

AVT 262

Sculpture I

+++++

ΩΩΩΩΩΩΩΩΩΩΩΩ

Jon Rajkovich

jrajkovi@gmu.edu

Fall 2016

Office hours after class or by appointment

www.jonrajkovich.com

Objectives

Sculpture I is an elemental introduction to the skills required to make 3D sculptural objects. Through building, design, techniques, basic contemporary sculpture history and theory, and studio assignments that introduce new concepts and materials, this class examines the historic position of sculpture and builds a working, personalized knowledge of how it exists today as a 21st century art practice. Together our aim is:

To broaden our perceptions within nature, our built environment, and with each other so that we may be fully attentive when experiencing one another's work.

To understand how sculpture has evolved through civilization into its position within today's contemporary culture.

To carefully consider how an object, the materials of which it is made, how it is crafted, and the context within which it exists affect our understanding and experience.

To locate meaning within the formation of work, understanding that the making process can be used as a means to generate ideas.

To examine the value of ambiguity in visual design in relation to the familiar and functional.

To experience the physical and psychological possibilities of scale in sculpture: the intimate which can physically relate to the hand, but also head as a conceptual model; the bodily scale to which we physically relate, and the architectural in which the body fits.

++++++

Safety

Safety is a primary concern. Every assignment will have a related safety demonstrations on how to work with tools and materials. It is very important to attend these demonstrations. The studio is shared by several classes and it is normal for things to need occasional repair. If you feel something isn't working properly, if something breaks, or you need extra instruction before using a tool or machine, that's OK. Please see me, the studio supervisor or TA and we can get things repaired, refreshed, and running again.

Readings

Assignments are accompanied by related readings/ research, followed by peer-to-peer group discussions in class. There may be a quiz. The readings have been especially selected because they are important to understanding, in depth, your current evolution within the place of sculpture; and they are quite enjoyable to read. When you are invested in the subject, have done the reading, and are thoroughly involved, it will make for exciting and memorable classroom discussion.

Sketchbook

By now your sketchbooks should be full of all kinds of thoughts, writings, pictures, lists, and loose ideas. They are an index of engagement through your journey as a human being and an artist from which you may continuously draw. Your sketchbook(s) should be with you in class. When discussing ideas for new work, we will need to see drawings of the forms taking shape.
Bring your sketchbook, pencil, and working materials to class every day and be ready to work at the beginning of class.

Critique

A critique is the group discussion and assessment that takes place as a group when your projects are finished and are shown to the class. Similar to an exam, it is absolutely integral to the creative process and counts as an important part of your semester grade. To get full credit for your project, you must:

- Have your finished project ready to present by the *beginning of class* on the day we will be critiquing it
- Be prepared to talk about your own project in an intelligent and thoughtful manner and
- Be prepared to talk about everyone else's project in an intelligent and thoughtful manner.

If you or your project is not present at the critique, your project immediately drops a letter grade. Every project will culminate in a critique. In this course there are no tests; just critiques.

Participation

Open discussion is very important to the course and expected. Students are always encouraged to voice their opinion, even if it might seem unrelated.

In this class, you must confer the ability to speak up in public and to debate rationally. We work to create a safe environment in which each student practices the vital skill of arguing a point in front of a group of semi-strangers. It isn't enough to have done the work. Some of you may be used to talking and advocating your point of view, defending your ideas and expressing yourselves. Others may have learned to sit quietly at the margins and let others run the show. Why is this? We are here to address the safe practice of not only new projects and skills, but new behaviors as well. Experimenting is safe. School is a laboratory in which we experiment with ideas. We learn to debate rationally and respectfully, without losing our tempers, looking for common ground on which to build.

Attendance/ Presence

Each absence will affect your grade. A student's final grade will be lowered when absent for more than two sessions and each time afterward. An absence on a critique day will automatically lower your grade by one grade mark for the semester. Students are expected to be in class on time, ready to work. Frequent lateness will count as an absence.

Your presence is mandatory during critique, lecture, and discussion. Use the restroom, text your lover, etc. before class. We always take a break halfway through.

I teach this course at the assigned times and will not relay the missed information to an unexcused student. Therefore if you miss class or come to class late, you will need to get the information you missed from one of your classmates. Take a moment and exchange contacts with two new colleagues.

Phones and Computers

Phone use, specifically during lectures, demonstrations, or discussion, will irritate your teacher and fellow classmates and result in a lower grade. Silence them completely including their vibration. There are breaks during class for your phone and restroom needs. While this technology during studio time can be helpful, make sure it's use is focused directly to your research such as looking up artists and designers, researching materials and techniques, etc.

Grading

Grading is based on the quality of work produced and upon the quality of the process the student has undergone in making that work. The working process will affect grades. A good studio practice demands regular work habits, i.e., not consistently last minute work. An A for example would mean that all the work is completed, it is consistently of excellent quality, that the student participated in critical discussions of artworks and readings, and engaged in an exemplary work process. This is to say that the student would take charge of their own work process, be passionately involved in it, respond to criticism, and maintain a high level of discourse with others.

- A Outstanding: Consistently exceptional work that raises the standards for one's entire peer group. No tardiness or absences. Expresses and advocates opinions thoughtfully and rationally. Head is always in the game. Craft is appropriate. Projects, working process, and discussion are always at, or very close to full professional

- potential.
- B Above Average: Exceeding the requirements/expectations of the class. No tardiness or absences. Head is mostly in the game. Good projects and ideas, but could be even better
 - C Average: Meeting all class requirements. No tardiness or absences. Succumbs to occasional cell phone addiction. Work is complete, but not to its fullest potential.
 - D Below Average: Completion of most, but not all, course requirements including absences and/or a pattern of tardiness.
 - F Fail: Failure to meet the requirements of the course.

Materials

The following YOU MUST HAVE for this class (additional Materials per assignment.)

safety glasses or goggles

break-off retractable razor knife EVERY DAY

pencils and erasers EVERY DAY

Sketchbook (you may share this with other classes)

Closed-toe shoes. The sculpture studios are not ideal for flip flops and the like.

Organize and Clean Up

You are now entirely responsible for cleaning up after yourself. This goes for the hallways, elevators, classroom and the shop. It includes repairing any damage done to walls as well as picking up crumbs left on the couch. In the classroom you must clean up all workspaces and dispose of any scraps/debris you may have produced while working. If you are leaving any materials or works-in-progress in the classroom, they must be clearly labeled and stored out of the way of the other students who share the room. It is true that one person's trash is another person's treasure, but the converse is doubly true in an art school. If you don't want to lose your work, make sure you keep track of it. There is a mandatory cleanup day at the end of the semester. This day will be

THE BIG CLEAN: TBA

+++++

CALENDAR

- Tues Jan 24 Introduction, Syllabus, Project 1 introduced, clay demo
- Thurs Jan 26 Work in studio
Homework for next Tuesday: Read *Passages in Modern Sculpture*, Rosalind Krauss, Introduction Research Laocoön and His Sons, Michelangelo Buonarroti
Consider these questions for discussion: Why do you think Michelangelo's work seen as the culmination or the Renaissance and western art in general?
- Tues Jan 31 Lecture: The Figurative Roots of Sculpture, The Emerging Kouros, Renaissance Humanism and Work in Studio
- Thurs Feb 2 Work in studio
Homework: Research Baroque sculpture, Francois Rude's La Marseillaise, Rodin
For discussion next class, be able to point out an observation and consider this question: Rodin often left tool marks, finger impressions, and evidence of the making process as part of his sculptures. Why is this important?
- Tues Feb 7 Lecture: Baroque to Rodin, contemporary sculptors who use neoclassicism
Work in studio
- Thurs Feb 9 Work in studio
Homework: Read "Forms of Readymade: Duchamp and Brancusi" in Rosalind Krauss *Passages in Modern Sculpture*. Outline chapter according to <http://www.albany.edu/eas/170/outline.htm>. Hardcopy outline due beginning of next class.
- Tues Feb 14 Project 2 Announced. Plaster demo
Lecture: Duchamp, Brancusi, and the Found Object Today
Homework: Bring in materials to work next class.
- Thurs Feb 16 Work in studio
Homework: Read [The shape We're In: The timely Sculpture of Rachel Harrison](#), Peter Schjeldahl, New Yorker, Dec 22 & 29, 2014
[Meaning Machines: The sculptures of Charles Ray](#), By Calvin Tomkins, New Yorker, May 11, 2015.
Make observations and be able to answer What Ray and Harrison have borrowed from Rodin? Brancusi? Duchamp?
- Tues Feb 21 Lecture: The Figure, the Object, the Figurative Object and discussion
Work in Studio
Load kiln
- Thurs Feb 23 Work in Studio
Homework: Read [The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism](#) by Filippo Marinetti, pp 49-53, in Futurism: An Anthology, Yale, 2009.
[Coco Fusco and Planet of the Apes](#) and the video. Elia Alba, Art21 Magazine, Aug 2, 2014.
And Juliana Huxtable <http://www.dailykos.com/story/2015/9/4/1418478/-Juliana-Huxtable>
Make observations and be able to answer questions:
Let's say Dr. Zira studies Marinetti partying with his fellow futurist friends. What would her findings be?
Given what we've learned thus far in class regarding humanism and futurism, how do you see Juliana Huxtable and her sculptural likeness as significant?

Tues Feb 28	Lecture: Futurism: Is the Future as Good as It Used to Be? Work in studio
Thurs Mar 2	Work in studio
Tues Mar 7	Work in studio Homework: Finish projects and ode
Thurs Mar 9	Presentation of projects and ode readings. Next project announced. Homework: Bring in a meaningful object that can act as a resource for form.
Mar 13-17	Spring Break
Tues Mar 21	Wood shop demo Homework: Read Louise Bourgeois Interview with Donald Kuspit Jim Shaw's subconscious runs amok at Mass MoCA , Sebastian Smee, Boston Globe, April 16, 2015. Research Surrealism, Joseph Cornell, Yayoi Kusama Why is it important to connect contemporary artistic practices with those of the past?
Thurs Mar 23	Lecture: Surrealism and the Contemporary Subconscious, discussion Films: Rose Hobart by Joseph Cornell, The Hole by Jim Shaw, Western Song by Marnie Weber Work on drawings.
Sat Mar 25	Field trip: Yayoi Kusama, Hirshorn Sculpture Garden, Theaster Gates, and more. Details TBA Meet at Hirshorn entrance area promptly at 11:30 AM.
Tues Mar 28	No class
Thurs Mar 30	Work in studio Homework: Read "David Smith Makes a Sculpture" by David Smith, "Martin Puryear" by Alex Potts. For discussion next week: How would you describe the making process within their work? The forms within the works of these artists can be ambiguous. What is the value of ambiguity in these works and art in general?
Tues April 4	Lecture and discussion: The Meaning of Form Work in Studio
Thurs April 6	Work in studio Homework: Read "Wheatfield– A Confrontation" by Agnes Denis, Michael Heizer's Big Work and Long View, Michael Kimmelman, New York Times, May 13, 2015, and "A Tour of the Monuments of Passaic, New Jersey" by Robert Smithson, Art Forum, Dec, 1967. What do you see as important regarding the land/ landscape as a Virginian, the place you are from or have lived that you find important? What are some feelings you have about being in nature?
Tues April 11	Lecture: Land Art Work in Studio
Thurs April 13	Work in studio Homework: read Three Artists Who Think Outside the Box: How Theaster Gates, Mark Bradford and Rick Lowe are Changing What Art Can and Should Do for the World , and Timely Lessons from a Rebel, Who Often Created By Destroying , by Nicolai Ouroussoff, March 3, 2007. By Nikil Saval, New York Times Magazine, Dec 3, 2015. For discussion: What is the role of the sculptural

object and how has it evolved regarding the work of these artists? What is the value of community involvement in the arts? What might be some potential problems?

Tues April 18	Lecture: Art of the City and Social Engagement Work in studio
Thurs April 20	Work in studio Homework: Read Notorious Possession: Occupying Foreclosed Homes With Art , Robbie Herbst, Artbound, KCET, Dec 2, 2012; The focus is the same as last week. Earlier this semester, we covered Duchamp and the found object. What is the relationship between issues surrounding the found object then and what it has evolved into regarding the work of these artists. What is the value of community involvement in the arts? What might be some potential problems?
Tues April 25	Lecture: Civic art. Christo, Adam Frelin, Ben Ashworth's Finding a line Work in studio
Thurs April 27	Work in studio
Tues May 2	Work in studio
Thurs May 4	Work in studio
Tues May 9	No class. Reading days
Tues May 16	Final critique

MASON CORE CLASSES:

This class fulfills a Mason Core Core requirement for Arts. Arts goal: Courses aim to achieve a majority of the following learning outcomes: students will be able to identify and analyze the formal elements of a particular art form using vocabulary appropriate to that form; demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between artistic technique and the expression of a work's underlying concept; analyze cultural productions using standards appropriate to the form and cultural context; analyze and interpret material or performance culture in its social, historical, and personal contexts; and engage in the artistic process, including conception, creation, and ongoing critical analysis.

Students with Disabilities and Learning Differences: If you have a diagnosed disability or learning difference and you need Academic accommodations please inform me at the beginning of the semester and contact the Office of Disability Services (SUB I room 234, 703-993-2474). You must provide me with a faculty contact sheet from that office outlining the accommodations needed for your disability or learning difference. All academic accommodations must be arranged in advance through the Office of Disability Services.

Technology: In accordance with George Mason University policy, please silence all cellular telephones and other wireless communication devices at the start of class. The instructor of the class will keep his/her cell phone active to assure receipt of any Mason Alerts in a timely fashion; or in the event that the instructor does not have a cell phone, he/she will designate one student to keep a cell phone active to receive such alerts.

Commitment to Diversity: This class will be conducted as an intentionally inclusive community that celebrates diversity and welcomes the participation in the life of the university of faculty, staff and students who reflect the diversity of our plural society. All may feel free to speak and to be heard without fear that the content of the opinions they express will bias the evaluation of their academic performance or hinder their opportunities for participation in class activities. In turn, all are expected to be respectful of each other without regard to race, class,

linguistic background, religion, political beliefs, gender identity, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, veteran's status, or physical ability.

Statement on Ethics in Teaching and Practicing Art and Design: As professionals responsible for the education of undergraduate and graduate art and design students, the faculty of the School of Art adheres to the ethical standards and practices incorporated in the professional Code of Ethics of our national accreditation organization, The National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD).

Open Studio Hours: SOA teaching studios are open to students for extended periods of time mornings, evenings and weekends whenever classes are not in progress. Policies, procedures and schedules for studio use are established by the SOA studio faculty and are posted in the studios.

Important University Dates:

Consortium Registration Deadline	TBD
First day of classes; last day to submit Domicile Reclassification Application; Payment Due Date	August 29
Labor Day, university closed	September 5
Last day to add classes—all individualized section forms due Last day to drop with no tuition penalty	September 6
Last day to drop with a 33% tuition penalty	September 20
Final Drop Deadline (67% tuition penalty)	September 30
Midterm progress reporting period (100-200 level classes)—grades available via Patriot Web	September 26 – October 21
Selective Withdrawal Period (undergraduate students only)	October 3 – October 28
Columbus Day recess (Monday classes/labs meet Tuesday. Tuesday classes do not meet this week)	October 10
Incomplete work from spring/summer 2016 due to instructor	October 28
Incomplete grade changes from spring/summer 2016 due to Registrar	November 4
Thanksgiving recess	November 23 – 27
Last day of classes	December 10
Reading Days Reading days provide students with additional study time for final examinations. Faculty may schedule optional study sessions, but regular classes or exams may not be held.	December 12
Exam Period	Tues December 13 – Tues December 20
Degree Conferral Date The Winter Graduation Ceremony will be held on Wed December 21.	December 21

ArtsBus - Dates for Fall 2016: September 24th, October 22nd and November 19th.

ArtsBus Credit and Policies: You are responsible for knowing and following Artsbus policies and rules. Please go to the ArtsBus website: <http://artsbus.gmu.edu> "Student Information" for important information regarding ArtsBus policy. For credit to appear on your transcript you must enroll in AVT 300. This also applies to anyone who intends to travel to New York independently, or do the DC Alternate Assignment.

If you plan/need to go on multiple ArtsBus trips during a semester and need them towards your total requirement, you must enroll in multiple sections of AVT 300.

Non-AVT majors taking art classes do not need Artsbus credit BUT may need to go on the Artsbus for a class assignment. You can either sign up for AVT 300 or buy a ticket for the bus trip at the Center of the Arts. Alternate trips must be approved by the instructor of the course that is requiring an ArtsBus trip.

Visual Voices Lecture Series: Fall 2016 Visual Voices is a year-long series of lectures by artists, art historians and others about contemporary art and art practice. Visual Voices lectures are held on Thursday evenings from 7:20-9:00 p.m. in Harris Theater: <http://soa.gmu.edu/visualvoices/>. Dates for Fall 2016: September 1st, September 8th, September 22nd, October 6th and October 20th.

Masonlive/Email: Mason uses electronic mail to provide official information to students. Examples include communications from course instructors, notices from the library, notices about academic standing, financial aid information, class materials, assignments, questions, and instructor feedback. Students are responsible for the content of university communication sent to their Mason e-mail account, and are required to activate that account and check it regularly.

Attendance Policies: Students are expected to attend the class periods of the courses for which they register. In-class participation is important not only to the individual student, but also to the class as a whole. Because class participation may be a factor in grading, instructors may use absence, tardiness, or early departure as de facto evidence of nonparticipation. Students who miss an exam with an acceptable excuse may be penalized according to the individual instructor's grading policy, as stated in the course syllabus.

Honor Code: Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code. Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work.

Writing Center: Students who are in need of intensive help with grammar, structure or mechanics in their writing should make use of the services of Writing Center, located in Robinson A116 (703-993-1200). The services of the Writing Center are available by appointment, online and, occasionally, on a walk-in basis. The Collaborative Learning Hub Located in Johnson Center 311 (703-993-3141), the lab offers in-person one-on-one support for the Adobe Creative Suite, Microsoft Office, Blackboard, and a variety of other software. Dual monitor PCs make the lab ideal for collaborating on group projects, Macs are also available; as well as a digital recording space, collaborative tables, and a SMART Board. Free workshops are also available (Adobe and Microsoft) through Training and Certification; visit ittraining.gmu.edu to see the schedule of workshops and to sign up.

Studio Assignment 1

The Reliquary

This project focuses one of the most ancient materials of sculpture and builds upon our bodily perceptions beginning with touch.

Part 1: Make four tiles 4 inches square (exactly) using these methods:

1. a “press mold” taken from a textured surface.
2. the “additive” method in which you create texture by adding more clay to the surface. The clay must stay on the surface for full credit.
3. the “subtractive” method creating texture by removing material and carving into the clay form.
4. Combination tile using all of the above methods.

Begin by making several sketches of what your tiles may look like. Be inventive.
DO NOT use imagery with which you are already familiar.

Part 2: Research reliquaries. Create several thumbnail sketches of your own reliquary. These sketches must contain more than one idea. Move beyond the most obvious, simple solution into something less traditional. Then create your reliquary out of clay that will later be fired in the kiln. With your project there will be one major difference— the object of which you are creating the reliquary for must remain secret. The form of your sculpture should create a relationship with the secret object you choose.

Parameters

- Scale should be about the size of a head.
- No long, protruding forms.
- No loose pieces (there may be a detachable lid or door)
- Creative use of negative space, texture, and surface design
- Your sculpture should be “in the round”

You will be graded on

- Dynamic use of design principles, especially negative space, and texture
- Craft— Tiles are exactly 4” square, projects should not crack and surfaces must be resolved and free of crumbs, bits, particles
- Creativity of idea— project is not overly conventional and does not fall into cliche

About Clay

As you begin to work with the clay, you will find it to be soft and **plastic**. As it dries, it begins to stiffen and becomes **leather hard**. Leather hard is the condition of clay when it is between soft and moist and **bone dry**, or **greenware**. If you connect slabs together, they should be in the leather hard state. You will use clay **slip** to “glue” the slabs in place. While you want your slabs to be stiff enough to work with, you do not want the clay to dry out so much that it becomes brittle. And remember, since clay is heavy, until it has dried to a fairly hard state, gravity will pull down against the slabs causing them to bow or otherwise deform.

When you incorporate design elements that require other hand building techniques, such as **coil** or **pinch** methods, these techniques require that you use the clay in its soft, supple state. The clay will be in this condition when you first open the bag the clay comes in. Always keep the bag closed when you are not getting fresh clay to work with. **It is also critically important that you put your work in the plastic garbage bag you will have and tie it off so the clay will not dry out.** You may need to give the work a couple of squirts with your spray bottle before you seal it up. Don’t let the spray puddle, and do not let the plastic adhere to a wet slab wall as this tends to aggravate the potential for cracks to form as the clay dries out.

Since clay shrinks as it dries, you need to consider the thickness of your walls. Ideally they would be around **3/8”** thick. Any other elements, such as round object of appreciable size, must be hollow. Also

note that you must not trap air inside a form without providing an escape hole. Failure to do so will cause the piece to explode in the kiln.

Once you are finished constructing the piece, it will be in a very brittle state. Be extremely careful with the work at this point, as any damage is difficult to repair. The next step will be to *bisque* fire the piece. This means the work will be fired in the kiln to a low temperature to harden the work into ceramic. Once out of the kiln, you will paint the work.

Work must completed and set aside for drying: Thurs Feb 16

Studio Assignment 2

Plaster 3 Ways

These projects explore several key subjects in sculpture: the relationship between internal structure and external surface, the role of the found object, additive and subtractive process, measuring skills, color, and plaster as a traditional and fun material.

Project 1: Using plaster and burlap over an armature or interior structure, create an abstract plaster form that establishes a relationship with a found object or objects. This found object must be attached to the work, affecting its design. Begin with several sketches in your sketchbook. These drawings should contain more than one idea. Consider possibilities including combinations of organic and geometric shapes, varying proportions, negative space, surface textures, and color.

Materials

- Plaster and related tools
- Burlap
- Found objects
- Internal structure may include wire, steel, wood, layers of cardboard, styrofoam, other objects, etc.

Parameters:

- Found objects cannot be cute or anything you would normally have in your bag or pocket
- Projects must include some form of color relationship. Acrylic paint (latex, water-based) only. Absolutely no spray paint or oil paint.
- Tops and bottoms of project must be interchangeable



Project 2: Using your razor knife, tape and cardboard, make an exact 7" open-top cube into which we will pour plaster. (This means that you will have to measure carefully and take into account the thickness of the cardboard.) After the plaster hardens we will drill two perpendicular holes through the center of the cube. You will then use your home-made rasp to *unify* the

interior (holes) and exterior surfaces, transforming the cube into what you would visualize as its smooth and refined form turned inside-out.

Materials

- ½" dowel
- Steel lathe
- Razor knife
- Cardboard

Parameters

- Plaster form should have a smooth, continuous surface
- Use your homemade rasp only
- Be sure to clean up all carvings and plaster dust after every work session



Project 3: Using a combination of objects found from varying places glued or attached together, you will make a experimental conglomeration that you will dip in wet plaster. The plaster will coat the varying ingredients and unify them into a singular transformed mass. Again consider how the objects you choose can come together to create a fun and interesting design.

Materials

- Objects of varying shapes, materials, proportions, textures (avoid food and nasty trash)
- Glue, hot glue gun, wire, fastening components

Parameters

- Finished project must stay together with no moving parts
- Project must be completely coated into a unified form (No “holidays” or loose, unattached areas.)
- Project may not exceed 8" in any direction.



Home Writing Assignment/Oral Presentation: Read Pablo Neruda's “Ode to Common Things.” Write a one page ode to *one* of your sculptures. You can be purely descriptive or you can use poetic language. Your ode should clearly express the nature of the object you created, how it relates to your body, and how these experiments could be of value in real life. For critique, we will read our odes while presenting our sculptures for discussion and thoughtful feedback.