

1. Where do you draw inspiration from? What kind of things do you try to put into your artwork to reflect your inspiration?

I would say I am most inspired by animals, nature, music and film. I am particularly interested in the ambiguous quality of the language of film and music, especially the eccentric ones, for example Bjork or David Lynch. Visual art can share a lot of these ambiguous qualities leading to the powerful, deep communication I am fascinated by. Sometimes when I meet an animal, there is an undefined connection to him/her, which can become an expression of a personal idea, emotion or abstraction.

2. Did you develop your art with classes or are you self-taught? Both?

Both. I drew a little when I was young but never sculpted. My main focus was music, I play the drums. I started sculpting on my own, mostly animals at 25 and after about a year I decided to go to school to get my BFA in sculpture. I went to a traditional school for human figures and studied from live models and learned about anatomy. After school I applied some of what I learned to sculpting animals. So I am mainly self taught with my animals.

3. Please describe the most difficult obstacle you've come across in one or more of your works.

My works are very process driven, and I usually have several going at one time. Whenever I get stuck on a sculpture, or I lose energy in it, I will put it down and work on another one. After a week or a month, I will come back to it with fresh energy and new ideas. Working on multiple pieces gives you room to experiment as well and you can bring those experiences to other pieces. Its a way to keep the sculpture exciting. It is a tough way to work because our society is very fast paced at the moment, but I believe good things take time to develop.

4. At what point in your life did you realize you wanted to pursue art as a career?

Well, I guess I always knew I wanted to be an artist, even when I was young. As I got older, I knew I couldn't fit in anywhere else. There was nothing else I could see myself doing.

5. In what direction do you think your art is currently going?

My work is very process driven. Sometimes I start with an abstract shape, without knowing what animal it will be. The more I refine, ideas and shapes begin to emerge. As I start to hone in on which character will be best for the piece, I start working from life on small sculpture studies to get a sense of his/her unique proportion, texture and attitude. I prefer to work on the main sculpture alone in the studio with some references I took of my model. Working in the studio allows my imagination to come out, instead of being limited by my reference. I have to really understand the anatomy and the animal I'm working with so I can move him into my pose and attitude.

6. What piece of advice has helped you develop your art the most?

When starting out, the best thing to do is to produce work! Lots of work. Especially when you're starting out, you don't want to get too over worked on an idea. With each piece you do, the more you learn and the further you can push the next one. After you have a bunch of work and you look back on it you will start to notice patterns of ideas, designs and what you are ultimately trying to do. Just like learning anything else it takes time. They say it takes 10,000 hours to be masterful at anything, so start logging some hours.

7. How would you define success in the art world?

That is a good question and will vary greatly between artists. For myself and many of the artists I am influenced by, honesty in ones work is a very important part of being successful, and I don't think it is emphasized enough in the main stream. Many artists in the main stream tend to focus on originality and who you know, but their career is not long lived. There needs to be a balance between concept (idea), craft (skill), art history and who you are as an artist. Everyone has a unique perspective and no one has lived twice, so we are original. We don't need to resort

to shock value just for shock value's sake. Im not saying we can't or should re-live the past, we need to understand where we come from and take it further.

8. Has your process changed over the years? If yes, how so?

I started sculpting animals generically. Another words, I was just interested in the animal as an archetype. It was more about representing nature, or what inspired me visually. The more I worked the more I started to get to know the individual animals, staying with them for long periods of time, days or weeks five hours at a time, sculpting them on location. That is how you get to know them, by seeing what they do, how they react to situations, etc. It enriched my experience and perspective.

Currently I still get to know individual animals, but I am also investigating why I am "connecting" to them, and exploring some personal ideas. As I previously stated, I start making small maquette sculptures in the studio, working without nature first, forcing myself to see the abstract shape and focus on the ambiguous quality that the animal will eventually fit into. When I go back to see the animal, I make a small sculpture study on location to get a sense of the individual, proportions, textures, and attitudes etc. Keeping the work ambiguous allows the viewer to bring their own experiences into the sculpture. Whenever people talk to me about my sculptures, they all seem to have a different interpretation of what is going on, and they are all right.

9. How did you get into teaching art classes?

There were two reasons. The first one is that many artists that I admired were teachers or taught classes, and they all said it was an amazing learning experience. I find that to be true as well. It really pushes you to hone in on your craft, which then applies back to your work. I enjoy the students energy and curiosity, I find it infectious.

The second reason was financial. The kind of work I do is time consuming and expensive. After school I knew I was ultimately going to need time to build a body of work and I would need to support myself, and teaching can be a consistent source of income without having to hold a 9/5.

10. What do you hope to do with your art in the future?

I would like to do more public shows and/or have some works publicly displayed so they can be more accessible to people. That's one down side to selling to private collectors; once the work is shown in a gallery and sold or if it was sold privately without being shown, it wont be open to the public again unless it's under very specific circumstances. This is worse for painters, because they only make one original painting, and at least I can make editions of 9 for each sculpture.

As for my art process, I would like to keep meeting animals and combine their inspiration with my new ideas and studies.