

NEW YORK STUDIO SCHOOL

OF DRAWING, PAINTING & SCULPTURE

Fall 2020 - Sculpture Master Class - VIRTUAL

Bas Relief: Form and the Perceptual

Instructor: Jilaine Jones
Class Hours: 2pm – 6pm
Dates: Wednesday, September 23 – Wednesday, December 16, 2020
Contact Info: see Program Office

Course Description

Bas-relief is a territory joining sculpture, drawing, and painting – form working across the plane of a wall; a picture, if perceptual, in three dimensions. This course will explore this form through a perceptual process, and expand these realizations into possibilities for sculpture or picture-making. Meeting virtually through Zoom and Padlet and working from still lives of the participants' own making (in their own spaces), bas-reliefs will be made predominantly in clay and also in chip board/cardboard. The nature and idea within the still life may be unconventional, for instance an installation, or a simple group of forms. Working perceptually the topography of space is bas-relief's revelation; this course is as much a particular experience of seeing as it is of making. It is fascinating and spatially sensitizing: for the sculptor or painter it becomes a way to organize the spatial, the organization becoming a form. The direction this project takes will be oriented to the interest of each student. Some may stay within a rectangular format, or others not; some may rework the viewed source again and again, or may extrapolate an essential idea into further bas-relief works of other materials. Discussion of the subject by images will be integrated throughout the course.

Course Outline

Several small bas-relief studies using clay over a vertical board will begin our dialogue about this technique. A simple setting decided upon by the student will be the subject, this setup/still life is the perceptual focus, and will evolve through the course prompted by how it's arrangement may teach and the individual's direction. The introduction about the logistics of the bas-relief process, will include how it can be accommodated into different work/live spaces, and our using the computer programs to best share work-in-progress through Zoom. There will be an initial sharing of images of bas-relief through history. This will cover its broadness of possibility and how it's specific ability (articulating space) works, evolved, and has played a role in the evolution of artistic consciousness. This will be expanded by short student presentations of a type or period of bas-relief. Works will increase in scale up to approximately 24 x 30 inches, in clay over board, and of paperboards/cardboard. Various ways to technically finalize the clay works will be demonstrated. Basic systems to organize the perceived through and across the material will be taught, as well as encouraging the exploration of empirical, experience based, responses. In the last third of the course each student will forward an idea orientation which has grown through their work independently in the course, either continuing a close connection with the perceptual source or disconnecting from it to degrees.

Learning Outcomes

After participating in this course, students will be able to make a bas-relief. They will have the understanding of how this process can expand their penetration into the spatial organization of a viewed setting. This course will enable the student to parse out incrementally: space, form, and materiality. The opportunity to physically construct that which is a perceptual phenomenon, will give the student the ability to realize topographical structure in relation to this concentration, and to allow the direct handling of materials to “think” and to feel responsively. Students will be able to take ideas and realizations developed from this experience of bas-relief and extrapolate it into sculpture or painting independently. Students will have a knowledge, and sources to refer back to, about the history of bas relief. They will realize its very broad variation, and understand how it is integral to our usable and deeply self-reflective art history.

Assessable Tasks

It is expected that each work will find resolution sooner: perhaps as a study for its potentials, or later: even being reconsidered and reworked throughout the course. There will be between 10 and 20 bas reliefs produced. A short presentation for the group of a type of bas relief will be required within weeks 3 to 10. Participation in group discussions to the degree which is individually comfortable, attention at least by viewing to precedents and the work in progress of the group.

Evaluation and Grading

MFA students participating in this course will receive grades. Grading is on a High Pass/Pass/Low Performance/Fail basis. To achieve a Pass grade, students must show engagement in the work of the project with the instructor present and in time independently. Readiness with materials and an organized working set up is expected. Responsibility for the technical aspects necessary for the Zoom format: good reception, clear photography of work in progress, and use of the computer for Zoom and Padlet programs. (Please let instructor/NYSS know beforehand if help is needed for any of this, this is expected.) Persistence, experimentation, and evolution in addressing the ideas will be evaluated. Through the proposed processes and materials, work should lead to unforeseen questions and answers. Participation is crucial in the dialogue of the group to discuss the project, precedents, and the ongoing work of the group. The making of at least 10 bas reliefs is expected.

Readings and Resources

Manifestos of Umberto Boccioni
Passages in Modern Sculpture, Rosalind Krauss
The Language of Sculpture, William Tucker
Modern Sculpture Reader, edited by Jon Wood, David Hulks, Alex Potts
The Birth and Rebirth of Pictorial Space, John White
The Stones of Rimini, Adrian Stokes

Materials and Tools

*Needed the first class.

Sturdy Easel and/or sturdy Shelves against wall at about chest height.*

Low-fire smooth Clay. 300 lbs. 50 lbs to start with.* (Probably fine if you have another type and want to use.)

Boards, plywood between $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{3}{4}$ inch thick or comparable, using thicker as size increases:

- 6 x 8" x 8"*
- 4 x 10" x 12"
- 4 x 12" x 20"
- 4 x 20" x 30

- Hardware Cloth – $\frac{1}{2}$ -1" grid, roll of approx. 36" x 10".*
- Thin Plastic. – example: 4 mil. Husky roll. 10' x 15' approx., dry cleaner's plastic, large garbage bags.*
- Heavy duty scissors.*
- Wire snips for cutting wire cloth.*
- Heavy duty Stapler and long staples at least 9/16" best. (Or Hammer and long Brads, thin nails)*
- Basic Clay Tools: paring knife, fettling knife, wire tool, ribs, wooden modelling tools, wire loop tools.*
- Hard Papers and Chip Boards and Cardboards of varying thicknesses;
- approximately 4 pieces each, 18" x 30", specific sizes not important.

- Tacks.
- Tape.
- Charcoal, Pencils.
- Paper Glues.
- Laundry Clips.
- Glue Gun and Glue sticks.

- **As this is a virtual course, meeting on Zoom and utilizing Padlet, all participants should have reliable internet access, a way of photographing your work digitally, and a computer or other through which to access the class.**

School, Department & Class Policies

Please refer to the Student Handbook for information regarding the School's policies on academic integrity and plagiarism. All students must abide by the general health and safety regulations laid out in the Student Handbook, as well as any specific instructions given by the Instructor.