

NEW YORK STUDIO SCHOOL

OF DRAWING, PAINTING & SCULPTURE

SUMMER 2023

Sculpture Marathon – IN-PERSON:

MOLD MAKING & CASTING

Instructor: Sam Nichols
Class Hours: 9am – 1pm / 2pm – 6pm
Dates: June 19 – 30 (daily, excluding weekends)

Course Description

This Marathon will explore the process of mold making and casting sculpted forms using a variety of materials.

Through demonstrations, presentations, class discussions, and direct experience, participants will learn to prepare a form before making a mold of it; learn how to design and build a variety of molds - from rigid, single use *waste* molds, to *piece* molds consisting of multiple parts and used repeatedly; learn how to select, prepare and cast a variety of casting materials (i.e., plaster, Hydrocal, etc.); learn about modeling materials such as clay and plasticine (oil-based clay); learn basic clay modeling and foam carving techniques from which molds can be made.

The course is open to students of all levels who have an interest in mold making and casting sculptural forms. Students from the preceding Life-Size Sculpture Marathon with Brandt Junceau are encouraged to work from their existing (clay) sculptures. For those students who are either new to mold making and casting, or who do not have or wish to use existing work, instruction and materials will be provided.

Class instruction will occur in the school's Plaster Room, Clay Room, Woodshop, and Metal Studio. While focusing on personal safety and responsible practice, students will learn about tools and materials commonly used in mold making and casting. Projects will be structured to ensure proficiency in the techniques of mold making and casting while simultaneously strengthening the students' abilities to articulate the significance of their own work. This course will also include instructor presentations, reading handouts, group discussions, and group critiques.

Course Outline

Class time: classes will begin with:

- **Group meetings:** we will meet as a group to discuss the day's agenda, class progress and student's evolving interests. This time will also be used for making announcements and discussing other appropriate topics.
- **Instructor's presentations:** the instructor will give a visual and/or verbal presentations on topics such as:
 - The history, tradition and types of molds used in the artist's studio
 - The methods and materials in mold making and casting materials
 - Contemporary and historical artists who've incorporated mold making and casting into their art practice
 - Storage and maintenance of reusable molds
 - Historical and contemporary artist who have integrated mold making and casting into their studio practice
 - The relationship between industrial and studio art casting
 - Group discussions will follow presentations and/or demonstrations
- **In studio demonstrations:** these hands-on demonstrations will cover the following:
 - SAFETY, SAFETY, SAFETY, and perhaps a bit more SAFETY
 - A range of modeling materials used in sculpting a form to be cast
 - Modeling and preparing a sculpture for casting

- Tools and equipment used in mold making and casting – this includes personal protective equipment
 - In-studio preparation necessary to making and casting with molds
 - Making and casting with waste molds
 - Making and casting with reusable molds such as: multiple sectional and rubber molds
 - Experimental molds and casting materials
 - Presenting: through group discussions and demonstration we will explore various ways artists present and speak about their work.
- **Studio work:** Either independently or with the instructor, students will spend the balance of class time working on their projects.

Learning Outcomes: upon completion of this course, students will:

- Possess the fundamental skills required to model and cast sculptural forms
- Best practices and personal safety in mold making and casting
- Have a sound understanding terms and vocabulary of mold making and casting
- Planning, building and preparing forms prior to mold making
- Studio and work area preparation for mold making and casting
- Identifying and selecting appropriate the materials
- Use and care of mold making and casting tools
- How to design and make custom hand tools for modeling and casting
- Have a higher understanding of sculptural form
- Additional content as time permits

Assessable Tasks

This class will have two group-critique days, and while the first will focus on evaluating student mold(s), the second will discuss final casting(s). Participation in these critiques is required for all students.

Students are required to bring one 8-1/2" X 11" (or larger) sketch book to be used in this class. This will be used to develop ideas, record technical information and serve as a visual record of your progress.

All materials will be provided for this class.

Evaluation and Grading

NYSS 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:

- The student will demonstrate through completed projects, a sound understanding of the principles, concepts and techniques required in the course.
- Each assignment must be finished and ready for presentation at the *beginning* of class
- The student must actively participate in each group critique process
- Willingness to follow classroom etiquette
- The student must make use of their sketchbook and bring it to class each day

To achieve a High Pass grade:

In addition to meeting the Pass grade criteria, students will receive a High Pass grade if they demonstrate an advanced understanding of the principles, concepts and techniques required in the course. An advanced understanding will be evaluated on the student's:

- ...technical execution of each assignment – dare I say craft and workmanship?
- ...ability to develop and convey concepts, both visually and verbally
- ...willingness to strive beyond their present skill level and to work outside their comfort zone.
- ...actively participate in all aspects of the class
- ...successfully integrating the principles and concepts into their current practice

Assignment grades will be reduced or recorded as incomplete if...

- The assignment is not finished and ready for presentation at the beginning of class.
- The student has an unexcused absence on assignment due days.

Please note that even if you were unable to complete the assignment, your attendance and class participation is still required. Failure can be the best teacher; therefore, project grades will be based largely on the student's effort and class participation.

The following areas will be considered when determining assignment grades...

- 70% student effort and class participation
- 15% quality of work
- 15% sketchbook and preliminary work

Students are also required to:

- Be punctual and prepared for class
- Communicate directly with the instructor regarding your attendance issues.
- Communicate directly with instructor regarding grades (see Grading Practices above)
- Work only on class specific projects during class time
- Participate in classroom cleanup during the final ten (10) minutes of class time

Readings and Resources

Supplied Readings: (PDF file or handouts)

- By in large, readings will be technical in nature

Suggested Books & Reading:

- *Arnold Auerbach, "Modelled Sculpture & Plaster-Casting"*, Elek Books Limited, (1961)
- *Bruner Felton Barrie, "Mold Making, Casting & Patina"*, A.B.F.S. Publishing (1992)
- *Ronald D. Young, Robert A. Fennell, "Methods for Modern Sculptors"* Sculpt-Nouveau (1996)
- *Victor Wagner, "Plaster Casting for the Student Sculptor"* Alec Tiranti Ltd. (1963)
- *Paul N. Hasluck (editor), "Clay Modeling and Plaster Casting"*, Casstell and Company Ltd. (1912)
- *Thurston James, "The Prop Builder's Molding & Casting Handbook"*, Betterway Books (1989)

Materials and supplies

A list of suppliers and resources for materials and tools will be given and discussed in the first class.

All materials will be provided for this 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.

We will review the rules and etiquette for the sculpture studios on the first day of class. In the meantime, please:

- Be punctual and prepared for class
- Communicate directly with the instructor regarding your attendance issues.
- Communicate directly with instructor regarding grades (see Grading Practices above)
- Work only on class specific projects during class time
- Plan on participating in studio cleanup during the final ten (10) or fifteen (15) minutes of class