Rob McKirdie

Teaching Portfolio

Rob McKirdie
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Sculpture MFA ‘14

Robert Mckirdie

My experiences as a student definitely had an impact on my decision to be an educator. Having overcome a severe case of dyslexia as a child, I was fortunate to have great teachers that helped me overcome this challenge. My experience with education is much different than the majority of my classmates due to the fact I was enrolled in special education classes that offered a more personalized structure than the standard classroom model. Art played a large role in my ability to communicate, understand the world and learn. I discovered I understand things visually.

What is the importance of an education in visual arts?

My goal as a teacher is to explain the power of visual language and its importance in today's dynamic world. Students will learn hands-on skills in conjunction with the ability to research their ideas in order to root concepts in a larger philosophical framework. I aim to do this by informing them how to make connections with the world and making them aware of the power of their own thoughts about art and to think critically about work and process.

The most powerful experience I had as a student is when I discovered how my work fits into the world. I began to understand the connectedness of art to other disciplines and ways of thinking. I feel that this is accomplished by nurturing students' ideas and challenging them to show how their ideas make sense in a broader context. Sharing of ideas and new ways of seeing things is important in the process of making these connections. Having the perspective and ability to adapt to students' ways of learning is important to a successful teacher student relationship.

I have found that one of the most profound experiences in life is when you are about to merge your ideas about the world with concrete research. When it happens it may seem like a coincidence but I belive that intuition is more powerful than that. It is more for me like the scientific method meets gut instinct, and this has become a powerful force in my artistic practice. I feel it's an experience that could benefit others by encouraging them to nurture their ideas and research them to find the myriad of connections they have with the world.

Course Name: Fundamental Sculptural Language

Course Section Number: SCULP-0234-001

Instructor: Rob McKirdie

Course Description:

As with any language, you must build a foundational understanding before being able speak fluently. To understand objects beyond their outward appearance one must dig into their inner meaning. This beginning studio course explores basic processes and materials of sculptural language. Processes that are covered in this course are modeling, casting, and assemblage. These processes reflect grounding processes in which sculpture originated. Materials that are quintessential to a sculpture's identity will be explored (wood, metal, plastic). You will receive in-depth demonstrations and hands-on workshops that will build proficiency in the use of sculptural tools and practices, while also strengthening conceptual footing and self-expression. Weekly critiques, studio check-ins, and exploratory readings will expose contemporary issues of creating in a contemporary environment.

Required Course
Credits: 6.00
Academic Level: Undergraduate
Meeting Information: Tuesday 9:00 am – 12:00 pm and Thursday 9:00 am – 12:00pm, Fletcher Building Room 405
Instructor Consent: Not Required
Lab Fees: $200
Prerequisites: none

Course Name: Advanced Sculptural Language

Course Section Number: SCULP-0334-001

Instructor: Rob McKirdie

Course Description:

The focus of this course is to build advanced knowledge of sculptural materials, processes and contemporary issues that confront sculptural practice. Demonstrations and workshops will address more technically advanced techniques and ideas. Weekly readings and discussions will expose challenges that are present in making three-dimensional objects in a contemporary environment. One-on-one discussions will be held to help individual students develop a cohesive working practice. Students will be expected to work extensively outside of class to advance their studio work.

Required Course
Credits: 6.00
Academic Level: Undergraduate
Meeting Information: Tuesday 9:00 am – 12:00 pm and Thursday 9:00 am – 12:00pm, Fletcher Building Room 405
Instructor Consent: Not Required
Lab Fees: $200
Prerequisites: SCULP-0234

Course Name: Analog Intervention into Kinetic Sculpture

Course Section Number: SCULP-0250-001

Instructor: Rob McKirdie

Course Description:

" Why must art be static?" - Alexander Calder.

This course will explore the various ways to integrate movement into sculpture using analog means. The addition of movement in sculpture has a history that reaches back to the 1920's and was reflective of technological progress. Through lectures, readings, and discussions the class will explore the historical kinetic sculptors and the means they used to animate their work. These artists utilized kinetics in their work to represent life, war, and irony of the modern world. In conjunction with this exploration, there will be demonstrations and workshops where students will learn how to integrate kinetics into their work by use of mobiles, motors, gears and hydraulics.

Elective Course
Credits: 3.00
Academic Level: Undergraduate
Meeting Information: Tuesday 9:00 am – 12:00 pm and Thursday 9:00 am – 12:00pm, Fletcher Building Room 405
Instructor Consent: Not Required
Lab Fees: $200
Prerequisites: SCULP-0234

Proposed Syllabus Rhode Island School of Design

Fundamental Sculptural Language

Instructor: Rob McKirdie rmckirdi@risd.edu
Undergraduate Level/ Required
Days: Tuesday & Thursday 1:00pm – 6:00pm
Classroom: Metcalf Building, Room 114 **Lab Fee: $150**
Class size: 15

Rhode Island School of Design- Sculpture Department- Fall- 2014 SCULP-0234-001- 6 credits

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Course Description:

"The aim of art is to represent not the outward appearance of things, but their inward significance." -Aristotle

As with any language, you must build a foundational understanding before being able speak fluently. To understand objects beyond their outward appearance one must dig into their inner meaning. This beginning studio course explores basic processes and materials of sculptural language. Processes that are covered in this course are modeling, casting, and assemblage. These processes reflect grounding processes in which sculpture originated. Materials that are quintessential to a sculpture's identity will be explored (wood, metal, plastic). You will receive in-depth demonstrations and hands-on workshops that will build proficiency in the use of sculptural tools and practices, while also strengthening conceptual footing and self-expression. Weekly critiques, studio check-ins, and exploratory readings will expose contemporary issues of creating in a contemporary environment.

Aims

1) To understand basic sculptural processes and materials.
2) To familiarize students with use of tools.
3) To discuss and understand contemporary discourse of sculpture.

Objectives

1) Demonstrate Competency constructing 3-D forms in four projects with increasing ability and ambition over three projects (45%)

2) Create an final project that applies techniques presented throughout the course of the class, which show a level of experimentation and risk. (30%)

4) Foster a collective community space and a sense of personal responsibility in a shared working environment. (15%)

5) Hone critical dialogue skills. (10%)

Course Structure

This will be a project-driven class. There will be four unique assignments that encourage students to develop very specific skills and to think about the concepts underpinning the work. These projects will cover the use of basic hand tools, metal shop, wood shop and casting facilities. There will be demonstrations, hands-on workshops and individual progress check-ins throughout the course. Weekly readings will be assigned that will supplement the concepts of the class.

Critique

Critiques are an important component in learning how communicate visually. It's an opportunity for growth and to increase understanding of the material process, while working together in a community of makers. Critiques in this class, as in any class, are a gift to the maker. They should reflect the thoughtful feedback and suggestions from everyone in the class and leave the maker with an idea of what is and is not working; a sense of accomplishment for things well done and a good idea of what to work on for next time. We will only critique finished work. Discussions that involve the phrase "I was going to…" and "If I had more time…" are not particularly helpful to anyone. You will be graded on your participation in the class.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance is mandatory. Due to the hands-on nature of this class there is no substitute for the in-class experience. **More than 3 absences over the course of the semester will result in the automatic lowering of your grade.** Excessive tardiness will not be tolerated, attending more than 5 minutes after the start of class will be considered late. **3 tardies will result in an absence**. **Six absences will result in a failing grade.**

SHOP SAFETY AND ACCESS

Safety equipment is REQUIRED at all times while in the metal shop. This means the following: safety glasses, closed toe shoes, and long pants (no leggings) are required to enter the shop. Students are required to attend the demonstration of tools before being allowed to use them. **If for any reason you missed a demonstration or have any questions about how to use the equipment please ask!**

EVALUATION, GRADING POLICY AND PERFORMANCE CRITERIA:

Your final grade will be comprised of a combination of the four projects and your overall participation in the class. Your grade will be broken down into the following parts:

First project: 15%
Second project: 15%
Third project: 15%
Final project: 30%
Attendance and active class participation in critiques, activities and discussions: 15%
Shared Community engagement 10%

Students can expect to receive grades for individual assignments within 24 hours of critiques. The assignments will be graded according to these criteria:

25% technical understanding, and ability that reflects specific aims of the assignment
25% a significant amount of time spent in struggle/conversation with the work
35% technical innovation, conceptual development, and ambition beyond the in-class demonstration
15% timely completion of work

WEEK 1

Learning Objectives:
Familiarize students with the tools and facilities and the role of each student plays is a community space. Start experimenting how to effect 3-D space using basic wood techniques and at a manageable scale.

Tuesday: Getting Started
• Introductions
• Course syllabus and schedule
• Safety and shop tour
o Homework:
- Reading:
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"Sculpture Since 1945"
Oxford History of Art
Chapter 5, "Anti-Form"
Andrew Causey
Pages 131-167

Thursday: Intro to Wood
• Group discussion on reading
• Introduction to assignment 1: **Miniatures in Wood**
• Go over machine tools in wood: band saws, nail gun
• Work Day, Clarify safety practices

WEEK 2

Learning Objectives:
Give an overview of the importance of critiques in a classroom setting. Develop an understanding of the contemporary art world and how it can be related to an art practice.

Tuesday: Preparation for Critique
• Workday, individual meetings
• Discuss writing a paragraph for critique
o Homework:
Prepare a paragraph for critique

Thursday: What is Art?
• Group Critique on Assignment 1
o Homework:
Choose a living artist and give a 10 min presentation next class

WEEK 3

Learning Objectives :
Challenge students to think about scale in a dynamic way, comparing human scale to the rest of the world. Discovering how to imply multiple scales in the same sculpture.

Tuesday: Larger than life
• Class presentations
• Introduce Exercise 2: **Larger than Life**
- Homework:
Reading:

"The Contingent Object of Contemporary Art"
MIT Press
Chapter 3, "Medium and Materiality"
Martha Buskirk
Pages 107-160

Thursday
• Group Discussion on Reading
• Workday, Clarify any questions about scale shifts

WEEK 4

Learning Objectives :
Familiarize students on the basic use of the MIG welder and safety issue around its use. Demonstrate how to translate a repeating 2-D pattern into a 3-D shape with the help of a jig.

Tuesday: Shape reality
• Critique on Exercise 2: **Larger than Life**
(Student will introduce each others work for critique)
• Demonstrate making and the MIG welder
• Write your name with the MIG welder
o Homework:
Meaningful 2D shape

Thursday
• Students present Meaningful 2D shape
• Introduce Exercise 3: 3-D Repetition (Jig making)
• Workday, Cut wood for making jigs.
o Homework:

-Reading, Please write one paragraph about what you read and your thoughts.
"Passages in Modern Sculpture"
By Rosalind E. Krauss
MIT Press
Chapter 5 Tanktotem Welded Images
Pages 147- 200

WEEK 5

Learning Objectives :
Introduce the use and safe operation of the Oxy-acetylene welders. Understand the use of different types of joining techniques and be able to employ them in future work.

Tuesday
• Student lead discussion on reading
• Work day, troubleshoot jigs and use of the MIG welder

Thursday
• Critique Exercise 3: 3-D Repetition. All work displayed together and critiqued all at once
• Oxy-acetylene welding: Regulate oxygen/acetylene ratios, torch tips, and safe handling of tank regulators, butt, lap, tee, and right angle joints
• Oxy-acetylene cutting:

o Homework:
- Weld 3 different joints using Oxy-acetylene welder
- Bring 3 images of shadows

WEEK 6

Learning Objectives :
Explore the different ways in which 3-D objects impact negative space, shadow.
Demonstrate other ways of fastening objects together using cold connections.

Tuesday
• Present at pictures of shadows
• Introduce Exercise 4: **3D to 2D**
• Drill press, Tap and Die
• Cold connections
• Metal upright band saw
• Workday

Thursday
• Workday
• Individual meetings
• Mid Term Studio Clean up

WEEK 7

Tuesday

Learning Objectives :
Utilize the form and shape of the body and combined it with made objects to create a dynamic conversation between body and object.

• Critique Exercise 4: **3-D to 2-D**
• Presentation about repetition
• Introduce Exercise 5: **Body Copy**
o Homework:
- **Bring items needed for alginate mold making**:
1) Alginate: Derma gel - Made by Art Stuf aka. Dougless and Sturgess Inc.
2) Plaster Bandages: All sizes, $.4.50 per Lb (Stephenson Pattern Supply)
3) Hair Conditioner: Can be used on facial hair and hairline. Any brand will work)
4) Plastic: Thin plastic sheet (1 mil) or shrink-wrap to cover hairline
5) Surgical Tape: Used to tape down plastic sheet over hairline. Can be found at

any major drug store.

Reading:

Sculpture Since 1945
By Andrew Causey
Oxford Press
Chapter 8 Objects and Figures
Pages 229- 259

Thursday
• Student lead Discussion on reading
• Demonstrate alginate mold making
• Work day complete abnegate mold

WEEK 8

Learning Objectives :
Refine ideas about the relationships between the human body and the man made world.

Tuesday
• Workday, integration of other objects
• Individual meetings

Thursday
• Critique Exercise 5: **Body Copy**
• Watch artist video
o Homework
- Bring an item to cast that has no undercuts

WEEK 9

Learning Objectives :
Imagine the impact of multiples. By casting one item multiple times compose an arrangement that amplifies the meaning of the object.

Tuesday
• Introduce Exercise 6: **Multiples**
• Demonstrate two part mold making
• Look at items for casting multiples
• Work Day, Cast objects

Thursday
• Work Day,
• Individual meetings about **Multiples**

WEEK 10

Learning Objectives :
Using all the modes of working that we have explored and evaluate which modes best suit your practice. Create a proposal for the final project for refinement and approval from the class.

Tuesday
• Workday. Finish Multiples project and find spaces to install work

Thursday
• Critique Exercise 6: Multiples.
• Introduce Final Project: Uniting Media
• Presentation
o Homework
- Proposal for final project
- Presentation on final project

WEEK 11

Learning Objectives :
Receive feed back from the class and evaluate what works for your project and begin creating final work.

Tuesday
• Final project presentation
• Individual meetings
• Work day and clarify ideas for final project

Thursday
• Workday
• Individual meetings. Address concerns for final project

WEEK 12

Learning Objectives :
Adapt ideas from the original concept to better match the time frame and skill set. Adaptation is a large component of making and completing a project.

Tuesday
• Workday
• Individual meetings; Discuss conceptual and technical concerns

Thursday
• Workday
• Individual meetings; Discuss installation location and execution.

WEEK 13

Learning Objectives :
Evaluate feed back from critique and measure success of the work either in its ability to communicate the original idea or in its ability to communicate something more impactful.
Tuesday
• Critique Final Projects
o Homework
After you receive your critique **write 1 page** about the full trajectory of your final piece its successes and its shortcomings in your perspective.

Thursday
• Critique Final Projects
• Class Evaluations
• Final Clean up

Important Information

Students with Disabilities
Beginning in the Fall 2010 semester, all students with disabilities are to make an appointment to meet with a member of the staff of the Office of Student Development and Counseling Services, even those who have done so in the past. Students should contact the Office of Student Development and Counseling. Services located at 63 Angell Street (401/454-6637) early in the semester. Students may make an appointment at the beginning of the semester with the instructor to discuss accommodations. This information is requested on a voluntary basis only. More information can be found at: http://risdcounseling.wordpress.com

Academic and Classroom Misconduct
Academic misconduct, including cheating and plagiarism, is considered a serious offense and will incur consequences including disciplinary probation, suspension or expulsion. Classroom misconduct includes behavior that disrupts a positive learning environment.

Student Development and Counseling Services
Students experiencing normal academic problems can meet with the instructor to work out solutions that will help them successfully complete their coursework. Counseling Services are available to assist students. Students may access this program by scheduling an appointment by calling 401-454-6637 or going to the counseling office at 63 Angell Street.

Grade Descriptions and Evaluation

Grades in this course will be based on the following grading scale and descriptions found below.

A (93-100) work of exceptional quality
A- (90-92) work of high quality
B+ (87-98) work of high quality, which reflects higher than average abilities
B (83-86) very good work that satisfies goals of the course
B- (80-82) slightly above average work that satisfies the goals of the course
C+ (77-79) average work, which reflects an understanding of course material
C (73-76) adequate work, passable
C- (70-72) passing work but below good academic standing

Grade Breakdown:

A= extraordinary performance, participation in critiques and thoughtful written responses to the work of your classmates. It means setting goals for yourself - and surpassing them. It means following up on all suggestions for both technical and conceptual development, doing quality research, and revising your work, if needed.

B= good performance, good solid work that is developing steadily, intermittent but intelligent participation in class discussion, thoughtful written responses to the work of your classmates. It means keeping pace with assignments. It means setting goals for yourself and meeting them. It means following up on some of the suggestions given to you including technical and conceptual development, research, and revising your work if needed.

C= lackluster performance, attendance issues, not much work being produced and work that reflects limited effort and thinking, rare participation in class, little evidence of effort in written responses to your classmates, and not keeping up with assignments. It means not thinking about your goals, and not meeting them.

Rob McKirdie

Class Project : Pattern to Form

Homework due at the beginning of class: Draw a simple pattern that has particular importance to you. Be prepared to show these patterns to the class and explain their importance to you.

Class Aim: Students will come away with new ways to generate three-dimensional forms from two dimensional patterns. The aim of the class is to demonstrate a precise way to replicate a pattern to create form.

Objectives:

- Create a jig out of wood using a specific pattern.
- Replicate multiples of the pattern in metal using the jig that was made
- Create a large metal structure using the multiple that are created

Class Demo:

Building and using a Jig

Methods:

The class will begin with everyone sharing the pattern they created using any method the wished. Also each student will explain the importance of the pattern and why the choose it.
A demonstration will be given about how to make a jig in the wood shop using the panel saw, brad nailer and wood glue.

After the jigs are built a demonstration will be given as to how to use the jig to make multiples of the same pattern. The class will then be expected to create an image that utilizes at least 10 patterns to create a three dimensional form.

Assignment:

Beginning students will complete all elements of the assignment: create a three dimensional form by replicating a two dimensional pattern in multiples (at least 10 copies) using a jig.
Advanced students will consider conceptual ideas when creating the form and will draw out ideas from the meaning of the original pattern along with the importance of it being multiples of the same pattern. There will be an apparent development of technique in the way these shapes are utilized and will demonstrate advanced experimentation.

Mid-Semester Feedback Form

SCULP-0234-001- 6
Fundamental Sculptural Language
Instructor: Rob McKirdie

Please fill out the following form with feedback with regards to the first half of the semester. The form will help me better the course the second half of the semester using this feedback.

Please Rate:

Do you feel you are gaining an understanding of materials and process?

1 2 3 4 5

Does the instructor explain things clearly?

1 2 3 4 5

Do you find the instructor feedback helpful?

1 2 3 4 5

What has been you favorite assignment thus far? What has been your least?
What improvements would you make?

Has the amount of work been manageable? What would you change?

Is there something you would like to learn that we haven't touch on?

What aspects of this course could be improved?