

NEW YORK STUDIO SCHOOL

OF DRAWING, PAINTING & SCULPTURE

Spring 2021: Saturday Figure Sculpture

Instructor: Jock Ireland
Class Hours: 9am-1pm, Saturdays
First Class: Saturday, February 6, 2021
Last Class: Saturday, April 17, 2021

Course Description

In this Sculpture class, participants will work in clay from a live model each week. Sidney Geist, the first Studio School Dean, used to say a week is just long enough to forget completely what you were doing the week before. With that in mind, everyone in the class **COMPLETES** at least one sculpture each week: projects do not carry over from one week to the next. The class might include absolute beginners or experienced artists who, for one reason or another, want to take advantage of the opportunity to work in the School's wonderful clay studio from the live model. The teacher is happy to give beginners whatever attention they need (he's also happy to leave experienced artists alone).

Course Outline

There's nothing special about the first class except that beginners are quickly introduced to a standard/academic modeling technique. We look at tools, talk about making cigarette-like rolls of clay, using the "cigarettes" to build sculpture. During the second class students get Xeroxes of Henri Gaudier-Brzeska's one-page history of art from Egypt to Epstein. Students are welcome to read the whole history, but are asked to memorize the first three sentences: "Sculptural energy is the mountain. Sculptural feeling is the appreciation of masses in relation. Sculptural ability is the defining of these masses with planes." Needless to say, nobody memorizes these sentences. The third class is just like the first two and all the others. We do 20 minutes of short poses—usually four five minute poses—then one pose for the rest of the class. The pose might be full of movement or very still. We might do twisty/"dynamic" poses for two or three weeks, then switch to still poses. We might alternate: one week full of movement, the next stillness. It depends on who the model is, who the students are, what happened the week before, etc. Occasionally we'll make multi-figure compositions. Occasionally we'll work from paintings. Occasionally we'll make reliefs. Occasionally we'll make heads. We'll do some standing poses every semester. We won't use armatures though. Gravity will be the issue: getting the sculpture to stand up. Anatomy won't be emphasized, though students are of course welcome to bring anatomy books to class, ask questions about anatomy, etc. There are short crits at the end of each class—opportunities for the students to talk, to ask questions, to look carefully at their classmates' work and to learn from it.

Assessable Tasks

In each class students make at least one sculpture. That sculpture is "assessed" as it's being made, and at the end of the class. It might be reassessed in light of subsequent work. Making sculpture is the focus of the class. There are no papers, presentations, etc.

Readings and Resources

Yves Bonnefoy: *Giacometti*

H. S. Ede: *Savage Messiah*

Peter Fuller: *Henry Moore*

Sidney Geist: *Brancusi*

L. R. Rogers: *Relief Sculpture and Sculpture*

Jean Helion: *They Shall Not Have Me* and *Double Rhythm: Writings about Painting*

Louis Finkelstein: *The Unpicturelikeness of Pollock, Soutine and Others*

Adolf Von Hildebrand: *The Problem of Form in Painting and Sculpture*

Jed Perl: *Paris Without End* and *New Art City* and *Art in America: 1945-1970*

Karen Wilkin: *Willard Boepple Sculpture* and *Caro* and *David Smith* and *Isaac Witkin*

Wilhelm Worringer: *Abstraction and Empathy* and *Form in Gothic*

William Tucker: *The Language of Sculpture*

Raymond Mason: *At Work in Paris*

Zbigniew Herbert: *Barbarian in the Garden*

<https://abcrit.wordpress.com/>

<https://brancasterchronicles.wordpress.com/>

<http://abstractcritical.com/>

Materials and Supplies

The School provides students with clay and modeling stands. Sculpture supplies are available at general art supply stores—but students are better off shopping at stores that specialize in sculpture supplies: The Complete Sculptor, 90 Vandam Street, 212-243-6074, is a great one.

On the first day, come with:

1. a block/stick of wood about 12"x2"x1" (you might find one in a dumpster)
2. a wooden knife about 10" long (sculpture supply store)
3. an ordinary metal dinnerware knife (not too sharp—from home)
4. a wire clay cutter (sculpture supply store)

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. All students will follow the School's current COVID-19 guidelines and procedures to maintain a healthy and safe working environment for the NYSS community.