

Realizing Interactions:
Studies in Light,
Shadow and Line

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Art 493 SMP 1
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Introduction

Since my first year at St. Mary's College of Maryland, I have become deeply interested in working in three-dimensional mediums. Working with and understanding new material becomes a form of relationship. I can want to create something in a particular way, but without the cooperation from the material, I am stuck in stalemate. A conversation with the material became the most important aspect of my art this semester. Completing material tests allowed me to introduce myself to the material without scaring it or myself away. If there was one lesson I learned from this semester it is absolutely that testing materials over and over helps you come to terms with the limitations of a given material, and with that allows you to break down some of its boundaries. For example, when I attempt to represent landscapes and human figure, I must do so with the material in mind. As a human figure, how I interact with the material also plays a huge role in the outcome of my work. When I am anxious, tired and annoyed with the welding drying my hands up until they hurt, I do not get good welds. Instead, they are blotchy and grotesque. When I take this same process outside in the sunlight where breathing becomes easier, I find my welds to be continuously improving. Interaction is what I am getting at. My size is important so people feel they can walk into, around and about my work. There is not one way to look at them, arrange them or photograph them. The space they are in can change what they mean to me. The individual viewer is responsible for what it means to them. Sometimes I pick finished works up months later and make them grow into an entirely new piece. One thing is clear. I must continue the conversation between my materials, my subject and myself to come to clear and distinct understanding.

~Molly Houston



Wave
22" x 18" x 14"
Cardboard and Glue
2016



Forms In Space
5" x 9" x .8"
Cardboard, Sheet Metal and Glue
2016



Hayley
22" x 16" x 1.2"
Steel Rod, Steel Sheet and Mig Welding
2016



Seated Figure
13" x 4" x 1"
Wooden Plank, Ink and Chalk
2016



Study in Multiple Materials
5" x 5" x 1.2"
Sheet Metal, Wood, Glue and Ink
2016



Fracture
10" x 4" x 2.1"
Aluminum Sheet Metal
2016



Admissions Tree
9" x 4" x 1"
Sheet Metal, Wood, Cardboard and Glue
2016



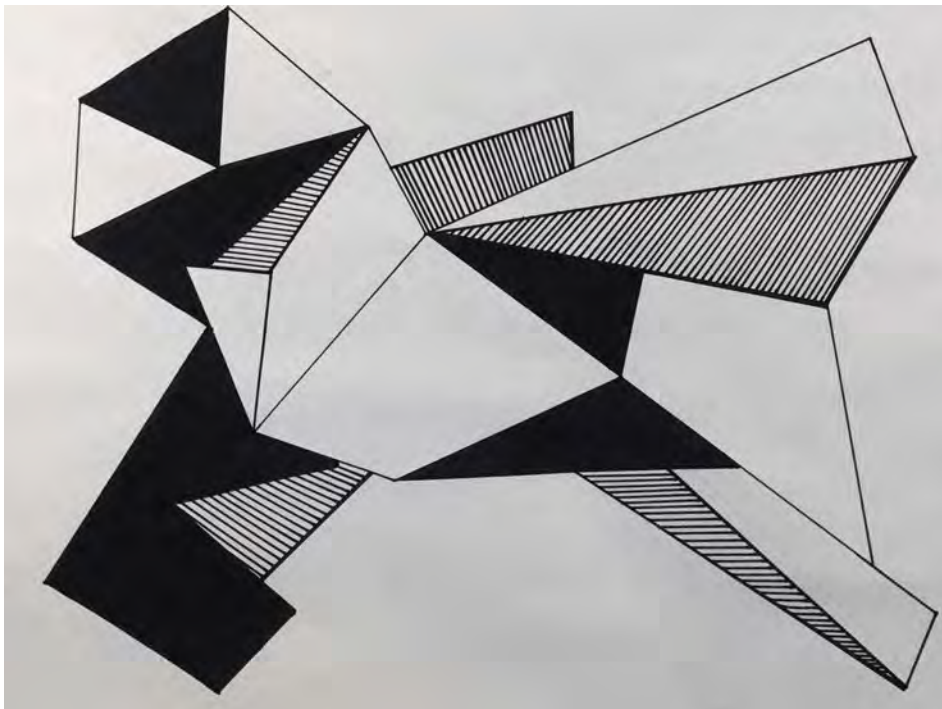
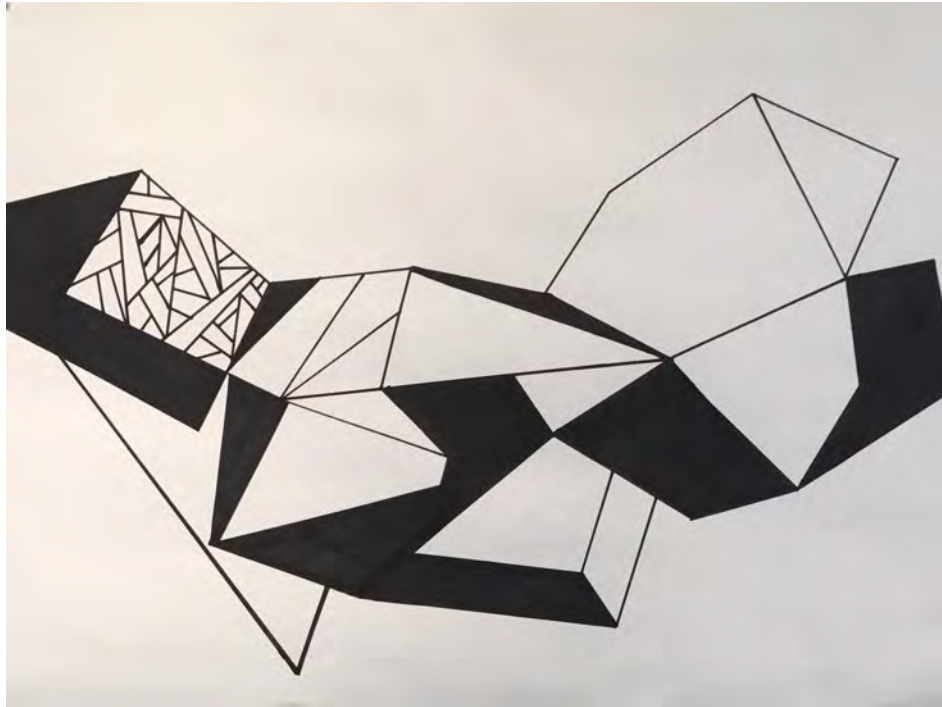
The First Dancers
8" x 4" x .2"
Sheet Metal, Wood and Glue
2016



Sailboat
4" x 3" x .5"
Steel Rod and Mig Welding
2016



The Dancer
18" x 5" x 1"
Wood and Glue
2016



First Reclining Figure and Second Reclining Figure
18" x 24"
Sharpie and Ink on Bristol Paper

2016



Invasive In Progress

27" x 64" x 8"

Cardboard, Hot Glue and Aluminum Sheet Metal

2016



Invasive
79" x 110" x 17"
Cardboard, Sheet Metal, Glue and Rivets
2016



Caroline
9" x 2" x 2"
Clay
2016



Floating Down Susquehanna
17" x 27" x 9"
Sheet Metal and Rivets
2016



Final Gallery Showing of Floating Down Susquehanna, Caroline and Fracture



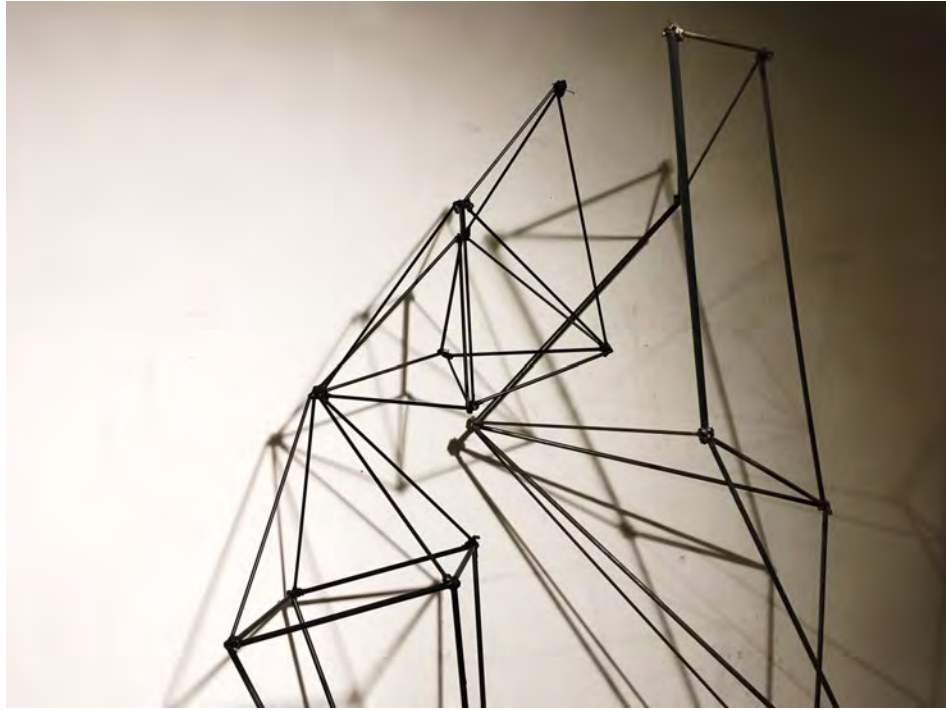
The Dancers In Progress



The Dancers In Progress



The Dancers In Progress



Detail Shots of *The Dancers*



The Dancers
68" x 45" x 56" to 110" x 57" x 49"
Steel Rod, Mig Welding and Spray Paint
2016



Final Gallery Showing

Questionnaire 1

Artists I feel an Affinity With

1. Georgia O'Keeffe. Some of my figural works utilize strong organic shapes that alone are not descriptive but together give an idea of subject. I also utilized minimal color in some of my drawing to dramatize a subject.

2. Alexander Archipenko. In both my figurative sculptures and drawings I have attempted to make subjects in planar space. I also delved into the shapes that make up the human figure and utilized them in both drawings and sculpture.

3. Richard Sweeny. I recently began creating objects that were once flat become dynamic and dimensional. In some of my cardboard and metal works I attempted to evoke feeling through utilizing contradictory subjects and materials.

Based on research I have already completed, I have learned and grown to appreciate that there are connections between the work that I have done in the past and the following art movements/artistic traditions in a geographic area or culture/artists.

1. Cubism. I have come to appreciate geometric shape as a means to exhibiting a place or thing.

2. Impressionism. I have grown an affinity to the idea of light in a composition. I also enjoy the idea of being able to manipulate a subject to allow others to see and feel the thing or place as you do. Giving the impression of a subject does more for the essence of a thing.

3. Expressionism. I enjoy depicting the world as I feel it rather than what I actually see. I believe it is a more interesting and dynamic way of working. My depictions should be internalized rather than exact replicas. Real life study is also extremely important to my work.

Using specific examples, tell some of the specific connections you understand to be part of your own history as an artist related to each of the above.

Cubism played a large role in some of my early metal sculptures. I enjoy blocking figure into integral geometric shapes, while also depicting movement. Simple geometric shapes allow me to strip down figures to their gesture, and for spaces to its most important features, such as movement. I have mostly used impressionism in my painted landscapes, which helps me in depicting the essence of a place as I see it. Expressionism has been used in my works with many materials. I enjoy allowing the material to affect and change my work. Allowing the process of my working shine through in the final piece.

I think that there are connections between the work that I plan to do in the future and these art movements/artistic traditions in a geographic area or culture.

1. I would like to work more with earth art movement, where pieces are site specific and utilize the landscape. This is mainly an American style, and I wish to utilize my own setting to make many studies within the setting.
2. Fauvism is also intriguing to me. I should learn more about color theory as time goes on, which I believe would help me create works that are successful with this movement. I have always enjoyed intense, eye-popping color.
3. Futurism is interesting to me, as it can utilize materials in contradictory ways. I enjoy studying technology and modern structure. Architecture is also deeply interesting to me. I have only done a few studies in it though.

Explain some of the specific connections you can anticipate between your future work/ideas and these art historical works/types of works

I would like to study more urban environments in the context of my relationship with them. I have done a few in Baltimore but I would like to continue working in a variety of mediums depicting urban spaces. I would like to utilize color in more of my sculptural works in a vibrant way. However, I would like to continue to stay true to the landscape, figure, and their essence in ways that are subtle but telling of the subject. Overall I would love to do more from life studies.

When I think about the work I would like to make in the future there are some artists that I think about, whose work and ideas

could guide my path to creating new work. Who are these artists? Tell what it is about their work that makes you feel a connection? Subject matter, the message conveyed, materials, techniques, scale, all or some of these things?

Most of all I feel a connection with Georgia O'Keeffe. I absolutely love the immense studies she's done of singular places. Each is so different, but most of her work was done utilizing only a few places. Her home in New Mexico seems to be where a large amount of her work was inspired by. It allows you to study a place in depth and reach conclusions about it. I also feel connections with Picasso and Archipenko in their use of negative space and objects surrounding the subjects as integral to the subject itself. In this way, I feel that you cannot depict a subject without also giving credit to its environment.

I've read biographies on these artists (what you've read up until this moment in time):

Georgia O'Keeffe
Alexander Archipenko
Lyonel Feininger
Pablo Picasso
Matisse

How I connect or do not connect with these artists.

I connect with all of these artists in the importance of essence and subject. I do not paint as much as Picasso, Matisse, Feininger or O'Keeffe, as sculpture is my favorite art form. I utilized less color than most of these artists, but focused on similar subject matters and styles.

The books I chose for my Partner.

1. Visions and Justice. This was a magazine and had many photographic artists. This was definitely my top chose for Hayley because she wants to work with justice on a visual scale.

2. The Nude Male. Margaret Walters. I thought this would be a great book for discovering male positions and stances that are enforced by our culture.

Hayley noted wanting to put females in male positions. Where better than to start looking at some dudes!

3. Censoring the Body. Edward Lucie-Smith. This was a great find to because it discusses how we may inadvertently censor the body even when attempting to do the opposite.

These are the books chosen for me by my partner

1. Hoffman, Katherine. (1984). *An Enduring Spirit; The Art of Georgia O'Keeffe*. Scarecrow PR.

2. Blossfeldt, Karl. (1986). *Art Forms in the Plant World*. Dover Publications.

3. Elsen, Albert. (1972). *The Sculpture of Henry Matisse*. Abrams First Edition.

I am interested to combine my interest in Expressionism with Cubism. Tell why you are interested in doing this, and what you hope will be accomplished by doing this.

I would like to create subjects in planar space, but I would also like the process of my work to shine through in the final product. I enjoy using fractals in space and would like to continue to work on that. I would also like to seek integral aspects of a subject that are often overlooked as interacting with the object to create meaning.

I have read about and looked with keen interest at the work of Artist X, and there are things about the work I don't understand, or connections to art of the past that I need more information about. Tell more about this here.

I have read about Lyonel Feininger, and something that interests me most about him is his long span of time in where he did not allow anyone to see his work. I would like to learn more about what went on during this time and how he changed his work so drastically. I would also like to learn more about his medium of oil paint and how he segmented space so perfectly with it.

I need to learn and know more about Fauvism, but need help finding more information and/or understanding how this movement/artists relate to (my work, this artist, something else). Tell what you have done so far in terms of preliminary research efforts.

I have begun a book on color theory, which I have very little knowledge about. I love vibrant color for some pieces and for others minimal. Either way, I would like to learn more about utilizing color in my works. I would like to do this in a way that would not disrupt the feeling of the dimensionality of the piece, but aid in it.

Questionnaire 2

Artist

David Smith
1906-1965

List 3 books you have checked out of the library on your artist
(full citation):

You must have read the Introduction and 1 chapter from these books – tell what you have read.

**Hamill, Sarah. (2015). *David Smith in Two Dimensions*.
University of California Press. Oakland, California.**

In this book, Hamill delves into the realm of materiality and its automatic intentions. Much of the introduction cites Smith's love for photographing his work. Throughout his career photography acted as a means for proliferating his work into the main stream. He states "Reproduction seems to act as a first acquaintance- and eliminate some of the barriers" (Hamill, 2015). He took thousands of photographs of his work and sent them to critics, curators, dealers, editors and patrons. His photographs were published in a myriad of print sources and thus became an entity of their own. These barriers he speaks of are in some way a purposeful limitation. In his photographs he was able to control the image for which we see. In sculpture, especially outdoor installation sculpture, the environment constantly plays on the meaning an essence of the sculpture. Smith was no foreigner to this concept, and utilized it heavily. However, photography allowed him to depict as he saw, and control the viewer's interpretation. The encounter was exceedingly different in these two mediums. His combined works required that his sculptures were "contingent thing, subject to the conditional factors of display" (Hamill, 2015). Size, medium, space, person and interaction made every viewing a unique experience, relying on the interdependence of all of these things. Sometimes, Smith went as far to personify his sculptures, destabilizing them from an idea of stagnation and stillness. In 1958, Smith composes a group of sculptures and captions them "Steel sculptures gather outside the artist's studio". He gives every piece an individual life and plot, denying them from a singular

meaning or purpose. He photographs them, to capture moments of their 'lives'.

Alcauskas, Katherine. (2011). *Social Surrealism: David Smith's Women in War*. Yale University Press. New Haven, Connecticut.

This work describes David Smith in context, which is likely integral to understanding David Smith as an artist of many faces. To deny his context would be to deny the sole purpose of his work. Alcauskas emphasizes surrealism as Smith's means of creation, while limiting the connection to Picasso and Giacometti and their own art movements. Smith was heavily influenced by French surrealist sculptors. Specifically, incongruous object and shape highlighted feeling and emotion over physical attributes. It is interesting though, that many of his works had specific titles portraying objects such as 'The Iron Woman' or 'Wagon'. The objects themselves were not reliant on their titles, rather broke through and exploded into meaning and depth. Overall, Smith disliked surrealism, but borrowed many concepts such as blending the inanimate with the anthropomorphic object creating contradiction and juxtaposition. His materiality also called for a sort of contradiction as steel is hard, immobile and sharp, and his subjects were not. Blending industrialization and humanity proved to evoke anxiety and tension from which he gained meaning.

McCarthy, David. (2010). *David Smith's Spectres of War and Peace*. Art Journal. Boston, Massachusetts.

During World War II, Smiths are illustrated what it meant to be an artist in a time of violence and anxiety. Most notably, his two "Spectres" conveyed strong political statements about war both in composition and title. Spectres here can be synonymous with essence. Both were created in environment of war and propaganda. It is clear through his sketches that he often worked from observation in the heavily mechanized world he lived in. The material of steel also undoubtedly was a form of commentary on the rapid industrialization surrounding him. The steel created a statement of creating icons of machines and allowing them to control livelihood and judge superiority. McCarthy paint Smith as a "moral force" to uphold human value in a period where "political propaganda emphasized the opposite" (McCarthy, 2010). Movement became imperative to this message. While all of his sculptures were immobile themes of forward progression, rotation, and even flight became sources of motif and commentary of everyday life during the war. He almost satirized the

depictions of war in the media as relying on shocking statement and allure. Speed became paramount to winning the war, and it was speed that Smith Capitalized on. His sculptures reveal an intentional ambiguity that can be viewed in many different ways. A sculpture could both be seen charging forward or retreating based on the angle of viewing. In this sense, Smith highlighted the idea that in war no one is a winner. Rather, we see a universal suffering caused by a wish for domination and imperialism. Post war, his art gained new meaning and purpose. Intellectual and revolutionary movements utilized his work to prevent future violence. Without reminder "the human community would be under constant threat" (McCarthy, 2010). His later work would become removed from this anxiety, but never completely freed from this constant threat.

List 2 books you have checked out of the library on art movements related to your artist (full citation). You must have read the Introduction and 1 chapter from these books – tell what you have read.

Hellstein, Valerie. (2014). *The Cage-iness of Abstract Expressionism*. University of Chicago Press. Chicago, Illinois.

This work outlines the connection between abstract expressionism and Zen Buddhism. Abstract expressionism was a label that David Smith was placed under and often denied this connection. The author of this work highlights that "scholars have downplayed abstract expressionism's connection to Zen and Asian influences" (Hellstein, 2014). In reality, concepts from this indistinct art movement reflect ideologies held for centuries. Mainly, they idea of art as based in progress rather than goal and outcome. Qualitative judgements have no role in expressionism. Similar ideas come forth in consideration nothingness, that is, the concept that subject and artist are one in the same and hold no entity or essence alone. They must exist "simultaneously, interconnected". In Smith's wartime life, ideologies of us against them were dominating the political atmosphere. His commentary sought to understand this era as mutual and relying on the whole. This idea denies a singular essence of a subject, and views it more as an interaction. Alone it could be compared to a hollow cavity for which meaning cannot come to fruition. In togetherness is essence formed. Subject is but a receptacle for experience and interaction, without which a void is formed. Also in consideration is the changeability of art over time.

Both in the process of creation and viewing is the form itself manipulated. Codependent origination, while a Buddhist term, can highlight ideologies of expressionist artists that seek to remove the subject from exact interpretations, for this would deny the experience as imperative to process and art. Goal and fruition should not be the motivators, rather the study and experience of art can be more mindful and understanding of the thing. The thing itself need not be defined by itself, instead context becomes paramount.

Weisstein, Ulrich. (1973). *Expressionism as an International Literary Phenomenon*. Librairie Marcel Didier, Paris, and Akademiai Kiado. Budapest, Hungary.

Unlike Futurism, Dada, Cubism and Surrealism, the exact nature of Expressionism cannot be so easily defined. In a perfect truth, expressionism is more easily described by what it is not than by what it is. It is opposed to the strict rules and regiments of classical Greek and Roman work present in the renaissance. "Expressionism, which culminates in the total detachment from reality by means of a purely visionary experience, cannot be directly realized" (Weisstein, 1973). While illuminating the idea that definition is impossible, it is none the less imperative to discuss and debate. This is the true essence of expressionism: Devoted to process, interaction and dialogue between things. It is a conscious attempt to breathe life into art and object. It is to recognize subject as changeable and indistinct. We cannot deny it as a movement though. As decades pass it is clear that the movement acts more as a conversation between art forms, artists and patrons than a set of strict rules. Subject became living and breathing, their "existence inspired interest, passion, or revolt" (Weisstein, 1973). The expressionist works upheld the human condition and the inherent nature of socialization in art. That is, removal from this condition was impossible and should be recognized as such. Expressionists based their work upon a hope for a new humanity, realizing the constant dynamism present in our world. The psychological condition is just as much an actor in object as the physical parts of it. In most cases, more important. With expressionism, breath and rhythm in subject encapsulated a fundamental feature of representation. The conversation becomes the truth in an object, denying its role as solitary and stagnant.

Subject matter(s) of artist focuses on:

David Smith focused on a great many subjects. In many ways this large range of subjects illuminated the idea of codependent origination, or the idea that subjects only come into fruition through interactions between all things present. Human form became paramount, as well as landscape and mechanical creation. These three, while distinct, also seemed to interact in a way that would define his career. Subject, clearly defined by title could take on new roles. Interaction was key to understanding his work.

Materials and techniques of artist:

Smith was largely known for his steel work which encompassed most of his notable career. However, in his beginnings he worked with found objects such as wood, coral and plaster. Some work was done in bronze casting. He often said that he should be among the painters, and felt his sculpture acted much more like paintings. Utilizing mig gas and torch welding he was able to construct compositions that freed themselves from the bonds of rigidity in his material. At the end of his life he was truly a master of manipulation and deception when it came to making the hard medium of metal into dynamic objects. His later career also brought about splashes of intense color and vibrancy similar to that of the surrealist and expressionist painting movements.

Art historians and art critics have written this about my artist - according to art historians and art critics, the three most important aspects of my artist's work are ...

Provide evidence for these important aspects using 3-5 excerpts from your research, fully cited here, followed by a summary paragraph that tells your understanding of the meaningfulness to your artist's work and ideas.

1. His works acted as an interaction and dialogue between the subject and the environment for which they were in.

"He achieves this push and pull-between landscape and abstract steel sculpture, between individual and collective-using a low point of view and crisp focus to exaggerate and amplify his objects" (Hammill, 2015).

2. His works were commentary and criticism of World War II, denying the "us and them" mentality, and upholding a mutual responsibility for the state of upheaval present. Even post war did his works illuminate this concept. Movement became paramount to this ideology.

David Smith developed “Grotesque and tortured beings, along with a similar indictment of hypocrisy of those in power” (Alcauskas, 2011).

“This young American sculptor has put the nervousness, conflict, horror of our day into forms that seem to fly” (McCarthy, 2010).

3. Materiality and process breathed new meaning into his work. Prior to being an artist, Smith worked in factories as a welder for the war effort. Although his material of steel seems contradictory to organic form and life, it became imperative to his message. Often, he would purposefully leave remnants of his process to integrate the subject and the material into a dynamic and related being.

“His well-known interest in the material of steel, was informed to some extent by radical criticism of Western Imperialism and his infatuation with regression-the idea that humanity devolves when civilization fails to advance” (McCarthy. 2010).

Art historical movements (at least 2) that provide context for artist’s work and ideas. This is not your opinion or conjecture.

Summarize the key aspects of this art movement in your own words, based on your research. Cite authors from your research listed on your bibliography (in-progress). Your citations should not come from Wikipedia or dictionaries on art (of course you can read these references for your initial background understanding)

1. Surrealism

The movement of surrealism is not fully “unreal”. Instead, it has the connotation and root of meaning above or in addition to as defined by the Merriam Webster Dictionary. Surrealist artists do not betray the reality, but rather dig into its core, where few have been before. Some scholars link surrealism and psychoanalysis. Freud and Dali are among a few of the examples of intellectual and artistic counterparts. The ego as well as the unconscious, both mysterious and unknown interacts with us in such a way that the formation of schemas around them is present. It is particularly to

the individual that these concepts evade us. Smith, while not directly studying the unconscious, realized objects and subjects as interwoven pieces produced by things seen and unseen, understood and unclear. Labeling every aspect becomes difficult in Smith's work, yet their presence is tangible. His work as well as surrealist work relies on opposites as inherently tied together. Peace is essential to violence, life is essential to death, and nothing is essential to thing.

Caws, Mary Ann. (1997). *The Surrealist Look: An Erotic's of Encounter*. The MIT Press. Cambridge, Massachusetts.

"In surrealism nothing stays where it should or used to. Things keep pouring into each other-as in the image of those *communicating vessels* by which Andre Breton characterized the surrealist mingling of night and day, death and life, and all other contraries. Things and people and ideas refuse to stay in their own domain, the way we remember them, and the way they are presented. Instead they insist, across centuries and countries, that they can be best seen not just in but *through* the other".

2. Expressionism

The major difference I see between expressionism and surrealism is that expressionism is about observable feeling, while surrealism delves into the psyche that we overlook, ignore, or cannot see at all. In some ways, expressionism deals with the conscious and surrealism with the unconscious. David Smith dealt with both, and cannot fit perfectly into either of these categories. I see him as an expressionist with his sculpture concerning the feeling of anxiety and industrialization during World War II. He sought to depict a place as it was felt by those who lived in it. I see him as a surrealist artist in some of his pieces that make vague the gender of an obviously figural work. In areas we will see curves denoting a female body, and in areas we will see somewhat phallic objects. With these he deals with the unconscious ideals of gendered form.

Weisstein, Ulrich. (1973). *Expressionism as an International Literary Phenomenon*. Librairie Marcel Didier, Paris, and Akademiai Kiado. Budapest, Hungary.

“Like cubism, futurism, and other avant-garde movements, expressionism was an answer to the uncertainty and confusion caused, at the beginning of our century, by the overthrow of values and principles on which a fixed world view was previously based. It was an answer-not of intellect, as cubism was-but of passion. Rather than restricting itself to a search for new technical solutions, it tended to engage the entire man, the very sense of his existence, and the consciousness of his being” (Weisstein, 1973).

3. Futurism

Some would walk up to one of David Smith’s sculptures and label it with the movement of futurism. I would argue against this claim, as Smith does not glorify industrialization, rather uses it as a means for criticism of it. He also uses commonly used futurism material like steel, but his subjects are often at odds with this material. Together it does not create futurist ideals.

Why it is important to understand the art historical context that preceded the work of my artist. This should be a combination of information you have learned from your research and then your synthesis of this with other art knowledge you possess. Use a combination of quotes/citations from your research AND your own analysis based on your research.

David Smiths subject and practice arose out of War torn America. His pieces were both commentaries on, and comprised of the war and what it meant to him as an artist and welder. In a way, it was how he continued to understand his world through a technique that was repetitively encouraged. The faster he created, the better for his country. It is also important to understand how expressionism arose out of dissatisfaction with the status quo. It was a means of upheaving the ideologies of the present, and recognizing their imminent demise. A world could not last like this for long. Additionally, it is important to realize that Smith, like many artists post War, did not subscribe to a particular movement, and thus significant study and discussion is needed to understand their art in context. One answer will not suffice, rather discussion is the goal, if you could call it that.

“When the ages of tanks and locomotives was over, sculpture would preserve the skills that had once brought them to be. He understood sculpture as both a quintessential product of its moment and a means of manufacture ideally positioned to exhibit the skilled labor by which the other products came to be”(Hamill, 2015).

His later career would shift from the anxiety producing sculptures depicting the war, but never completely diverged. It remained ever present in his work. Perhaps this is because the idea of domination, industrialization and imperialism never disappeared. Perhaps it is because the war will continue its effects long after its fruition. It is likely a combination of the two. To deny his historical context would limit the viewer and interpreter from gaining meaning, which is absolutely there.

How does the combination of form (composition, materials, size, etc.) and subject matter create meaning (the content of a work art)? Choose 1 work. Base your answer on your research and tell how this happens in 1 paragraph. Then write a 2nd paragraph that is your own response to the work with regard to meaning informed by factors beyond your research but that also include your research.

Raven IV by David Smith

Forms and subject matter often are opposing each other in Smith’s works. In Raven, we feel intense upward movement through the use of dramatic and juxtaposed diagonal line and shape. We feel the entity lift out of the bonds of the material it is made out of and take on new life. This was important to expressionists: life in work. Smith sought to give every one of his pieces breath, sometimes even personifying them and giving them action.

This commentary could be said for many of his works. Primarily the use of steel and subject matter of a flying bird is contradictory. In this way he compares his labor to that labor of the bird flying. Him and the bird are connected and essential to one another. In this way he is freeing himself from the bonds of his own material from which he was originally required to do for the war effort. He changes it, manipulates it into being something that it is not. First he must empty it of its meaning. In each piece, he fills its entity up again anew, drawing on the things around him.

3 contemporary artists related to my artist. Provide 1 image each plus a website/link below. For each artist, write about how you understand the relationship to your artist. If you have uncovered this information, include what contemporary art historians and critics say about these three artists. Include full citations as appropriate.

Henry Moore

I see a connection with Smith and Moore in the experience of the viewer. Both chose to create larger than life works for specific reasons. With these works it is more interactive, and at times you cannot view the entire thing. Multiple perspectives are required. Moore similarly to Smith personifies his sculpture, which comes through in some of the titles. Interaction is key for both of these artists.

Alexander Calder

I see a connection between Calder and Smith in their use of shape and material. Both of their works take on vague identities as well, however they all have a sort of life and breath to them, as if they could easily walk and move.

Seymour Lipton

I have only recently begun looking into Seymour Lipton, but the resemblance is often uncanny. His works often utilize many subjects rather than one, and integrate them in a singular fashion. Smith sometimes did this, especially in his landscapes. Stark, straight lines accompany organic shape, which is a technique Smith used.

COMPARE AND CONTRAST

Part 1

I aspire to have my work relate to this artist in several key ways.

Hudson River Landscape (Steel)

1951

David Smith

49 15/16 x 75 x 16 3/4 in.

My work relates to David Smith's Sculptural work in many key ways. Primarily, in the sense of line, shape and material as meaning makers. For us, realistic representation is not the important factor in our work. Rather developing a theme, meaning and emotion surrounding the object. While my work is not yet to the size that his is, I seek to work at this size. We both pick important aspects of our environments and subjects and create entire pieces based on that one essence. We both believe in the form as an interaction rather than a thing. We both emphasize aspects of our subjects that are not generally thought of.

Part 2

The ideas I have for my work are also different from this artist.

My work currently differs from Smith through the absence of voids. While my work is comprised of many objects similar to Smith, mine lacks the voids in space that his works do. He also utilizes curved and straight lines as a means for explanation of space. His also sits on top of a surface rather than hanging on the wall. Small shapes are interwoven between the lines, but the lines remain the paramount factor of representation here. The title also gives a larger meaning to this work upon second glance.

Questionnaire 3

Artist

Henry Spencer Moore

1898-1986

List 3 books you have checked out of the library on your artist

Lassaigne, Jaques. (1972). *Homage to Henry Moore*. Tudor Publishing Company, New York.

It is easy to say that Moore worked primarily as a figural sculptor. However, his sculpture is also indicative of other natural objects such as "pebbles, rocks, bones, trees, plants, etc." (Lassaigne 1972). His pieces are often represented to interact with their environment, rather than to remain solitary to it. We find this interaction within the subject matter, the environment for which it is installed, and the material for which the figure is born. This reading also touched on the idea of his work as directly developing composition from pre-Columbian and Mexican sculpture. Henry Moore spoke of a specific reading on Negro sculpture by Roger Fry that appeared in "The Atheneum" in 1920. In his early twenties, this seemed revolutionary to him, which is seen through his primary wood sculpture. An interaction with this history also becomes paramount. Lassaigne argues that "Moore's art is founded on a duality and that the two elements that constitute its exist in a state of fertile tension, even when they interpenetrate, seem to join together or coincide" (Lassaigne 1972). Here, she highlights the significance of what she calls a "rupture" in development when forms are placed in unusual scale and perspective. Surrealism allowed him to grow conscious of this, and breath life into generally lifeless objects.

Place, similarly to David Smith, became a backbone to composition for Moore. He had a desire to "think beneath the surface, to understand what lies in the heart of the hills, rocks, mountains and flowing streams. They were for him the visible evidence of a living organism, the earth" (Lassaigne 1972). Moore was fixated on the interrelationship between space and form. Most of his sculptor was and continues to be installed in the place from which they were inspired. From this we also gain a contrast between what is solid and what is empty space. Each plays a significant role. It can also be argued that Moore was the first artist to truly study the impact of negative space as integral to function and perception.

Communication between all things present form a stress and a dignity to each sculpture, and each sculpture is an essence with in itself that breathes, feels and interacts.

Melville, Robert. (1966). *Henry Moore: Sculpture and Drawings 1921-1969*. Harry N. Abrams, Inc. Publishers, New York.

Materiality was an adventure for Moore. Traveling to new places brought about opportunity for understanding a new landscape through direct and tactile study of it. In his early years, wood was a favorite material and harkened back to pre-Columbian and African work. He liked to “play” with clay as well, but nothing excited him as much as stone as he moved into his middle age. He stated, “A piece of stone, any piece of stone in a landscape, I just love” (Melville 1966). Stone seemed to represent to him the bones and inner workings of a landscape, and thus working with them became a communication with the landscape itself.

The titles of his work imply an intent that varied throughout his career. Some were called figures, others more abstract ideas like “Metamorphosis (1928)”. However, some came with an “admirable directness” such as “Hole and Lump” (1934) and “Two Forms” (1934). These pieces became an almost comical declaration of an absolutely fulfilled intent. Together, his accumulated works portray a remarkable self-awareness in the process of creation. This idea radiated throughout his career, calling on a consciousness that could defy the logical realm of composition. Critics have noted Moore’s ability to create work that seemed to swell and grow from within, rather than to feel chiseled out of a larger object. I believe it is important to express the importance of specifically bone and stone to his work. Both seem to form similarly, and much of his work resembles that kind of growth. Subject matter remained less important than the symbolic growth and life. Bone and stone represented to Moore an inner working of the object and place.

It is also clear that Moore’s work became an extension of himself, to the point that his being was presupposed on the act of creating these sculptures. During World War II, he was unable to create sculpture as he did before and began drawing. “Crowd Looking at Tied up Object” was a drawing that enlightened critics to Moore’s desire to resume his sculptural work. This interaction and communication he felt towards his studies in sculpture were a missing component of his life. War had its distinct impact on his work, and to him it felt unequivocally limiting. To say that Moore had

an emotional tie to his works would be an understatement. For him, sculpture became a means of understanding his environment, and making sense of an often-nonsensical world.

Gibson, Eric. (2002). *The Writings of Henry Moore*. New Criterion, Volume 21, Issue 4.

We are lucky to have such an extensive bibliography with over six hundred utterances of Henry Moore. However, from his earliest years Moore warned against writing excessively about his work, especially when in the process of creating it. He noted that "It releases tension needed" to work (Gibson 2002). However, throughout his career Moore would become an artist of great idiom and conversation. He constantly welcomed interview and requests to speak on his thoughts on art. Gibson notes "he made himself available for interviews on a scale more in keeping with a politician than a practicing artist" (Gibson 2002). Critics have said his approach to these, unlike Picasso or Giacometti, was down to earth, and the "prose workmanlike". There was no attempt at immodesty or grandeur. As World War II ravaged through his settings, he became more analytical and attempting to convey ideas. His works during these times began to have more and more distinct purpose. He wrote that it is through the importance of natural forms that one "learns such principles as balance, rhythm, organic growth of life, attraction and repulsion, harmony and contrast" (Gibson 2002). Tying in with surrealist viewpoints, he upheld the idea that unrecognized and recognizes psychological factors played an essential role in his sculptures. Similarly, knowledge of history and intellect is imperative to his composition.

Moore used words to separate between the outside world and his own artistic impulses and intents. He used writing to highlight the struggle that was necessary to creating structures that had life and breath. To resolve these struggles would leave the composition to readily accessible and planned. It was in the tension, stress and struggle that Moore found revelation and inspiration. In some ways, Moore did what was expected of him to "gain the freedom to do what he wanted where it mattered most-in the studio" (Gibson, 2002). It is interesting to me that Moore seemed at odds with words. Interviewers often noted their frustrations in getting him to talk, and when they did, feeling as though he had previously edited his life as to make these interviews all lead to one direction. However, in some ways it was important for Moore to never go off book in his words, as only

a few principles remained unchanging in his work. In this way he did act like a politician, using his words to protect his persona, and truly being expressive in his sculptural works.

List 2 books you have checked out of the library on art movements related to your artist (full citation). You must have read the Introduction and 1 chapter from these books – tell what you have read.

Conley, Katherine. (2013). *Surrealism, Ethnography, and the Animal-Human*. College of William and Mary. Taylor & Francis Group. United Kingdom.

Surrealists dealt with what it meant to be human. They established significance between the sentient and the mindless, and blurred the lines that distinguish these to as opposites. The movement of surrealism began as a line of questions on the truth of limits and possibilities of the human identity. While some have said that the surrealist ideal was inherently human, Conley argues that it is instead and “oscillating between humanistic and nonhumanistic perspectives” (Conley 2013). It is recognition of unconscious drives and interactions between all things that pervade our perception. Surrealism was an attempt to understand the human condition, and in this way was humanist, while also denying a distinct entity of human at separating from the natural world, and in this way it was nonhumanistic. Alongside intellectuals such as Sigmund Freud, Jaques Lacan and Clause Levi-Strauss, surrealism took its place in giving significance to the unconscious and unseen. The unknown became just as important as the concrete and understood. Questions arose about the “Centrality of human beings, particularly Western human beings, to human thought, human rights, and the place of human being in the world” (Conley 2013). The surrealists posed their manifesto to encourage individuals to reject rationalism that they had been taught to revere. It highlighted the idea that sentience was much broader than once defined. It was not only humans and animals that held this label, rather it could be shared by other species and objects.

Fry, Robert. (1933). *Negro Sculpture at the Lefevre Gallery*. The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs, Volume 62. United Kingdom.

In every reading on Henry Moore I have come across, Robert Fry's writing on Negro Sculpture has been mentioned as fundamental to Moore's work. It quickly became apparent that to understand Moore, I must read this work too, for which we have called it "primitive art". Fry begins by explaining that the showing of Negro work in 1933 was the richest that London had ever seen. He notes that the West prior to this was too keen to deny the importance of Negro art, and how slow we have been to recognize its influence. He extends this oversight to the impact of many factions of the western society including government, music and ideology. He continues that no art that is more spiritual than that of native Africa. They have always been interested in the invisible world of spirits and their impact on human life. In each case, the artist develops a unity to express the idea of an indwelling spirit that overcomes the physical limitations of the human form. He realized the remarkable gift of the Negro sculptor to express support while also highlighting plastic harmony. These people who influenced Moore so heavily were prior to this, thought of as barbaric and unrefined.

Stecker, Robert. (1997). *The Constructivists' Dilemma*. Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism. United States.

Constructivists are individuals who hold the view that art is not only constructed by the artwork, but also by the people who view it, the time it is created, the material from which it is created and the environment for which it is in. It replaces the concern with composition and replaces it with construction. It calls on a new idea of attention to materiality, rather than the subject matter alone. It offers the claim that there can be competing interpretations of the same work and thus, one work can "construct" itself to the individual in many ways and that changes the object. Unseen properties of an object become as important as the physical and seen. Interpretations are the completing part of a piece of art, and thus it is not the artist alone who formulates his or her work.

Subject matter(s) of artist focuses on:

Almost all of Henry Moore's works were figural. However, it was the natural entities of the world from which he found his inspiration. Entities of the landscape were as important to his subject matter as the figural elements he was portraying. Some of his works departed from any subject at all, and instead focused on their presence in the natural landscape.

Materials and techniques of artist:

Moore was known to constantly change his material of choice. In the beginning of his career, he harkened to a Negro art through his use of wood carving and absolutely attributed it to this source. Later, he would find a love for stones from the landscapes for which he studied.

Throughout his career he prided his work on an unexpected and often contradictory material and subject. This particular stress evoked an interaction unseen between the environment and his subject.

Art historians and art critics have written this about my artist

1. They consistently credit him for the foundation and invention of using negative space in a way that was not seen before. In a way, parts of his objects were negative space while also being positive space, it was not as distinct as negative space was space without object in it. Many times, it would even shift.
2. Contradiction between material and subject matter. He felt a need to change the way people viewed the material and in this way made monumental art. A subject that was ephemeral with an object that was not.
3. Composing life like objects, which seem to grow from the inside out. Often his sculptures have been compared to bone in that they seem to grow from the inside out, even though that is not true (Gibson 2002).

Art historical movements (at least 2) that provide context for artist's work and ideas.

1. Surrealism deals with the unconscious. It is for this reason that it is very hard to define surrealism simply on the visual aspects of it alone. It deals in

what our conscious mind does not pick up, and there for can be very hard to describe. However, it puts emphasis on interactions that are often left unattended (Gibson 2002).

2. Primitive remained widely unacknowledged until the 1930's in London. Moore constantly spoke of this showing in London as well as a paper about primitive art by Fry (1933) as a permanent source for his work. His early wood works showed their roots from Africa and Columbia, but so did all of his works in subject matter. Historians have said that this primitive art was much better at dealing with the spirit and essence of all objects than western art counterparts.
3. Negative Space was a large factor in him creating works that seemed both tied to the environment and the body itself. Negative and positive space in his works seems to change throughout the piece, leaving a complete form in places and incomplete in others.

Why it is important to understand the art historical context that preceded the work of my artist.

Henry Moore's work was deeply affected by World War II. You see a distinct shift in his work. During wartime, he was unable to work in the mediums he wanted because stone and wood were in short supply due to the war effort. He turned to drawing as a war-time artist and often created works that enlightened us to his inner struggle about not being able to do sculpture. I feel a strong connection with him on this. All I ever want to do is sculpture, but no one or nothing is telling me I can't. Many of his drawing displayed objects being encased or hidden from view. Here, he highlights his struggle (Gibson 2002)

How does the combination of form (composition, materials, size, etc.) and subject matter create meaning (the content of a work art)?

Henry Moore
Four Piece Compositions: Reclining Figure
1934

This work is a few pieces arranged in a particular way together. He often utilized multiple objects to make up a whole. He was noted saying that he enjoyed the ability to move round his parts often to create new and dynamic gesture (Gibson 2002). The use of a singular bade too pull them together. The stone again, is contradictory to a form that is able to move and have further movement. It is in this rift that we get a more interesting composition.

I believe the size (8 ft. 3ft) is a great indicator that he is attempting to make you interact with it in a way you would interact with a real human being. In an even more literal way, he often was known to allow people to move around these objects when displayed outside. He develops this contradictory nature of material and subject, which is why the piece has an added level of intrigue. Our minds seek out the abnormal, and this absolutely does that. Lastly, he uses an interaction between all of these objects in the form of negative space as equally important to the objects themselves.

3 contemporary artists related to my artist.

William Turnbull
Horse
1946

- Negative Space
- Planar constructions
- Material

Phillip King
Dunstable Reel
1970

- Distinct shape as plane and movement
- Negative space as interacting with the object
- Size

- We oppose each other in color use

Anthony Caro
Piece CCCCVIII
1977

- Line as integral to form and gesture.
- Planar shape
- Similar lack of color, which allows the material itself, be important to understanding the piece.
- Intermingling between solid, negative, and line.
- Light and shadow also interact together in this piece to extend it beyond its physical limitations.

COMPARE AND CONTRAST

Part 1

I aspire to have my work relate to this artist in several key ways.

1. Material As Contradictory to form or subject. I seek to breathe a life into materials that are generally thought of as having none. I believe this is automatically engaging.
2. Large objects you can interact with in a physical way. I want people to touch my sculpture, stick their heads in it, and move them around. I want people to be able to see a part of my work and then move to the next part.
3. Architectural in design while maintaining a feeling of organic inner growth. In some of my pieces this may be how I diverge from Moore, while for others it would draw us together. An inner growth should be key. It should not seem that the thing was carved away.
4. Also get images of people interacting with the sculptures. This I believe that would be an art piece on its own.
5. Negative space. Utilize solid and space to contrast and create form. Place negative space purposefully. Contrast body parts from each other. Why would one be negative and one be solid.
6. Play with interacting multiple separate objects.
7. Standing sculpture to allow

Part 2

The ideas I have for my work are also different from this artist.

1. I am not as concerned with the inner architecture of the object, rather the surface of it. More broadly I am concerned with interaction between light and body that produce meaning and gesture.
2. Light and shadow mean more to me than direct form.
3. I seek to portray movement rather than stagnant figures.
4. My work is planar and geometric for the most part, while his utilizes more organic shape.

Marathon Reflection

Showing my work was a truly wonderful experience. I received feedback from faculty and students alike. Often, I found myself agreeing with many of their sentiments. The first comment I heard was that it was clear I had a larger affinity for sculpture than flat work. That is, that my sculptural works seemed to look more finished and concrete. Some also said that they had wished some of my works were larger in scale to interact with the viewer. Next, I heard many remarks as to the negative space between some of my works and how they aided in the dynamic of them as a whole. However, since this was not a unified line of work, I did hear some people say that it was not as cohesive as they were used to seeing in a gallery. It was helpful to discuss with them about which works they felt were most successful. Some of what I took from this review was a personal understanding that came about only when I was presenting to other people. Some came from their comments. From both I feel as though working with shadow and space as hugely important to my next step as an artist. Using light as a way of dramatizing gesture will be paramount. Space between stark shapes will aid in the pieces functioning as an entity that takes up space itself. Moving forward I would like to combine some of my figurative work into some of the more abstract and "light-Catching" works that then cast their shadows on the wall behind. The next steps I will take in my art is to work much larger. I would like these "entities" to take up entire walls and give body to the fractals I will create. I would like to experiment with different mediums and colors, yet working towards a similar goal of creating the body and taking up space in an analytical way. I would also like to utilize drawing as a means for developing my thoughts and ideas in a similar scale to that of my future works. David Smith, Tony Smith and Beverly Pepper were but a few of the sculpture artists suggested to me during this showing. I have begun to collect works that I enjoy from them since. Beginning this next step of SMP, I would like to purchase clay to work with solid form, and possibly wax and paint to experiment with color. For now though, I may begin to work with some of the materials I felt an affinity with during the marathon, but work much larger. Overall I am extremely excited about some of the inspiration that this marathon gave me, and am looking to keep up the same pace of work. However, it will be nice to focus on something for more than a few days.

First In Progress Reflection

This went so much better than expected. I personally would have liked to have more samples of the mediums I will be working in for the midterm, but all of that should be ready by Thursday. I am left feeling excited about the midterm review. I want to have one piece made of cardboard at least six feet across. The metal piece I will likely have to be smaller because it is a more difficult medium, but I would still like it to be 4 feet across. The clay object will be smaller and on a sculptural base and more realistically figural. If I have enough time after all of this I would really like to begin work on a large found objects piece utilizing metal objects painted in very stark colors. I would like it to wall hang, so weight definitely poses an issue. Some things I heard as comments were playing with color (even lights), which I found intriguing. I also heard comments about how realistic these objects should be to what they were representing. I am still unsure in that sense.

Midterm Review Reflection

This was a wonderful experience to hear commentary from faculty and students for an extended period of time. Some things I heard were that my message was not coming across correctly, people enjoyed the use of metal more than cardboard, and that I need to draw into one aspect of the human body, even if it does not necessarily look like the human body. Prior to this critique, I was working through philosophical thinkers and developing art from that. I received two artists who actually worked from Zen Buddhism and ways they did it, which was endlessly helpful. From most people I understood that my forms need to be a little more hashed out and planned, rather than random in their construction, or constructing as I went. People also seemed to enjoy curved lines in my work rather than sticking strictly to straight line and geometric shape. Something I heard as well was that I needed to stop "playing" and really start studying the forms I am working with. For me this means more in depth in person studies of forms in nature.

Second In Progress Reflection

This in progress report alongside working on my final questionnaire has been abundantly helpful in understanding direction for the rest of the semester. Learning from Moore and Smith simultaneously has aided in visualizing, conceptualizing, and understanding my own work immensely. I presented two works at this 'mini' critique, one of which was six and a half feet tall lone standing sculpture; while the other was a much smaller wall hang sculpture. Both were made with steel rod and copper welding. The large more figural work was discussed for most of my time for commentary. This may have been a symptom of its size, but perhaps it is also a symptom of a more distinct subject matter and consistent idea. However, while the second piece was more of a maquette, I received some notable interest in the composition of it. Some said it look graffiti like, drawing on some of the shapes that take on the persona of jumbled letters. I will continue to make more maquettes, studying further into this composition, but I make no commitment to it being in my final showing for the semester. My next step is to finalize a group of larger figural sculpture using line as the primary means for gesture and essence of movement in the body. The tentative title of these combined works will be "Dancing Figures" and will include three figures of varying size (four feet to 7 feet approximately). I heard that people feel that the sculpture I presented today was rather architectural. While reading I came upon some understanding of this through Henry Moore as well. Lassaigue writes that he was drawn to transforming "human forms into a sort of architecture". She called this his "monumental art" (Lassaigue, 1972). I absolutely believe this to be an integral part of forming these bodies in space. I do agree with some of the comments I heard that if I used the same composition of strict geometric shape for all of them it may begin to become to stagnant or still looking. So, as I move forward with this piece I will begin to utilize curvilinear line for the following figures. I believe it is important now that each of the figures to have their own style, even if they are utilizing the same hard material. Finally, I heard that for a figure to represent movement, removing the visualization of parts made just for structure is important to my work. Allowing the subject matter to transcend the material is important to my work.

Artist Statement

I build to give conviction and breath to material that originally had none. Potential for movement and growth is vital. I will start and finish some of my work only to come back to it months or years later. Thus, it is not important to call my work finished or unfinished. Sometimes, I finish works only to put them attached to or alongside other works. In this way, every environment or new construction creates the piece anew. I am devoted to process, interaction and dialogue between things. I want to know what a piece will be on a hill, in the water, or placed on a white wall and backlit. Each new place inherently changes the object I have made. I want people to walk around my work, stick their head and hands in my work, and even move my work around. I don't mind when parts of my work fall down or break, which they have, because it teaches me something new about its form. The material itself plays just as much of a role in the objects creation as I do. I will often become angry at the material itself, until it lends itself to compromise with me. I cannot dictate what I want it to do; rather I must work with it. My subject matter is often at odds with the materials I work with. This semester, the figure and landscape are my sources of inspiration. I may work on depicting a series of bodily movements, or a repetitive movement found in nature. I want light and shadow to interact with my objects as they do with my subjects. I want the gaps in my objects to allow the environment to fill them. The space between my objects becomes as important as the objects themselves. They are a communication of my environment, the process from which they were built, myself, and anyone who comes to interact with them. I want them to be in their environments, and have their own essence and life. They can be compared and contrasted to the work around them, whether it is artwork or the natural landscape.

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