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Figurative Sculpture and Social Commentary.

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“Figurative Sculpture and Social Commentary”

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Masters of Art in Sculpture

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by
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ABSTRACT

Figurative Sculpture and Social Commentary

by

Marty Henley

This thesis supports the Master of Arts exhibition entitled “Figurative Sculpture and Social Commentary” at the Slocumb Gallery located on the campus of East Tennessee State University in Johnson City, Tennessee, from April 10 – April 14, 2006. This is an exploration of human form in sculpture and the use of representational human form to make comments about society.

DEDICATION

For my wife, Bonnie Henley,
you are my inspiration and the pillar that gives me strength.

And to my children, Ben and Rose Henley,
You keep my eyes filled with Wonder.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to thank my committee; Catherine Murray, who has given me the opportunity to explore my ideas and techniques and helped me find direction, David Dixon, for always giving me an objective set of eyes and a different point of view, and Ralph Slatton.

Thank you to John Brown for sharing your figure sculpting techniques

Thank you to Malcolm Harlow, Jr. and Gale Bowman for the skills you taught me and the wisdom you shared.

Thank you to my Family for always being there for me.

And, finally, thank you to my Grandmother, Blanch Henley, you always believed in me

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INTRODUCTION

Figurative Sculpture

Figurative sculpture has been produced by humans for thousands of years. It has been used to create religious icons, to illustrate stories or events, as a means of remembrance, and to convey ideas. Great masters like Michelangelo, Donatello, and Bernini shaped materials into human likenesses that have a profound effect on the viewer and originally inspired me as a figure sculptor.

The majority of figurative sculpture from antiquity is based on religious deities or illustrates religious events. Michelangelo's "Pieta'" depicts Christ lying in the lap of Mary. The many statues of "David" by various artists depict a scene from the bible in which David meets Goliath in battle. Churches and temples all over the world have used figurative sculpture to convey ideas and tell stories. Figurative sculpture is also used as a tool of remembrance. We know what certain historical figures looked like because they had commissioned portrait busts and full figure statues. Figures adorned tombs and graves reminding the viewer of the life that the sculpture represents.

Figure sculpture used to be the pinnacle of sculptural skill and mastery. Now it is primarily considered to be a decorative art for figurines, toys, and fountains. However, there are contemporary artists that are forging new ground with figurative sculpture. Artists like Ron Mueck, Judy Fox, Duane Hanson, and others are still exploring new ideas and materials when presenting figurative sculpture.

CHAPTER 2

THE EVOLUTION OF MY WORK

Does it mean anything?

Figurative sculpture has fascinated me since I was very young. When I thought about sculpture it was figurative sculpture that came to mind. Imagine my surprise when I started college and I was told my sculptures were too figurative. I couldn't understand what that meant. This caused me examine my work and other forms of artist expression. I still loved figurative sculpture and tried to find out how to more effectively create it. During this search I found that some of the most talented figure sculptors around today work sculpting toys, figurines, conceptual maquettes for the movie industry, and for theme parks. I was hooked. I started reading as much as I could find about their techniques and processes. Over the years, I have discovered that even though these sculptors are unbelievably talented, they are looked down on by fine art community. I couldn't understand the difference, why would sculptures created with such great skill not be considered art. It is a huge question that could be debated till the end of time, but for me I think it is because of the content of the sculpture. It is a question that is relative to a discussion I had with Malcolm Harlow, Jr., a master stone carver. We were discussing the difference between a stone carver and a stone sculptor. Stone carvers are trade workers who have a skill and produce carvings based on designs by other people. Stone sculptors have an idea and convey that idea in stone; sometimes they sculpt an idea in clay and have a stone carver reproduce it in stone. In both cases it is the idea that is being presented that separates fine art sculpture from product.

This brings me to my current art work. When I started the master's program at East Tennessee State University, I had originally planned to create movie style concept maquettes. I had planned to work with the human figure produce to fantasy style figures. But what did the sculptures have to say? Nothing! So I started to try and find my voice in figurative sculpture. I looked at what figurative sculpture had been and what it had

become and where I wanted to fit in. The more I studied figurative sculpture the more I noticed that a majority of it represents what is referred to as the "Ideal Human Form". So who picked this ideal human form? I don't look like that, as a matter of fact most people don't. Vicki Goldberg says that it shows us what we have dreamed of and how we would reconstruct ourselves if we could (Goldberg 8). I feel that the ideal form is a learned image. When bombarded with images of this form for hundreds of years people will start to accept this from as perfection. Then at some point I made a correlation in my head between this "Ideal Human Form" and today's marketing campaigns for clothing, cosmetics, beer, cars, movies, toys, etc. People are handed this idea and most people can never achieve it. At that point I decided to make figurative art work that commented about the "Ideal" and the "Real". In my current work I address the unrealistic self-image that toys for girls place on women. I also address our current society's ad campaigns directed at self-esteem and self-image. In my current works I attempt to present the human form exactly as it is, unique and different. In my work there is no ideal, I reveal only the natural human body in all its perfect imperfections. I refuse to deal with the average, I address the uniqueness that everyone has. I feel that it is this past obsession with the "Ideal" that has led to the types of," don't you want to fit in?" ad campaigns of today.

In my work I'm not trying to discount any artist who deals with ideal or athletic human form, I am simply trying to look at what is truly natural. Humans are fat, thin, tall, short, and everything in-between. It is this uniqueness that I find so fascinating. In this work I am trying to find myself and my voice in the world of art.

Chapter 3

FIGURATIVE INSPIRATION

Influences

I have been inspired by the works of every figurative artist that I've seen. With every artist I learn a new technique and new ways of looking at the figure. Some artists have had more of an impact on me than others, but they have all helped shape my point of view, style, and technique.

The Old Masters

The masters of old are the foundation of my love for figurative art. The works of the old masters were initially the first images of sculpture I was exposed to as a child and teenager. Artists such as Michelangelo, Bernini, and Franz Xaver Messerschmidt solidified my fascination with sculpture. During my time as an undergraduate at East Tennessee State University, I was reintroduced to these masters in Art history survey II. During one of the slide lectures we were shown close up images of Michealango's *Pieta'* and I was overwhelmed to the point of tears. Prior to the history class I had started to learn how to carve stone. When I saw the *Pieta'* again for the first time, I saw the delicate cloth draped around the mother of Christ, I saw the weight of this dying man on his mothers lap, and I for the first time saw the soft touch of skin on skin. To me the human anatomy is one of the hardest things to attempt to successfully execute. Michelangelo could not only create emotionally and physically perfect humans, but he

Fig. 1

Michelango
Pieta'
1498-1500
Marble
Saint Peter's Basilica

also did it in the most unforgiving medium I have ever encountered. At this point the flame of my passion for the human form was truly kindled.

At this time I was also introduced to Bernini. In Bernini's work I was amazed with the motion that he was able to capture in the living stone. Bernini's *David* was hard for my mind to fathom the first time I saw it. David appeared to be locked in a time-warp; he is ready to sling the rock that changes his life forever. This was the first sculpture that actually made me feel as though I was on the field of battle with the soon to be king.

Fig. 2

Bernini
David
1623-1624
Marble
Galleria Borghese,
Rome

I was introduced to the works of Franz Xaver Messerschmidt by 2004 Basler Chair Mel Chin. I was instantly fascinated with the bust that he had sculpted. I found it most intriguing that his previous works were quite tame in comparison. He sculpted portrait busts and religious commissioned pieces. In the last six years of his life he sculpted the 47 busts in different materials all with distorted faces. One of the reasons this work most intrigues me is not the craftsmanship of the pieces but the uniqueness of the subject matter. All classical work I had seen up till this point was majestic and beautiful, this work was wonderfully disturbing. Messerschmidt had cast off the accepted and experimented with the contortions of the human face and mind. Messerschmidt helped me find focus in my work, his faces were "Real" full of the harsh reality of life, not static portrait busts that are used to remember the self -absorbed.

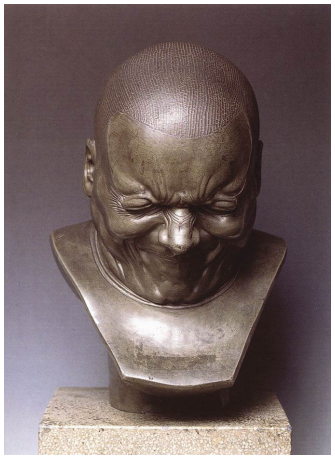

Fig. 3

Messerschmidt
An Arch-Rascal
After 1770
Tin-lead alloy
Osterreichische
Galeria Belvedere,
Venna

Artists like these captured my attention with the superior technical mastery of the medium that in which they worked. It is the attention to detail and technical

craftsmanship that still holds my attention in my current work. It is the work of the old masters that make me challenge myself to always improve my skills and abilities.

Contemporary Influences

My contemporary influences are diverse from sculptors in the fine arts to toy sculptors to sculptors from the motion picture industry. As I have researched some of the contemporary artists who have inspired me, I have discovered that some of the industrial sculptors are also amazing fine artists. Some of the sculptors who have had an effect on my direction and abilities are artists like Ron Mueck, John Brown, Judy Fox, Mark Alfrey, Gabe Perna, Jarrod and Brandon Sheflett, and Jordu Shell. All of these sculptors have given me the desire to work harder and experiment with different materials and processes.

Seeing Ron Mueck sculpture was my first experience with super-realism. It was the first Contemporary figure sculpture I had seen with this level of detail and emotional life. Ron Mueck's work gave me hope that my work was valid in the fine arts community. Until this point I felt that if I was going to create figurative sculpture I would be forced into the toy and movie industry. It was while researching the artist that I discovered that he had once worked in the motion picture industry for Jim Henson. Mueck's work captivated me more with each new piece I discovered. Heiner Bastian wrote of Mueck's work, "Our experience of Mueck's illusion of life is more rewarding and prolonged because we are willing participants in the deception. In fact, our amazement is predicated on our awareness of the deceit, and our pleasure lies in finding it out. We relish the contradictory message of eyes and brain, the question of our senses." (Bastian 29). It is this questioning of the senses that I find most interesting, he is able to

Fig. 4

Ron Mueck
Mother and Child
2001
Mixed media
9 ½ x 35 x 15 inches
Image courtesy of
James Cohan Gallery

cause the viewer to question their own reality, and it is that quality I hope to instill into my own work.

John Brown works for the motion picture industry creating concept art and creature sculptures. He is also an accomplished figurative sculptor. John Brown has had the greatest impact on my sculptural process. After years of searching for instruction in the art of figurative sculpture I discovered John's instructional videos. These videos helped me refine my technique. The thing that most interested me about John's work was that he had the ability to work in the ultra-high detail level of Ron Mueck, but in his fine art pieces his sculptures were very loose. In these pieces the viewer can see finger prints, tool marks, and blobs of clay. Although these sculptures are not super-realistic they have a wonderful sense of motion and emotion. It was John Brown who caused me to question super-realism. If you have the ability to create super-realistic sculptures, why not create all your figurative sculptures that way? Nancy DeCamillis wrote, "By keeping a loose hand, Brown brings life to his work. He approaches a project "…by not over thinking what I'm working on. I use a lot of fluid strokes." He feels that it is important to learn anatomy than forget it. (DeCamillis 32). This was a turning point in the direction of my art work. It made me question why I was striving to be able to create super-realism. This revelation also led to the introspection of the subject matter of my work. What was I trying to say and how would I say it?

Fig. 5

John Brown
EXALTATION
2004-5
Bronze

Photograph by John Brown. Used with permission of John Brown

The artist Judy Fox helped me focus. Until I had seen Judy Fox's work, most figurative sculptures I had seen dealt with motion, form, and weight. Judy's work is figurative sculptures of mostly nude young children. Although her work depicts children and some adults, they are representations of fictional and historic adults in their youth. Her work has been very controversial; some critics even attach a sexual connotation to the sculptures. This is interesting to me because there is nothing sexual about the pieces, only nudity. Barbara Wally writes, "Judy Fox's figures are "tongue-in-cheek" messengers of a global history of culture and ideas. There is a specific provocation in the presentation of artless childless bodies in association with ambiguous gestures and attitudes. This body language with elitist, intellectual and magical content implies a knowledge of the world that lends to the figures a special charisma." (Wally 42). It is in Fox's work that I was first able to look past the sculpture of the child and see the future circumstances that lead to the adult version of the sculpture. It is the potential of each of the children that open my eyes to the possibilities in conceptual figurative sculpture.

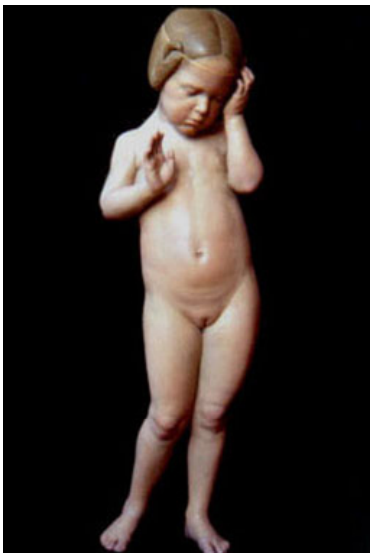

Fig. 6

Judy Fox
Virgin Mary
1993
original terra cotta with casein paint

Photographed by Adam Reich. Used with permission of PPOW

The remaining artists on my list work in different industries. Mark Alfrey and Jordu Shell work in the motion picture industry. Gabe Perna and Jarrod and Brandon Sheflett work in the toy and collectable industry. These sculptors each have unique styles and always inspire my point of view. These sculptors also are always very helpful about discussing processes and techniques. This is a trait that I have found to be very rare. Most artists in these industries closely guard their secrets. These artists have broadened my understanding of the human form, materials, mold making, and process. It is because of artist like these that I have been able to hone my sculptural abilities.

All of these artists have given my work a solid foundation on which to more successfully present my ideas through figurative art.

CHAPTER 4

METHODS AND PROCESSES

During my time at East Tennessee State University I have had the opportunity to experiment with many new materials and techniques. I have experimented with construction methods of armature construction. I was introduced to materials such as Chavant, p-40, and Castilene. I also developed an understanding of flexible mold making techniques and casting processes. The pieces in my show are the culmination of these methods and processes.

Armature

Armatures for figurative sculpture usually consist of a semi-ridged wire of some type, most commonly aluminum. The wire is measured out to the proportions of the human body. The artist would then attach this armature to a board with a supporting pipe or rod. The armature would then be covered with clay. The problem with this type of armature is that while sculpting the human figure in certain poses areas become very hard for the artist to reach with the tools. Also during the process of casting some parts of the sculpture would have to be cut and removed. The sculpted clay would have to be cut into and the armature wire cut. This process can be tricky and destructive.

I have learned a process for creating telescoping armatures courtesy of John Brown (DVD Sculpture 1: The Character Armature) available at http://www.thegnomonworkshop.com. With this type of armature, it is constructed so that specific parts of the armature can be detached and reattached during the sculpture process.

When I start a sculpture, I determine the pose I intend the figure to be in. Then I determine the body style of the sculpture. The human references I have used for the sculptures in my show have came from a web site for artists call http://www.3d.sk it is a web site that provides human references for artists and game developers. Once I have

selected my model, I use a program called computer Photoshop to arrange the front, sides, and back images. Then I scale the image to the final size of the sculpture. The models are in a neutral pose in the images, so it is easier to create an armature. These printed images are called an armature map. This type of map can also be created using a scale drawing. Once the image has been printed, I draw lines on the image to represent the bone structure of the model.

At this point I decide what parts of the sculpture need to be removable on the armature. For this analysis the armature will separate at the shoulder. I then measure out the aluminum wire from the shoulder joint to the bottom of the foot. Then I loop the wire back and double the length. At this point I use a cordless drill to twist the wire into a single wire. This gives the wire more strength. Then I use a small gauge Floral wire and measure from the spine to the tip of the middle finger. Here I measure a little past the tip of the finger. Then I loop the wire back on its self the full length of the wire five times. This wire will be twisted as the spine and leg wire was. When twisting the wire I grasp the five wires at the area of the wrist, once twisted the single arm wire will have five small wires protruding from the end that will be used for the fingers. I measured the wire past the end of the finger because once the five wires are twisted together their overall length shrinks. At this point I use to different sizes of brass tubing to make the removable arm joint. The smaller brass tubing should slide easily into the larger piece. I then measure the larger piece of brass tubing to the length of the clavicle on the armature map. I cut the clavicle wire on the armature so that it is half the length of the clavicle brass tubing. Then I use two-part epoxy putty to secure the brass tubing to the shoulder portion of the armature. I then insert the smaller piece of brass tubing into the attached tubing and mark the depth of the small tubing. I cut the small tubing so it fit perfectly inside of the large tubing. Here I measure the arm wire so that the small cut brass tubing coincides with the shoulder joint. Then it is glued into place with the two-part epoxy putty. Now the arm portion of the armature can be removed at any time of the sculpting process to access hard to reach places and can be removed for mold-making. This process can be used on any wire armature for clay sculpting.

Sculpting

The sculpting process varies from material to material. The one constant for me in figurative sculpture is the use of armature maps. The armature map that was printed to measure the wire for the armature is also used to take measurements off of the model. The image was printed exactly to the scale of the sculpture, so measurement taken from the image of the model should coincide directly with the measurement of the sculpted clay, with minimum variation. Variations would be caused be change in pose. I learned this process from John Brown's Sculpture 2 DVD.

While using the image as a guide to the size of areas of the body, I roughly create a representation of the skeleton in clay over the armature wire. I then add the muscles over the bone. This allows me to better understand the folds of skin and fat the will fall over the muscles and bones.

Finally, I add the surface layer of the sculpture; this is the layer that the viewer will see. All the hard work of building the skeleton and muscle system only helps to produce the illusion of reality for the viewer. The surface treatment of the clay is only partially the surface of the final sculpture. After the casting of the sculpture the final surface treatment will addressed.

Clay and Wax

The clays that I have experimented with while studying figure sculpting at East Tennessee State University are Chavant NSP Hard, Chavant NSP medium, Le Beau Touche, P-40, and Castilene. Each clay or wax has its own unique properties that make it more or less desirable for my application.

Chavant NSP is an oil-based clay. Chavant has been producing oil and wax based clays for over 100 years. (chavant, inc. corporate website) This clay comes in different hardnesses, soft, medium, and hard. The clay also is available in brown and a gray-green color. The (NSP) in the name refers to "Non-Sulphurated Plasteline" most plastelines use sulphur to prevent the clay from drying out. The sulphur in these types of clay can cause

problems in the mold-making process. The sulphur in the clay can cause silicone mold-making material to not set up. This can destroy the sculpture and the mold unless the sculpture is coated with a sealant. The Chavant NSP clay has no sulphur, so this problem is avoided. For most of my sculptures of 16 inches, I prefer Chavant NSP Hard. This clay requires special treatment before it can be used. The clay blocks are extremely hard and have to be heated to make the clay more maluable. Once the clay is softened with heat, it can be worked onto the armature very quickly. The property of this clay I find most effective is its ability to be manipulated with temperature. For instance, the clay surface can be melted to produce textures or to smooth rough areas down with an alcohol torch. Once an area is heated, it becomes very pliable this can be counter acted by turning a can of Air Duster canned compressed air upside down and spraying the liquid directly onto the clay. By doing this the clay becomes instantly hard and can be touched without fear of damaging the clay surface. Chavant NSP Hard when at room temperature is hard and sculptures made with this clay can be moved and manipulated without harming the sculpture. Chavant NSP soft and medium is much more pliable and can be damaged easily. The softer clays are best used for larger sculptures that will not be moved or touched often.

Le Beau Touche is also produced by the Chavant Corporation. This clay is sulphur free as well I found this clay to be too soft for me to work with at room temperature. This clay would be excellent for large sculptures. For my purposes of sculpting figures at 16 inches tall, the clay remained too soft. This caused damage to the detail of the sculpture when moving the piece.

P-40 is DeAired clay. This clay is also produced by Chavant. P-40 is used by automotive, marine, aerospace, and consumer product designers; it is harder than Chavant NSP Hard, and must be heated to get it into a workable consistency. Unlike Chavant NSP Hard, P-40's surface does not react very well to the open flame of an alcohol torch. This limits some of the effects that are possible to achieve with Chavant NSP Hard. This clay has some excellent working and surface qualities. However, it is more difficult to work with compared to Chavant NSP Hard.

Castilene is a sculpture and protyping compound. Like Chavant NSP, it also comes in soft, medium, and hard. This material is very light and doesn't need an armature

when sculpting thin areas. This material is use extensively in the toy industry. My first reaction to this material was negative. Castilene is much harder than Chavant NSP Hard and must be heated to get it into a workable state. I had a hard time finding information about how to use this material at first. The first instruction I found said to heat the castilene in the microwave. After heating the castilene I found the outside of the material was still hard and the inside was molten and dangerously hot. So I put the castilene aside and went back to work with Chavant. After some time a student at East Tennessee State University named Thomas Gwyn (who is interested in toy production) gave me a lesson in the proper heating process for heating Castilene. Castilene must be heated in the microwave at 30-second intervals and should be kneeded between heating. After the castilene is properly heated, it works much like Chavant NSP Hard. There are some differences in the way a direct flame must be applied to the surface without burning the wax. The major advantage of Castilene other than its light weight is that it holds very high detail. Castilene is ideal for small and medium sculptures.

Chavant NSP Hard and Castilene are the materials I choose to work with most. Both have unique properties that lend themselves to different applications. I have recently discovered that some sculptors use Chavant to quickly produce sculptures that slightly simplified versions of the final sculpture. Then they create a waste mold off of this sculpture and pour molten Castilene into the mold. This castilene casting is then finely detailed. This process has been developed because Chavant can be worked very quickly to get the form, weight, and composition of a sculpture. A cast of Castilene is then produced because of its ability to hold very fine detail and texture. This is a process that I look forward to exploring in the future, but for now the process is expensive and time intensive, requiring two sculptures and two molds to produce a final casting.

Mold Making

Mold making is as complicated and demanding as sculpting. The mold making techniques that I have developed were built on the foundations of John Brown's DVD (volume 5: Molding and Casting the Maquette) available from The Gnomon Workshop.

I have been expanding upon his process thorough experimentation and observation of other artists' techniques. The two main types of molds I use in my current work are box molds and two-piece matrix mother molds. I have experimented with different types of mold-making material because some of the materials did not work well for my applications I will not discuss them, I will describe the materials and processes I used to create the pieces in my show.

The flexible mold material I use to produce my sculptures is made by Smooth-on. I use Mold Max 30 and Mold Max 40 in my mold making process. Mold Max 30 & 40 are both RTV silicones. RTV stands for "Room Temperature Vulcanization" meaning that these silicones cure at room temperature and do not need extra-heating to cure the silicone. Mold Max 30 & 40 use a tin-based catalyst to cure the silicone. There are also platinum-cure silicones that cure much faster than tin-cure silicones. Platinum-cure silicones are more expensive that tin-cure silicones. I chose to use Mold Max silicones because of price and working properties. When silicon has been mixed correctly and poured, the fully cured rubber is very resilient. This cured rubber for the most part doesn't require the use of a release agent; this saves time and reduces the chances of damaging a mold.

Box molds are simple molds that I use to reproduce parts of my sculptures. These parts consist of smaller elements of the sculpture like arm, legs, hands, heads, etc…. These molds are created by making a box with foam core, placing the piece of the sculpture into the box, and filling the box with silicone. The foam core is removed and the silicone is parted. The original clay part is removed and the cavity is filled with liquid plastic.

A two-part matrix mother mold is similar to the box mold. The mother mold is used for larger sculpture to decrease the amount of silicone needed for the mold and to increase the strength of the silicone. A matrix mold consists of two halves; each side has a plaster shell with an interior filled with silicone. After filling this type of mold with plastic, the plaster shell can be removed and the silicone can easily be flexed off the casting.

To reduce parting lines I have experimented with coating the sculpture with a layer of brush-on silicone first. This creates a silicone skin over the sculpture. During the

construction process of the two-part molds, the sculpture in incased in silicone and is not affected by the clay build-up process. So far, this process work well, but it does increase the time in takes to create a mold.

Casting

The process of casting consists of pouring a liquid material into a mold. When this material solidifies, it reproduces the details of the original sculpture the from which the mold was made. All casting consists of pouring a liquid material into a mold, the liquid solidifies and the casting is removed.

The materials I use to cast my sculpture are Smooth Cast 300, Smooth Cast 327, Bronze, and Marble cast. Smooth cast plastics are produced by Smooth-on. Smooth cast plastics can be colored and have fillers added to them to produce many effects, like cold cast bronze, and cold cast porcelain. Bronze is a hot casting process. The bronze metal is melted and poured into a heat resistant mold; the resulting casting can be patinaed with chemicals to produce different colors. Marble cast is a polymer that is embedded with marble powder and is mixed as a liquid. When the liquid cures, it has the look and feel of real marble stone.

Each of these materials is used to create different effects and responses from the viewer.

CHAPTER 5

CATALOGUE OF FIGURATIVE WORKS

The following work represents my MA show held at Slocumb Gallery located on the campus of East Tennessee State University in Johnson City, Tennessee, from April 10 – April 14, 2006.

The work displayed in my show is my realization of my voice in the world of art. The human form as it occurs in reality and in the minds eye. These sculptures are an on-going evolution of my examination of the human body and the world in which we live.

No. 1

Mirror Mirror

Found object and
Castilene wax

16x16x5

"Mirror Mirror" is my examination of the idea of a woman's body as presented to a child. Most girls are familiar with the Barbie doll and most adults understand that the dimensions of this doll do not mirror those of a real female adult. However, we still present these unrealistic icons to our little girls and wonder why when they grow up they have self-esteem issues. This sculpture was created with an actual Barbie doll and a figurative sculpture created in Castilene wax. Castilene is a wax that is used by toy manufactures to sculpt toys like Barbie. The sculpted female is of African descent because in addition to the unrealistic body dimensions of the doll, black Barbie dolls are the same as regular Barbie with brown coloring. I feel that this is an added layer of confusion that these toys present to women.

No. 2

Creating the Goddess of Creation.

Resin with earth treated surface

16x6x6

"Creating the Goddess of Creation" is my own examination of an aspect of religion. It would seem that man has an uncanny ability to create images of ideas and then disconnect themselves from the images while using the image as vessels of holy divinity. For thousands of years humankind has created sculptures and images then worshipped those images as supernaturally made. Examples of this are the "MOA" stone heads on Easter Island and the stone carvings of the god of ancient Rome and Greece. "Goddess" is my creation and idol. I created her from earth to represent a goddess, and she (the object) now supersedes me as a deity. Just as sculptures of the Virgin Mary become divine and sacred, losing all connection to the artist who created it

No. 3

Nothing at all

Multi-media

7x6x4

"Nothing at all" is inspired by the work of Judy Fox. Her work deals with the potential of young humans, my sculpture deals with lost potential. With this sculpture I am asking the viewer to imagine the potential of this fetus's life. It could have grown up to be a doctor, lawyer, chemist, but it could have just as easily grown up to be a serial killer, rapist, drug addict, or congressman. This is an idea I plan to explore more in the future.

No. 4

Victoria's Secret

Bronze coated Resin

16x10x5

"Victoria's Secret" is my examination of the ideal female form. In ancient art work we see artists working with the ideal human form. In today's media we are bombarded with images of the ideal human form. Who created this ideal form? The idea of this perfect form confounds me because most people don't look like it. This ideal form creates feelings of inadequacy in viewer that do not fit that mold. This fantasy has people chasing after a ghost, when the real ideal form is what you were born with.

No. 5

Seppuku

Bronze
16x5x5

"Seppuku" is a comment on the reaction people had toward my wife when she became pregnant. When my wife became pregnant, we were very excited so we were surprised at the reaction our peers had to this pregnancy. We heard comments like," What are you going to do about a career" and "Your life is over now". She was asked by health care workers if she wanted the baby. It would seem from my viewpoint that society looks down on young mothers. The name "Seppuku" comes from a samurai ritual where dishonored warriors would cut their bellies open, causing a slow painful death (Ratti 92). This depiction represents my feeling on how society views young pregnant women. Your life is over if you don't have a career, you are dishonored, and there is one way out cut your belly open.

No. 6

Pain

Resin and found objects

16x16x5

"Pain" is my examination of the mental game that marketing ad campaigns play on self-conscious men. This work in inspired by all the adds that tell men that they are not really men because they are going bald, are overweight, or they can't maintain an erection for more than 2 hours. These types of ads seek to sell happiness to men by solving these little problems. I find it interesting that in these ads happiness always seems to include a woman with the "ideal" female form. These companies hope to create a dependency on their product to create a sustained happiness. This sculpture depicts a man being suspended in a bondage manner. He is counter balanced by the products that are making his situation miserable.

No. 7

Suffering

Resin and found objects

16x16x5

"Suffering" is the sister sculpture to "Pain". The ads directed at women seem to tell women that they can achieve anything if they look like a model. The ads sell products that if used correctly can make you look like a model. But you must look like a model to be happy. Also the magazines marketed to women sell fantasies about how to make your life happy; follow their 10 easy steps and you will be happy. These types of marketing strategies pretend to be interested in the happiness of the consumer, but they are really parasites feeding off of our self-doubt and need to fit in. I find it interesting that they are selling solutions to problems that they helped create. This sculpture is being tortured in a bondage manner, suggestion pain and loss of freedom, but also because of the sexual aspect of bondage, it suggests a certain amount of pleasure.

No. 8

Mute

Resin

16x16x5

"Mute" is my reaction to the world. It is a representation of the feelings of helplessness in today's society. I feel that my voice doesn't matter in the grand scheme of life. More and more control of my life seems to be taken away as the days pass. Most of these feelings stem from government actions and laws that make no sense to me. We seem to be free, to do as we please, as long as we do exactly what we are told. When I stop to look at everyday life from outside the box, I feel muted and helpless.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I will continue to study the past and present while trying to have an impact on the future. Figurative art has always been my passion and I will continue to explore aspects of the human body and the thoughts that it can convey.

During my time at ETSU, I have come to understand mold making, casting, and sculpting techniques. I have only scratched the surface when it comes to all the different applications and process that relate to these techniques. I will continue to explore new process and materials as they pertain to the evolution of my work. In the future I intend to expand on the social commentaries I am making with my figurative work and I plan to experiment with adding 3-denimentional elements to 2-dementional illustrations.

As I continue to grow with my work, I hope to improve my technical skills and abilities. I feel that the easier my art is to understand visually the more receptive the viewer will be to the message I am tiring to convey.

WORKS CITED

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DeCamillis, Nancy. Sulptural Pursuit Colorodo: Hammer & Pen Production 2005

Goldberg, Vicki. Nude Sculpture 5,000 Years New York: Harry N. Abrams, Incorporated 2000

Ratti, Oscar / Adele Westbrook. Secrets of the Samurai New Jersey: Castle Books 1999

Wally, Barbara. Judy Fox Salzburg: Internationale Sommerakademie fur Bildende Kunst 2005

Sculpture: The Character Armature with John Brown. The Gnomon Workshop,

Sculpture2: Character Maquettes with John Brown. The Gnomon Workshop

Sculpture with John Brown: volume 5 Molding and Casting the Maquette with John Brown. The Gnomon Workshop

VITA

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EDUCATION

2002 Bachelor of Science, Design Graphics
East Tennessee State University.
Johnson City, Tennessee

2006 Master of Arts, Sculpture
East Tennessee State University.
Johnson City, Tennessee

WORK EXPERIENCE

1999 CADD OPERATOR
Jackson Design, Blountville Tennessee
Created floor plans in CADD programs

1999 TRADESHOW AND GRAPHIC DESIGNER
Essyx exhibits & displays, Johnson City Tennessee
Designed tradeshow exhibits, designed Graphics for tradeshow exhibits

2000 TEACHERS ASSISTANT TECHNICAL ILLUSTRATION
East Tennessee State University, Johnson City Tennessee

2002 SECURITY GUARD
Murray Guard inc., Johnson City Tennessee
Guard client properties

2003 3D DEVELOPMENT AND GRAPHIC DESIGN
Sirius Multimedia, Johnson City Tennessee
Created 3D content for multimedia production

2004 STONE CARVING
Studied stone carving with Master Carver Malcolm Harlow Jr., Berryville Virginia

2005 ART DIRECTOR
Huffer Manufacturings. Johnson City Tennessee
Incharge of game development and design, Print media design, Tradeshow design

2006 ART DIRECTOR
Huffer Amusements. Johnson City Tennessee
Incharge of game development and design, Print media design, Tradeshow design

EXHIBITIONS

1998 E.T.S.U. Technology fall show, Johnson City, Tennessee

1999 E.T.S.U. Technology spring show, Johnson City, Tennessee

2002 Lenior Art in the Park, Lenior, North Carolina
E.T.S.U. Technology spring show, Johnson City, Tennessee
Student show Nelson Art Gallery Johnson City Tennessee

2003 Student Sculpture show, Nelson Art Gallery, Johnson City Tennessee

2004 "The Option" Slocumb Gallery, Johnson City, Tennessee
Curated by Mel Chin
Student Sculpture show, Nelson Fine Art Gallery, Johnson City Tennessee

2005 Student Sculpture show, Nelson Fine Art Gallery Johnson City, Tennessee
"Mute" Graduate student art show, Reece Museum and Art Gallery, Johnson City, Tennessee

HONORS AND AWARDS

1998 First place in sculpture (E.T.S.U. Technology spring show, Johnson City, Tennessee)

1999 First place in 3D cadd illustration (E.T.S.U. Technology spring show, Johnson City, Tennessee)

2002 Award for excellence in animation (E.T.S.U. Technology spring show, Johnson City, Tennessee)
First place for 3D animation (E.T.S.U. Technology spring show, Johnson City, Tennessee)

2003 Second place for game advertisement and design IAPPA tradeshow