Instructor: Jilaine Jones
Class Hours: 9am – 1pm / 2pm – 6pm
Dates: Tuesday, September 5 – Friday, September 15
(no class: Sunday, September 10)

Course Description
Bas-relief is a territory which joins sculpture, drawing, and painting with material ideas oriented across a plane between the three- and two-dimensional. This Marathon will explore bas-relief as initiated through conveying the spatial construct of a perceptual source and also by focusing on the ideas and feelings offered by materials and through various approaches of process. Working perceptually, the topography of space is bas-relief’s revelation. Reliefs will be made in clay, cardboard, plaster, and mixed media. Drawing will be integrated throughout the Marathon as a continuation of the understanding and experience coming from each of the more physical processes. The source will be a setup with a model in the sculpture studios at the New York Studio School: the nature and ideas within this setup will be unconventional and will enable responses both to the wide span of an installation and to a closer experience of forms. Whatever the participant’s experience with working from life, it will offer a quality to support and develop. Ultimately, the direction this project takes will be oriented to the respective interests of each student. Some may stay within a rectangular format, while others may not; some may rework with the viewed source again and again, while others may extrapolate an essential idea. Discussion of the subject by images of precedents will be presented throughout the Marathon. This will cover the broadness of its possibility and how the specific abilities of bas-relief have worked, evolved, and played a role in the evolution of artistic consciousness. This course is as much a particular experience of seeing as it is of making – for the sculptor or painter it is a period focused on the touching and forming of the spatial.

Course Outline
The Marathon will begin with an introduction focusing on: smaller bas-reliefs using clay over a vertical board; collage and shallow constructions with paper; basic systems to organize the perceived as bas-relief; sections of the view, simplifications of the broader view, and different viewpoints. During the first week, work will increase in scale, in clay over board, and of paperboards/cardboard, and culminating in the use of direct plaster.

During the second week of the Marathon various ways to technically finalize the clay works will be demonstrated. Larger scales (approx. 4’ x 4’) of construction will be explored, bound by rectangle and not bound. By the middle of the second week, each student will advance an idea which has been developing, either continuing a close connection with the perceptual source or disconnecting from it to varying degrees.

Throughout the Marathon, we will explore the ways in which drawing can follow each process (does not initiate process); have discussions on bas-relief of the past and near present; have group viewing and discussion of the work in progress (this will include two evenings); as well as daily individual discussions with the instructor.
Learning Outcomes
Through participating in this Marathon, students will be able to make a bas-relief and possess an understanding of how this practice can hone in on and incentivize dynamic ideas about spatial organization. Students will experience parsing out incrementally: space, form, and materiality. Students will gain the opportunity to physically construct that which is a perceptual phenomenon; the direct handling of materials to “think” and to feel responsively. 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 at different pace: sooner – its speed enabling and holding an idea, or perhaps as a study for its potentials; or slower – being reconsidered and reworked throughout the course. There will be between 10 and 20 bas-reliefs produced. Participation in group discussions is expected to the degree that is individually comfortable. Attention by viewing, and engagement to precedents and the work in progress of the group.

Evaluation and Grading
NYSS MFA students participating in this marathon 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. 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, as is comfortable, with the group: for the project, realization of precedents, and the ongoing work of the group. The making of at least 10 bas-reliefs is expected.

General Readings and Resources, not required (last two more are specific)
• 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: excerpts (will have available)
• The Stones of Rimini, Adrian Stokes: excerpts (will have available)

Materials and Tools
The tools and materials for our Marathon can be found at both an independent hardware store (or the bigbox ones: Home Depot or Lowes, etc.) and any art store (including Dick Blick and Amazon). Please bring what you already have if you have, and both some bought and found cardboards of a variety of thicknesses, same for papers, especially if you have a love of using a certain heavier paper for instance.

• Paper for drawing, roughly 11 x 14 to 12 x 16, pad (easy to turn and position on easel) or quantity of, at least 30 sheets and 80 lbs.
• As per working in collage and paper or cardboard construction, it will be between the sizes of 10” and 10” and 4‘x5’. Heavy duty scissors.
• Wire snips for cutting wire cloth.
• Heavy duty Stapler and long staples at least 9/16” best.
• Hammer and long Brads, assortment of small nails.
• Basic Clay Tools: paring knife, fettling knife, wire tool, ribs, wooden modelling tools, wire loop tools.
• Larger scale Cardboard: to be purchased at NYSS.
• Hard Papers: over 100 lb weight, 140 lbs or more is great, but if you have what feels like heavy paper and you want to use, bring! Smooth like a vellum or hot-pressed is great, but to have also some with a surface even as textured as water-colour paper too it will add to possible qualities, Cardboards bought and found of varying thicknesses, of a few varieties: 2 pieces each, c 18” x 30”.
• Tacks.
• Tapes.
• Charcoal, Pencils, Red and Blue Pencils.
• Indian Red and Ultramarine Blue tempera paint. Brushes.
• Gesso.
• Paper Glues, Wood glues.
• Laundry Clips.
• Glue Gun and Glue sticks.
• Thin Plastic. – example: 4 mil. Husky roll. 10’ x 15’ approx., dry cleaner’s plastic, large garbage bags.
• Rubber gloves for plaster work.
• Set of chisels: ½, ¾, 1”
• A hand ‘Surform’.
• Leather gloves for work with wire cloth.

Materials supplied by NYSS include:
clay, wirecloth, burlap, plaster, wood backing for clay reliefs, larger scale cardboard.

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 – inclusive of any current Covid-19 protocols – laid out in the Student Handbook and School website, as well as any specific instructions given by the Instructor.