

Spotlight: Edward Eyth Interview, Part 1



Edward Eyth is an artist of various talents from the United States but his special talent lies in his sculpture pieces. Every inch of one of these pieces is a sight of beauty; From the delicately formed hands to the creases in a dress or wrinkle in face, these statues portray raw emotion that every viewer will recognize. Edward graciously agreed to answer a few questions about himself and his art.

Toonari Post (TP): How and when did you first start practicing your art?

Edward Eyth (EE): I've been drawing as far back as I can remember. I wasn't very popular as a kid, so drawing provided an outlet, an avenue to detach from reality and venture off into my own little world, a world that would contain anything I was able to create. That's probably what really inspired my interest in art. It's the absolute joy in creating something that takes on a life of its own, then sharing it, and evoking a response in someone else.

Even with my earliest efforts at creating art (drawings) I was fascinated by the fact that I could make a few pencil marks, some lines, a few forms and if I did it well, anyone who looked at it would know it was a dog, or a person, or whatever. Visual communication. No words required, and you can convey an idea quite well with just a drawing. And the great thing about communicating visually is that the whole world speaks that “language.”

The lines of a simple drawing will communicate “dog” to your friend, someone in China, or even a caveman. In fact, cavemen did drawings thousands of years ago that exist today, allowing us to see something they saw or experienced thousands of years ago. I love that aspect of art; communicating through the ages.

My training includes degrees in Visual Communications and Industrial Design. I learned much of what I know about the process of sculpting through the guidance and mentorship of professional artists, instructors and friends. Few things in life satisfy me more than creating art that speaks to someone else and compels them to want to own it.

I find similar satisfaction in instructing others and sharing the insights I’ve accumulated over the course of my career. I taught an Advanced Visual Communications course at the Art Center College of Design, and I teach private workshops around the country currently. I continue to create representational figurative sculptures and drawings, working primarily from live models.

TP: What mediums do you use for your artwork? Which is your favorite and why?

EE: For two-dimensional work I gravitate to pencil, charcoal and pastel. I’ve made a few efforts in oil paint that I truly enjoyed, but haven’t found the time to develop any real proficiency. Color really excites me; I hope to find more time to paint in the future.

For sculptural works I’ve always used oil-based clay. It’s very forgiving, easy to modify by adding or subtracting and it never dries out, like water-based clay. That’s a big benefit since I often have as many as 20 or 30 pieces in various degrees of completion in my studio. The finished works are molded, then cast in bronze.

Bronze provides an element of permanence to a piece that I really like, knowing that my work has the capacity to outlive me, and endure for generations. Recently I had some success with sculpting stone and I may continue to pursue that.

TP: What piece of your work is your favorite and why? Which one are you most proud of?

EE: My favorite would have to be “**Mari**,” the first figure I had cast in bronze. It’s one of my most popular pieces, and the one I’ve sold most. I wanted to depict the beauty and eloquence of the female form, in a way that combined strength, confidence, grace and femininity. What resulted is a seated female figure, her hair drenched, having just emerged from the water.

Her foot is lightly perched on the rocky outcrop below. She represents the embodiment of feminine grace, poised effortlessly between the earth, sea and air. The title “Mari” comes from the from the Latin word for “sea.”

Since most of the emotion in a sculptural work is conveyed through the face, I put a lot of effort into the expression of calm reflection in her features, as if she’s quietly reminiscing about something and the hands, which I also labored over to capture a natural pose & gesture. The piece was awarded first prize in a national “Nude in Contemporary Art” competition in 2009.

The piece I’m most proud of would probably be “**Olympic Spirit**,” a sculpture depicting male and female athletes holding the Olympic rings aloft. It was selected from over 2,500 worldwide entries in the 2008 Beijing Olympic Sculpture Competition. As one of 100 finalists that toured the world, it was exhibited in major cities in China and worldwide.

Read the rest of Edward’s fascinating interview [here](#).

Image Courtesy of <http://eyth.deviantart.com>

Artist Spotlight: Edward Eyth Interview, Part 2

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Edward Eyth continues to grab attention and enthrall his audience in the second part of his interview. He addresses the difficulties of being a perfectionist and the numerous inspirations for his sculptural works.

Toonari Post (TP): When you first started did you ever hit any bumps in your art process? What were they and how did you overcome them?

Edward Eyth (EE): I had plenty of bumps, most of them self-imposed. Procrastination, self-doubt, merciless self-criticism, and a capacity to only see the faults and shortcomings in my work. I think maybe those qualities come from a perfectionist mentality, and can drive an artist to excel, but they can also make the process an unpleasant one. The art critic Robert Hughes said: “The greater the artist, the greater the doubt.

Perfect confidence is granted to the less talented as a consolation prize.” I’m not sure I’ll ever fully “overcome” those traits, and if Hughes is right then it’s best to embrace them anyway. Besides, if you reject your own inner critic, then you’re being critical of your own self-criticism, which takes it to a whole other level of disorder. I think criticism of any type has benefits and is more valuable than abundant praise, which can lead to complacency. I’ve managed to supply myself with a

balance of both lately.

TP: Who or what are your inspirations and why?

EE: I've always been inspired by the body and people in general. To understand and represent the human figure accurately, with all its complexities, is not easy. Rendering the variety of surface features, physiological complexities, diversity of facial features, a bone at the surface that disappears under softer tissue masses, it requires a lot of study and practice. But when it's done well and with artistic expressiveness, it can be powerful.

There are sculptures of epic events like the **Pieta**, which are breathtaking in technique and emotion, and there are also sculptures of everyday events that are evocative. That's one of the things I find most engaging about great sculpture. It can extract from life a single moment and hold it up for the world to see.

There may be nothing sensational or historical about that moment; it doesn't have to be descending angels, epic adventure, or events of grand historical magnitude. There are so many fleeting moments of beauty and grace in our everyday experience. By capturing one of those moments, and bringing it to the attention of the viewer, an artist can illuminate it as remarkable and give permanence to one transient instant that would otherwise be lost.

As for whom I find inspiring . . . the list is long. So many of the old masters. For sculptors it would be **Carpeaux, Houdon, Bernini** . . . painters, that's an even longer list. There is art out there that just pulls you in, engages you in a way that can leave a lasting impression. That's the art I find inspiring.

For contemporary artists I'd have to say **Richard MacDonald** tops my list. He creates figurative works that are unparalleled in beauty, quality and anatomical accuracy. I own several of his pieces and he's a dear friend, though I'd still feel the same about his work if he weren't.

But from a practical standpoint, nothing inspires me more than a deadline. When your reputation is on the line and you have a limited time to accomplish what you're intending to? There's where the real inspiration happens. Amazing how limited time (or often budget) can breed ingenuity & promote inspiration.

TP: What is your favorite subject to draw and why?

EE: Recently I've been fixated on human faces. The options for features and expression are so vast; I could draw faces for the rest of my life and still be intrigued. It's interesting how just a slight change in the angle of an eyebrow, or turn of the corner of the mouth can completely change the expression.

I particularly enjoy trying to capture candid expressions on people I see. Moments when someone is between thoughts or so lost in thought they're unaware of themselves. Those are the expressions and instants that are fleeting and challenging to portray with accuracy.

TP: If there was any art medium that you wish you could master, what would it be and why?

EE: I mentioned painting, which I'd love to spend time pursuing. And music has always been a creative interest. There are so many similarities between the creation of music and visual art. A sculpture can engage a viewer for as long as they're willing to stand there and experience the piece. Music can be more of a voyage, with a narrative that has a beginning and an end. Both can provide an emotional journey when done well.

There are great musicians and visual artists who say they do their best works when they "step aside," and let the creativity "flow through them." I've always been fascinated by that view; that great art can originate from some source other than (and possibly greater than) the artist themself.

I've never studied music or achieved any level of proficiency but I still like to sit down at a piano/keyboard and dabble, sometimes composing melodies and songs. It can be relaxing and creative at the same time.

There are so many creative outlets but I've come to the conclusion that life offers a finite number of things you can develop expertise with, and while all artistic pursuits tend to feed one and other, it seems mastery can only come from a dedicated approach to the medium you choose.

TP: What is your life like outside of your art?

EE: Truth is, I like to teach, and I find that very rewarding and a great way to express appreciation for all those who instructed or encouraged me through the years. I love new technologies and materials, and enjoy great design (which can have a profound impact on the

success and appeal of a product).

I'm fascinated by how the Internet and social media are changing the nature of our culture and seem to be revitalizing the democratic process. I'm blessed to be married to the woman of my dreams and have two outstanding sons that I'm perpetually thankful for. And I like walks on the beach and asparagus. That's all I got.

TP: What are your goals in life?

EE: In order of importance, that would be: to be a fantastic husband and father, create art that connects with or inspires others, leave a positive life legacy . . . walk on the beach and eat asparagus.

About the author

Kala Istvanek

I am currently a student at Carthage College. I will be graduating next year with my B.A. in Asian Studies and English with a Creative Writing Emphasis. Reading and making plushies are a few of my hobbies when I'm not working on school work or research.