore College in downtown two blocks from our hotel in the center of Philadelphia. See https://www.sculpture.org/philly2018/

One of my favorite presentations was a round table discussion by a group of artists from Ghana that created a contemporary art college (without walls) called blaxTAR-LINES that goes out into their communities and makes stuff from whatever they can collect. Then they give it back to their community. They have been transformative across Africa and produced El Anatsui an amazing contemporary artist that makes art that is reminiscent of African design themes only made of crushed beer cans and stitched to create giant tapestries (look him up). He now sells work in America for $500,000 and up.

Another panel discussion featured four professors that tried to define the limits of what is still considered sculpture. I think they agreed there wasn’t one even though they didn’t agree. They let/encourage their students redefine the boundaries of “art in space.” They acknowledged that college art programs are a privileged sanctum completely removed from the reality of making a living through art. And that’s a good thing.

Philadelphia has a ton of public art including over 3000 building murals that were everywhere and, as a result, very little graffiti! I guess graffiti artists are too busy doing contract work for the Philadelphia City Mural Project. Lots of giant old industrial building have fallen into the hands of the creative community, unlike Portland where our old buildings get swept up by developers and beer companies.

One session featured the dynamic people that were creating their public art expansion and encouraging much in the non-public realm. One of the receptions featured the ISC’s regular 8x8x8 art show featuring 40 or so small sculptures of every sort. fun and went well with cocktails and horderves. Start thinking about what you want to put in this one. Prices ranged from $7.50 to over $300! some NFS.

My biggest disappointment I had is that I missed the bus going out to The Seward Johnson Atelier and Grounds for Sculpture because I got carried away with a wonderful conversation with the group of professors that were trying to identify the definition of sculpture. Damn, too many good things at once!

I hope we can help the ISC identify similar presenters and tours of our (hopefully) dynamic sculpture community next year when ISC comes to Portland. Thanks to Julian’s persistent badgering of the ISC leadership and indicating to them the positive and special qualities of Portland. I guess we have one year to make Julian honest! They have not yet identified a venue for the October event. PSU was the prime choice but the administration there has not been very helpful to getting that coordinated even though the PSU sculpture department has been trying to get it to happen there. The ISC is frustrated with PSU and is exploring other options, maybe PNCA or the Portland Art Museum. It looked to me that the volunteers had a blast helping to create the event and we will have opportunities to do the same here. I’ll let you know more when I know more. Or better yet get on the ISC info list, https://www.sculpture.org/portland19

Comments

Our strategy will need to show how Portland is different, unique, colorful, welcoming, non-judgemental. And it is. To me it’s all about the human connection. We will make people welcome here and show them a good time. Some bottles of wine will go a long ways.

Julian Voss-Andreae

There are certainly things we can learn from Philadelphia but I’ve a hunch some good stuff gets plowed under there as it does here. A nod here to Carton Service’s Ken Unkeles who has taken a WWII shipyard and turned it into art studios. Still it is a constant battle. There is something undefinable here that attracts creative minds. Those minds in turn feed that undefinable something and there you go.

George Heath
Echinoderm with an Idiot Grin

Unlike us, Echinoderms - that is starfish, sea urchins and the like - have rotational symmetry. We, that is, us’n, have mirror symmetry. We look mostly the same on both sides. One side mirrors the other but if we are rotated we look different unless we are fortunate enough to have faces all the way around. Speaking of faces echinoderms don’t have faces, at least not on top and not much of one undeneath.

This is that pesky artistic license thing. It’s a statue and I can do what I want.

I think its too bad humans don’t have rotational symmetry. We could have eight legs and one long eye that went all the way around. I think that would be cool.

Maxim Zhestkov

Given how realistic computer animations have become it was just a matter of time before someone would do sculpture that is not constrained by material restrictions. I watched “Element” for some time before realizing it was digital. Please copy and paste the following link in your browser:

http://www.zhestkov.com/

Member Events

Mutek - Mexico City
Mutek is dedicated to the development of digital technology applied to the arts.

Member Craig Dorety will present the “Chamber of Cerebral Geometry” on Nov. 23 and 24th. For a sample follow the link below:


Guardino Gallery
Little Things
2939 NE Alberta
Portland, OR
Nov. 23 - Dec. 30
Opening Nov. 23rd. 6-9pm

This year’s Little Things show includes works by members Chayo Wilson and George Heath

Crystal Heart Gallery & Boutique
269 East Main St. Hillsboro

The Crystal Heart Gallery is currently showing 11 works by member Katie Salos in conjunction with their grand opening.

Calendar

December Board Meeting
December 12th at 7:00pm
George Heath residence

November Member Meeting
Patrick Gracewood studio.
(See cover article)

For details see:
http://pnwsculptors.org/calendar.htm

Due to the holidays there will be no December member meeting or newsletter.

Newsletter Issues

Given the attention that is forthcoming to the Portland sculpture scene it’s occured to me that a newsletter feature that highlights member’s works might be a good thing. We have a targeted audience in our subscribers and a simple page featuring pictures could be an effective way to reach potential patrons. To that end please feel free to email me images along with titles, medium and size info. Do shoot your piece in front of an uncluttered background. I can also take images from your website but they must be at least 1000 pixels on the long side. I’m certainly going to take advantage of this myself as you can see from the awful cartoons I’ve been including. Think of this as a quick way to get your work in front of targeted with little or no effort. That is not to say I don’t want articles. I certainly do and I will make the newsletter as long as need be to include all I receive.

The next newsletter will be the January issue.