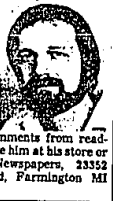


Sculpturing is expressive and fulfilling

This is another in a series of lessons on art and drawing by special columnist David Messing. He has taught for eight years and operates an art store, Art Store and More, 18774 Middlebelt, Livonia. Messing encourages questions and comments from readers. You may write him at his store or c/o Observer Newspapers, 23352 Farmington Road, Farmington MI 48024.



By David Messing
special writer.

"Wow, oh, hey wow look at those twins!" I thought to myself. It must have been love at first sight. After arranging an introduction I knew my life would never be the same. Within months I knew Sandy was the one for me. I remember once telling her, "I have waited for you all my life."

And now 15 years later, whenever she is late and I have to wait for her, I still tell her, "Honey, I've waited for you all my life!" But I do remember that introduction to Sandy and Sue (her sister) like it was yesterday, because it led to a love that continually supports me in whatever I do and the maintenance of it is my primary goal.

There is however another introduction that I also distinctly remember and that, in fact, was the name of the course, "Intro to Sculpture."

I clearly remember moulding the clay to the general shape of the male model's head. First I worked in the planes of the face, head and neck and with many stolen glances to either side of me I could see I was keeping up with the other students.

Then came time to do the features and this started to separate the "men from the boys" so to speak. Many of the sculptured lips looked like they were either "giving the raspberries" or puckered for a kiss. And the work of my own hands was producing the same three-dimensional error.

SO I did what any other self-respecting overweight sculpture student does. I went down to the snack bar and ate my frustrations away. Unfortunately when I returned, my sculpture actually looked worse.

So there we stood head to head. My sculpture seemed to scream out "hurry up and fix me!" And I with it. Henry in one hand and a Coke in the other couldn't think of what to do next.

So since I was out of money and couldn't possibly eat any more, I had to stay and face this problem. Bravely I cut the lips right off my sculpture and just stared at the model.

You know how I always write that it must be clear in your mind before it can be clear on canvas or paper? Well, this was the moment that it all was revealed to me. I had to see the main shape which was his nose. Then I saw the many subtle shapes in the lips. Then the texture of the skin of the lips and the mouth.

This was not a medium that allowed me to hide any difficult areas in shaded color, nor could I rub a little here and there to vaguely suggest a feature. This was three-dimensional modeling. This was creation, sculpture. To me this was the true art form! The formation of a three-dimensional image is the finest hour for any artist. The day and hour of my introduction to sculpture and the revelation of shape and mass will always be clearly remembered.

MY ENTIRE approach to art changed from that day forward. When I went to my life-drawing class it seemed easy to merely draw the two-dimensional image and simply to give it the three-dimensional shading.

In my approach to any object I drew or painted with an appreciation for not only its length and height but also its depth or mass. Because this moment was such a revelation to me, because the revelation affected my approach to all other media and because it opened my eyes to the third dimension I would like to take a couple weeks to introduce you to sculpture.

Even if you don't try it you may gain from just reading some of the basics of how it is done. You may even dislike working in three dimension but as I tell my students, "It is not important that you don't like a particular medium. It is worth a few lessons to learn how to use it so that your decision to never do it again will at least be an educated one."

As for my students they will all have the opportunity to decide for or against sculpture as it will be required when we move to our new facility some time after the first of the year.

It is surprising how many artists come from other fields of the visual arts. By that I mean there are many wood carvers who already have an appreciation for three-dimensional art, but are unaware that they can even draw.

I have one student named Leon, who is a wood carver. Since his beginning lessons at the Art Store, Leon has attracted much attention, as his ability to capture realism is remarkable.

EACH LESSON, each medium so far seems to come easy to him and I am sure it is so because of his three-dimensional background. As a humorous compliment to other new students, Maroon (one of our teachers) and I will say, "this lesson is turning out so well it almost has a 'Leon' look to it." So if your three-dimensional hobby is wood carving or ceramics you may be

surprised to find you too can draw.

Sculpture is the true art form, sculpture is expressive and fulfilling, sculpture is therapeutic, sculpture is the biggest mess you have ever seen in your whole life.

My wife and mother-in-law, June, threatened my life if I taught another student sculpture in our present classroom setting. The usual oil-base clay, wax and plaster materials are akin to accidents and debris.

While one student has clay stuck to the bottom of his tennis shoe another is flinging plaster to make a break mold, yet another is lost in a cloud of hydrostone dust as he or she mixes the plaster for pouring. Sounds fun doesn't it?

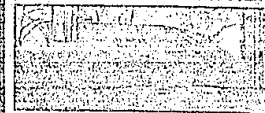
If you are ever going to try sculpture, summer is the time and outside is the place to try it. So hold on to your three-dimensional hats and we will start next week with an introduction to sculpture.

Here's a good line to end on. While bettering my mind watching "Beverly Hills Cop" one day Jed had a good comment about sculpture. He said, "bucks, sculpture's easy! Ya just cut away everything that don't look like what yer sculpture."



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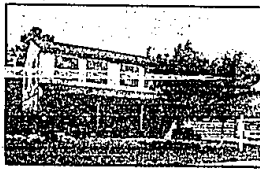
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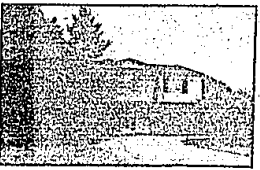
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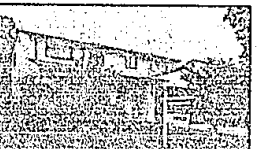
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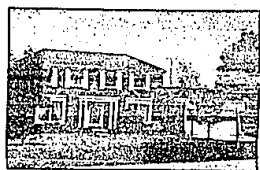
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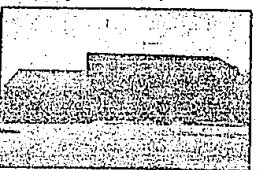
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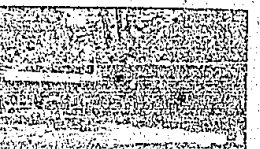
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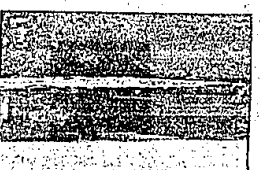
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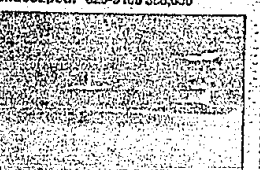
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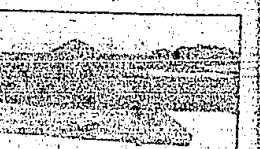
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Polish art exhibit has 105 works

The Detroit Institute of Arts is the exclusive U.S. site for "Symbolism in Polish Painting 1890-1914," which opens Wednesday, Aug. 1, and continues through Sunday, Sept. 23.

The exhibition introduces Polish Symbolism to the American public. It was organized by Dr. Agnieszka Morawinska of the National Museum in Warsaw. All 105 works by 40 Polish artists are from public and private collections in Poland.

The 164-page exhibition catalog, the only book on the subject in English, illustrates and discusses all works. Published by the Detroit Institute of Arts, it will be available from the Museum Shop.

A separate volume of scholarly essays on historic, literary, philosophical and aesthetic aspects of Polish Symbolism will be published before the close of the exhibition.

"Symbolism in Polish Painting 1890-1914" presents in depth for the first time that nation's contribution to the Symbolist movement which swept Europe in the last years of the 19th century.

Morawinska feels examination of these paintings should establish a broader understanding of 19th century art and contribute to the scholarly process of revisionism as it continues the reassessment of neglected aspects of this period.

"AT A TIME when Poland had no political autonomy, many of her artists focused on images which — at a highly poetic level — reflect the aspirations and melancholy of a suppressed nation," said J. Patrice Marandel, curator of European Paintings at the Detroit Institute of Arts, who has worked on the exhibition during several years of preparation.

Even a casual viewer will see the relationship of the exhibition's artists to better-known European Symbolists such as Edvard Munch, James Ensor, Ferdinand Hodler, Odilon Redon and Paul Gauguin.

Polish artists altered the Symbolist atmosphere of decadence and escapism with images evoking a sense of national identity during a continuing struggle for independence.

The struggle took place throughout

the turbulent 18th and 19th centuries which saw Poland — once the largest state in Europe — politically dissected by three successive partitions between Russia, Prussia and Austria.

Estates were confiscated, individuals deported, Polish universities in Warsaw and Wilno were closed, use of the Polish language was discouraged.

Great numbers of Poles went into exile in France, among them composer Frederic Chopin and poets Adam Mickiewicz and Juliusz Slowacki. Further efforts to regain independence in 1863 resulted in executions, deportations to Siberia and other measures to weaken the remaining Polish gentry. Only in the aftermath of World War I was Poland re-established as an independent state.

Through the long period of foreign domination, the residents of Warsaw and Cracow, as well as Poles in exile, clung to their common language, cultural traditions and the dream of a reunited motherland which provided the subject of many paintings in the exhibition.

The artists' message of yearning for a unified nation adds poignancy to this haunting array of portraits, landscapes and scenes combining bizarre with familiar images.

POETIC THEMES abound in their paintings, which combine allusions to current events with cosmic visions. The artists adopted a variety of styles — from the graphic visionary descriptions of Jacek Malczewski (1854-1929) to the elegiac compositions of Wladyslaw Slawinski (1854-1918) and the powerful inventions of Wojciech Weiss (1878-1929).

"Symbolism in Polish Painting 1890-1914" also presents works by Olga Bonamanna, Jozef Chelmonski, Adam Chodzinski, Stanislaw Czajkowski, Konrad Krzywicki, Jozef Miodover, Edward Okon, Jozef Pankiewicz, Wladyslaw Podkowinski, Witold Pruszkowski, Ferdynand Ruszczyc, Kazimierz Slawinski, Jan Slawinski, Wladyslaw Wankle, Leon Wyczowski, Witold Wychlicki and Stanislaw Wyzanski.