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# **Current(s)**

By  
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Bachelor of Arts, University of Oklahoma State, Stillwater, OK  
2016

Thesis

Presented in partial fulfillment of the  
Requirements

For the degree of  
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## Narrative

I was born and raised in West Palm Beach, Florida and when I was eight years old, we moved to Tulsa, Oklahoma. As a child I spent most of my time being outdoors. I recall being shooed outside after breakfast, being handed a paper sack with lunch followed by a locking door. Rain or shine it was me and whatever 'shenanigans' I got into that day; digging in dirt, swimming in creeks or lakes, catching a whole array of critters. My interest in nature stems from this experience and continues today.

Living in the southern and midwestern has given me an appreciation for my natural surroundings, landscape and weather, noticing how changes in nature happen slowly, steadily, or rapidly. Every day in Florida the most extreme weather was predictable year to year. As a child, I recall predicting the afternoon rain storms from the color of the clouds. The shift in tides was also very predictable due to the moon's cycle.

In Oklahoma the weather is quick, sudden, and unpredictable. In the transitions of each season, the weather vacillated. A springtime snow of six inches one day and being ninety degrees the next. Summer heat dragging on, consuming fall, and calm skies that would become a massive tornadic cell.

In Montana, I've found the weather moves steadily as each season becomes the next. The leaves slowly lose their green glow and transition to the warmer tones of yellow, orange, and red. As this occurs, the colors of the leaves begin to lose their saturation as they then fall off and become brown. These slow changes in the color also occur in the skies. During dawn and dusk as the sun crests the mountains there is a gradient of warm to cool toned colors. As the sun moved across the sky it affected the landscape too. Walking by the Clark Fork River

every day, I observed how it also experiences the same transitions as the leaves and sky. High water levels create powerful and fast-paced currents, while low water levels are calm and smooth.

Over the past three years, I have had time to better recognize and appreciate the shifts in the natural elements, sky, river, landscape, that surround me. These moments of observing the seasons have allowed me to recognize the changes that have occurred in my artwork and myself.

I have a deep admiration for the south, midwest, and western United States, these visual and physical energies that occur where I have lived have great meaning to me. From ocean/waves, tornadic storms, and mountains and trees. I am inspired to make art from the forces and forms of the natural world, whether being tranquil or destructive allows me to notice how I operate within them. Having to adjust and change to each of these different places has given me a deeper perspective of the world.

“Observation of Natural Objects. The observation of nature is part of an artist's life, it enlarges his form-knowledge, keeps him fresh and from working only by formula, and feeds inspiration.”<sup>1</sup> – Henry Moore

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<sup>1</sup> Henry Moore, “Henry Moore, 'Statement for Unit One', in Herbert Read (Ed.), Unit One: The Modern Movement in English Architecture, London 1934, Pp.29–30.” March 1, 2015.

## Introduction

The ideas of transition and change that occur within the seasons here in Missoula, MT inspired my MFA Exhibition “Current(s)”.

The title “Current(s)” is a play on words. It displays a multitude of ideas that captures the present time of my life and reflects the growth I have slowly gone through during my graduate studies. The majority of the work in this exhibition was made during fall as my surroundings transitioned to winter. I display these seasonal changes with the color pallet of my artwork. This is a physical representation of the shift in these seasons, fall to winter. While the seasonal progression in Missoula has been evident through color choice, my work is also influenced by the ocean from my childhood. I demonstrate the force the ocean holds in gestures of my sculptures. I created the layout for the exhibition to demonstrate the push and pull that occurs within the sea. I find this contrast of calming and slow versus explosive and overwhelming to exemplify my experience. I want my audience to experience this contrast that lies between them. For me, this acts as a metaphor. I illustrate these life experiences in my artwork, the sculptures themselves are a metaphor for change.

Modern sculptor, Martin Puryear’s, artwork and philosophies have been an inspiration to how I understand art. My work is guided by many of his principles, and I look to incorporate them within my own sculpture.

“Puryear’s sculptural vocabulary is of three basic types: organic natural forms, implements, and containers. These he recombines in hybrid assemblages, incorporating both wall and floor. Within these categories he has a fondness for joining two opposites in a balance, for example

line and mass, thin and fat, open and closed, dark and light, male and female, so that a linear element may serve as a belt or base to outline and restrain curves bulging into volumes, or intricate joinery may cover a simple shape with a complex pattern.”<sup>2</sup>

Current(s) addresses my perspective of the subtle changes that happen as the seasons slowly transition to act as a metaphor for the subtle changes that have happened to me over the course of my time in graduate school.

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<sup>2</sup> Martin Puryear and John Elderfield, *Martin Puryear*, New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2007

## Cascading Skies:



Figure 1, "Cascading Skies". Stoneware clay, oxidation and reduction firing at Cone 6. Wall hanging. 72" X 144" X 7 ½" 2022.

"Cascading Skies" is a wall installation that consists of twenty-two ceramic slabs. The shape of the slabs is inspired from multiple bends of the Clark Fork and Bitterroot Rivers in Missoula. I orchestrated the composition to mimic the flow in the currents; to illustrate motion and movement that happens in the river. This single wall piece captures the viewers' attention as the slabs gestures the to and fro of the current. The whole wall piece consists of the same glaze put through different types of firings to change the surfaces. I stretch the limits of what

this glaze is capable of by creating a gradient of tones warm to cool. The purpose of these surfaces is to illustrate the transition in color that happens in Missoula. The color choice for this piece is influenced by the sunset during winter. As the sun sets and it begins to dip past the mountain's peak the sky begins to create a gradient in the sky; going from strong warm radiant to dark eerie tones. This piece echoes the idea of steady change, the change from day to night, season to season. And more so, metaphorically speaking, this steady change mirrors my life experience in Montana.



Figure 2, "Cascading Skies" detail shot.



## Cotton Splash:



Figure 3, “Cotton Splash” and “Cascading Skies”.

“Cotton Splash” is an eight-foot sculpture made of cottonwood and steel rods. I found these wood slabs on a hike along the Bitterroot River. While on this hike with a colleague we stumbled upon a fallen cottonwood tree and collected these wood slabs to create this sculpture. We hauled these slabs two miles to our vehicles. My colleague explained how cottonwood trees grow rapidly and for that reason they fall over at a young age, and this influenced the shape of this sculpture. Where the cottonwood tree falls is where the new growth occurs.

The wood was initially two large slabs that I split in half using a log splitter wedge. The four slabs were then connected together by bolts and sanded lightly. As a found object I did not

want to alter the wood. It is important for the wood to retain its integrity as this reflects the experience it has gone through. Once the slabs were sanded and balanced, I began to bend and insert the steel rods in their blooming appearance. This sculpture mimics the cottonwood tree, transforming into a sculpture. The steel rods represent the energy of new growth.

“Puryear will capitalize on accidental and procedural details, the colors and patterns of contrasting grains and texture, the marks and imprints of tools left on the surface. Conflating materials and finish, he parallels Anselm Kiefer’s strategic, symbolic deployment of media such as straw and lead. Poplar, pine pear, maple, oak; Honduras mahogany, Sitka spruce, hickory, basswood, cypress. The sheer physicality and presence of raw and milled wood contribute to the empathic power of Puryear’s art along with its insinuation of something vaguely known or remembered.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Martin Puryear and John Elderfield, *Martin Puryear*. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2007.



Figure 4, "Cotton Splash". Cotton wood and steel rod. 96" X 38" X 29" 2022.



Figure 5, Overview shot of "Current(s)".

## Point Break:



Figure 6, “Point Break”. Stoneware clay, salt and reduction firing at Cone 6 and steel rod. 84” X 200” X 144” 2022.

“Point Break” is a large installation of five freestanding sculptures that push and pull one another across the gallery space. They are mimicking the crashing energy in the ocean waves. Each piece stands about six-foot tall and together they span twelve-feet of the gallery; the sculptures are made up of multiple parts of steel rod and ceramic slabs. The steel rod is hand bent in a custom vice to create drawn out bends, so the metal appears as fluid as the ceramic elements.

The order of making these sculptures determines the final product. I start with a casual gestural drawing, from which I intuitively shape the clay slabs. Then the form of the clay slabs inspires the shape of the metal rods. The ceramic pieces for each sculpture are fired together to create a cohesive gesture. I use a wide variety of ceramic firing techniques, and this expands the possibilities in the glaze surface. For example, I used atmospheric firings which are unpredictable in nature and capable of resulting in multiple outcomes.

When creating the metal work elements in the sculpture I leave the marks that occur during the making process to show the experience that the materials are going through. The mill scale coating on the steel cracks off in unique ways based on account of the bending process and I leave the weld marks and grinder scratches to also display what the material has gone through. Whether the marks are rough and harsh versus smooth and clean they reflect the experience the material goes through during the process of becoming a sculpture.

Once the ceramic slabs are finished and a basic skeleton is created out of the steel rods, I begin to work on balance and stabilization. As the pieces gain height and weight shifts, stabilizing becomes a constant issue. Stabilization and balance are important from a purely physics standpoint but also acts as a metaphor for myself seeking to find stability within my life. I have myself experienced a range of order and chaos within my life and also search for the balance that lies between.

Each sculpture is capable of operating individually, but together the pieces display ideas of motion and time. They become an amalgamation of their experiences throughout the process of being made. Together they are a physical representation of transitions in my own life. The work illustrates this through its formal qualities; surface variations, cuts, dents, cracks,

and scratches. Some of the sculptures are cleaner while some are rugged, representing my experience.

## Technical Process:

For four years as an undergraduate student, I was working towards a mechanical engineering degree. When I switched to art, I incorporated mathematics and physics into my sculpture practice; from weight distribution, balance and material strength. Post-graduation I studied under an artist where I learned about different materials and building techniques. It was also the period where I would realize the capabilities of the materials I was using and how ceramics, metal, and wood could come together. It is important that I start from unrefined materials - whether clay, found wood or generic steel rods.

“Truth to material Every material has its own individual qualities. It is only when the sculptor works directly, when there is an active relationship with his material, that the material can take its part in the shaping of an idea.”<sup>4</sup> – Henry Moore

## Ceramic Process:

My ceramic practice starts with mixing clay and from there I roll the clay out thick wet slabs. To create the curved plains, I manipulate the clay while it is still wet, which makes it more plastic and flexible. I use styrofoam to prop up the slabs so as they slowly dry, they retain their

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<sup>4</sup> Henry Moore, “Henry Moore, 'Statement for Unit One', in Herbert Read (Ed.), Unit One: The Modern Movement in English Architecture, London 1934, Pp.29–30.” March 1, 2015.

form and do not collapse on themselves. I wait until the clay reaches a state known as 'leather hard', this is when the clay has dried enough to be moved without cracking or slumping. Next, I use shur formers to shave and shape the slabs. When all the water has left the clay, it becomes dry, brittle, and fragile but also ready to be put into the kiln for its first firing. This firing takes the clay to 1850 degrees Fahrenheit, and the end result hardens the clay like a rock. This step is critical because the clay now becomes vitrified, and the vitrification is important because the absorption of the water is what makes the glaze adhere to the surface of the clay. Glaze essentially is a combination of glass forming minerals and water. As the glaze is applied to the clay it begins to absorb the water and as it dries the minerals mixed into the water stick. I apply my glazes by pouring out of a cup and cleaning up any gaps or spots missed with a brush and then the work is placed in a kiln to be fired. There are multiple types of firings and temperatures that can be used. My work ranges from 2164-2232 degrees Fahrenheit. I focus primarily on salt and reduction firing because of the unique surface results from these types of kilns. I am creating an atmosphere within each firing and based on a number of factors the same glaze will yield similar or different results.

### Wood Process

I always use repurposed wood, whether it fell over during a storm, cut down for landscaping, or taken down because of illness. It is important for me to use wood found this way so as to not damage the environment. My woodworking skills are not from ancient techniques but rather simpler and more destructive tools. Chainsaws, a variety of other saws, grinders and sanders make up the majority of my tool kit. The work is laborious and shows as I

often do not erase evidence of my hand. I allow some of the marks of the tools and the natural situations encountered.

### Metal Process

The metal elements in my work are the last part of the process. I typically build with steel rod or rebar; the gauges of steel range from  $\frac{1}{2}$ " -  $\frac{5}{8}$ ". I hand bend all the metal in a handmade vice to create the sharp and drawn-out curves. I use a chop saw or angle grinder to cut off excess. I make a wide variety of curves and bends then intuitively begin to create a form by welding all the pieces together. Once a rough base is created, I focus on balancing the piece by adding supports and stabilizing parts. I incorporate the ceramic or wood pieces to the sculpture by bolting them to the metal skeleton. Once the form is finished and reached its peak height, I fortify the form by adding more stabilizing supports and bolstering welds. Some of the metal is treated with a patina. If I heat treat a piece, I use an oxyacetylene torch to heat up the steel until it turns to a gun metal black. If I rust a piece, I spray the metal skeleton with a mixture of hydrogen peroxide and salt water to make the rusting process happen in a matter of seconds, resulting in a bright burnt orange color that fades to a more rustic brown over time.

My art is inspired by the idea of process and experiences. I want to emphasize the journey of my materials; whether it is the variation in ceramic glaze, saw marks on wood, or welds on steel. During the creation each material goes through its own process where they are introduced to anticipated and unexpected situations. These situations display levels of control and the uncontrollable within the work. These moments created characterize the individual pieces.



## Artistic Influences:

### Abstraction and Scale:

“Spontaneity is at the heart of my abstract art. It is revealed in my marks, drips, lines, colors, and the swipes of my brush. They are the result of my focus on creating something that is part of who I am – my spirit, my ideas, my individuality. I am not, and my works are not, what someone else thinks they should be.”<sup>5</sup> – Christine Alfrey

My sculptures are abstracted versions of my natural surroundings. I find beauty in creating sculptures that are influenced by mood, emotion, materials and my natural surroundings. During my making process I enter a meditative state and build intuitively. I let the process of creating a sculpture influence my decisions, working this way makes the sculpture a product of my instinct and intuition.

I have become increasingly drawn to making large scale artwork. I found that when my sculptures increase in scale it has a vitality of its own. When sculpture becomes life size or larger it challenges myself and the viewer in a different way than smaller works and is similar to how I experience the natural world. Pushing scale is a tremendous technical challenge, as the sculptures increase in height and volume, issues of balance, weight, and gravity amplify. I find fulfillment in making larger work in both the challenge in making as well as how scale changes

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<sup>5</sup> Christine Alfrey, “Blog: Spontaneity in Abstract Art.” Contemporary Artist Christine Alfery's OnLine Gallery, November 9, 2020.

how we experience the sculpture. By pushing scale, I am able to test myself with what I am capable of, forcing me to use my knowledge of material to its fullest.

John Mason:

John Mason (b. March 30, 1927 - January 20, 2019) was an abstract expressionist artist who mainly worked on large scale ceramic sculptures. Mason's work focused on exploring the physical properties of clay and its "extreme plasticity". Being part of the Otis Art Institute, Mason was one of a group artist that studied with pioneering ceramicist, Peter Voulkos, aiding the progression and state ceramics are in now.

"It's a common experience in the midst of going one direction to suddenly see another possibility, and to stop and consider it. Particularly if you have been on the path before, to say hey, there is another possibility that maybe I'm overlooking, that might be of interest for further development. That's what keeps it alive. Otherwise I'm just a worker."<sup>6</sup> - John Mason

The quote above carries a level of determination and understanding of materials in Mason's craft. His quest to seek what clay is capable of is where I find inspiration in his practice. Once entering on a path of my creative practice, I can easily become narrow sighted in what is possible. If I take a couple steps backwards, I can open up new doors. Being well versed in a material allows me to see other paths; when stuck on ceramics, I turn to wood or steel to refresh my thinking and creating. Being fluid in clay, metal, and wood not only creates more

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<sup>6</sup> Conover, Ian and Tepper, Jake. "*John Mason: Life as an Artist*". Youtube.com. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V1p1XmuCmMo>.

pathways but also strengthens my knowledge with each material. Working this way I am able to play off what other materials are capable of doing and incorporating certain moves from one to the next.

“Blue Wall”, Figure 7, is a monumental wall sculpture that was made by throwing clay onto the ground and working on the floor to make the composition. By utilizing the floor to the fullest this artwork was able to be arranged as it would be on the wall. There are many steps in the ceramic process and it is not always possible to create work with seeing the ending composition in the early states of creation. Mason’s technique of constructing Blue Wall influenced how I created “Cascading Skies”, Figure 1, by simply working on the floor to depict what it would look like on the wall. Many of my other sculptures are created this same way, creating on the floor until the artwork is ready to stand or hang. Working this way allows me to control and plan out a sculpture better because I do not have to battle against physics in the early stages of making.



Figure 7

(John Mason, Blue Wall, 1959, ceramics)

Richard Serra:

Richard Serra (b. November 2, 1938) is an American artist known for his steel and lead sculptures that are made for site-specific installations in landscape, urban, and architectural settings. Since the mid-1960's Serra has been exploring sculpture and is most known for his material quality along with the investigation in the relationship between the work, viewer, and site. His work has radicalized and continues to extend the definition of sculpture.

"In one, you sense the volume moving out like a giant flowerpot, or moving in like a giant lampshade. It's all about centralizing the space in different ways. How people move in relation to space, that's essentially what I'm up to."<sup>7</sup> – Richard Serra

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<sup>7</sup> Sean O'Hagan, "The Interview: Richard Serra," The Guardian, Guardian News and Media, October 4, 2008.

“In The Matter of Time”, Figure 8, Serra displays colossal steel sculptures that transform and create a dialogue with the space they are located in. To further this dialogue created he gets rid of pedestals for the sculptures to sit on. Now in real space the sculptures stand toe to toe with the viewers and create a new relationship as the spectators are able to move freely around the artwork without a pedestal acting as a barrier between them.

As influential as Serra’s sculptures are formally, my true interest lies with his thoughts on spatial awareness. I look to transform a space with my sculptures, creating a space that engages and guides the viewer through my artwork. This interaction is important in my sculptures because it allows the audience to move all around them and investigate the small or large details present in the materials. I want the evidence of the process these materials have gone through to be seen. It reveals the range of order and chaos that can occur in the creation of a sculpture. Without a pedestal to deter the viewer from getting close, I actually invite them in to interact with the forms and observe the features present in each sculpture.



Figure 8

### Martin Puryear:

Martin Puryear (b. May 23, 1941) is an American artist who is most notable for his sculptures, made of wood and bronze, and his interest with traditional craft. His minimal and formalist sculptures are pure and direct as they visually reference the history of objects and of their making, alluding to narratives of the artist, race, ritual, and identity.

Puryear is a craftsman that embraces the evidence of his mark making during the process of creating his sculptures. Where most craftsman look to eliminate and evidence of their hand, Puryear claims it adds character to the sculptures. Each tool he uses serves a purpose and leaves a mark as evidence of the tools use. A story is created through the use of tools on the material of his sculptures. I look to incorporate this idea in my sculptures; the evidence of process in the materials whether it be the surface variation in the ceramics, saw marks on the wood, or weld/grinder marks on the steel. These formal qualities of my sculptures act as a metaphor to tell a story of the journey my materials have been through.

Much how Richard Serra rejected the idea of using a pedestal for his sculptures, Puryear did the same. Both saying that by taking the sculpture and placing it directly on the ground the audience was able to have a deeper connection with the artwork. "Bower", Figure 9, was one of Puryear's pieces to be placed on the ground and this sculpture was influenced from traditional basket weaving then turned upside down to act as a trap to capture the viewers' attention and allow them to have a moment of self-reflection.

The ideas behind "Bower" have influenced the direction my artwork has gone. By dismissing the pedestal and allowing the audience to have a closer connection with my sculptures. As the viewer is able to get closer and interact with the sculpture the small and large

details of the process of creation become more evident. Embracing the purposeful and accidental mark making creates a story for the artwork as each cut, dent, or scratch are unique to the sculpture.



Barbara Hepworth:

Barbara Hepworth (b. January 10, 1903 - May 20, 1975) was an English sculptor, whose work personified Modernism, she was a catalyst for modern sculpture. Her wide range of materials showed the sensitivity of their qualities. Hepworth was also interested in the absence that was present in a sculpture as much as what was actually present. Her interest lies within the relationship between volume and space. She was a leading figure within the community of St. Ives, England after World War II.

"I have gained very great inspiration from Cornish land- and sea-scape, the horizontal line of the sea and the quality of light and colour which reminds me of the Mediterranean light and colour which so excites one's sense of form; and first and last there is the human figure which in the

country becomes a free and moving part of a greater whole. This relationship between figure and landscape is vitally important to me. I cannot feel it in a city.”<sup>8</sup> – Barbara Hepworth

Hepworth’s investigation into her materials and connection to the landscape have influenced my artwork since I started making sculpture. I find inspiration in her philosophies about materials and look to find a deeper connection to what my materials are capable of doing. By having a strong knowledge, I am better able to display the experiences my sculptures go through during creation, by making purposeful marks and embracing the accidental ones.

In the quote above, Hepworth states that when the figure enters the land it becomes another moving part in a greater whole. I share the same appreciation for the landscape as Hepworth does, there is beauty in the colors and forms that occur but there is also a humbling aspect; by entering the land I become part of something grander. I use form and color from my surroundings to influence my sculptures, and to demonstrate the gentle and chaotic sides of these natural occurrences.

Hepworth created individual sculptures that mainly stood alone, but she also created pairs. In Figure 10, she has series of sculptures staggering across the landscape and these artworks demonstrates an interaction between each sculpture and the landscape. “Point Break”, Figure 6, is influenced on this idea of interaction, how these sculptures interact and operate together to activate a space for the viewer. The viewer is guided through the exhibition and becomes part of the space that these sculptures are placed in.

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<sup>8</sup> Barbara Hepworth, “Quotations from Barbara Hepworth's Writings,” Current news and basic information.





Figure 10

Henry Moore:

Henry Moore (b. July 30, 1898 - August 31, 1986) is one of the most notable sculptors of the twentieth century, known for his colossal semi-abstract sculptures. His forms often depicted human figures and engaged positive and negative space. Moore's sculptures were an introduction to a particular form often found in modernism in the United Kingdom.

"For me a work must first have a vitality of its own. I do not mean a reflection of the vitality of life, of movement, physical action, frisking, dancing figures and so on, but that a work can have in it a pent-up energy, an intense life of its own, independent of the object it may represent."

"Truth to material: Every material has its own individual qualities. It is only when the sculptor works directly, when there is an active relationship with his material, that the material can take its part in the shaping of an idea."<sup>9</sup> – Henry Moore

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<sup>9</sup> Henry Moore, "Henry Moore, 'Statement for Unit One', in Herbert Read (Ed.), Unit One: The Modern Movement in English Architecture, London 1934, Pp.29–30." March 1, 2015.

I share an affinity to Moore's essays on sculpture, his thoughts on truth to material and how having knowledge of the materials themselves can become an influence on the artwork as much as anything else. Much like why I am influenced by John Mason and Barbara Hepworth, Moore has also inspired me to have a deeper knowledge of my materials. Having a strong understanding of what clay, wood and steel are capable of, allowing me to create intuitively based off what is possible within each one of them. Clay, wood, and steel are able to operate independently, but when combined in some fashion, like Cotton Splash in Figure 5 or Point Break in Figure 6, they are able to demonstrate how a combination of material creates a complementary aspect within the artwork. Whether it be the steel rod blossoming out of the cotton wood in "Cotton Splash" or the ceramics slabs bolted onto the steel rod forms in "Point Break", the pairing of materials brings harmony and vitality to my sculptures.

Moore states that sculptures have a vitality of their own, an energy that is present by the sculpture purely being. I use form and the combination of materials in my sculptures to display the experiences that occur throughout the process of being created and release this energy that is its own.

## Conclusion:

"Vitality and Power of expression, for me a work must first have a vitality of its own. I do not mean a reflection of the vitality of life, of movement, physical action, frisking, dancing figures and so on, but that a work can have in it a pent-up energy, an intense life of its own, independent of the object it may represent. When a work has this powerful vitality, we do not connect the word Beauty with it. Beauty, in the later Greek or Renaissance sense, is not the aim in my sculpture. Between beauty of expression and power of expression there is a

difference of function. The first aims at pleasing the senses, the second has a spiritual vitality which for me is more moving and goes deeper than the senses. Because a work does not aim at reproducing natural appearances it is not, therefore, an escape from life – but may be a penetration into reality, not a sedative or drug, not just the exercise of good taste, the provision of pleasant shapes and colours in a pleasing combination, not a decoration to life, but an expression of the significance of life, a stimulation to greater effort in living.”<sup>10</sup> – Henry Moore

I came to graduate school because I just wanted to get better at making art. Study with more artist and invent in a community. I have learned to develop my ideas further and articulate what I am making. I am a formalist, influenced by the early modernist sculpture and love of ‘truth to materials’. I also have learned a great deal about clay, metals and wood; how to build, find and use raw materials from my surroundings. My discovery of the shift in scale in my artwork has been hugely inspiring and I hope to continue this in the next stage of my studio practice. In graduate school I have come to understand and better appreciate the postmodern artworld, though find myself most inspired by the early modernist. I am inspired by pure form and beauty, and think these are, for me, still important in art today.

I find fulfillment in creating sculpture. I find great pleasure in working with different materials and making formal decisions to create visual balance. Being inspired by my surroundings has great meaning when I am creating my art. The materials go through their own hardships during the process of being made. I go through a similar hardship during the creation of each individual piece. During these periods of working, I am able to self-reflect and

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<sup>10</sup> Henry Moore, “Henry Moore, 'Statement for Unit One', in Herbert Read (Ed.), Unit One: The Modern Movement in English Architecture, London 1934, Pp.29–30.” March 1, 2015.

contemplate on the changes that have shaped me. Reflecting on my past motivates my artwork and helps me gain awareness of what I believe. In a sense, it is a doorway for me to gain self-awareness and discover my identity.

## Image List

Figure 1, “Cascading Skies”. Stoneware clay, oxidation and reduction firing at Cone 6. Wall hanging. 72” X 144” X 7 ½” 2022.

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Figure 7, John Mason, “Blue Wall”, ceramics, 1959, accessed April 14, 2022.

<https://momus.ca/ceramics-in-the-expanded-field-the-art-world-the-clay-world-and-the-case-for-john-mason/>.

Figure 8, Richard Serra, “The Matter of Time”, steel, 2005, accessed April 1, 2022.

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Figure 9, Barbara Hepworth, St. Ives Sculpture Garden, accessed June 18, 2022.

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Figure 10, Martin Puryear, “Bower”, spruce and pine wood, 1980, accessed May 5, 2022.

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