

KOPFLER III, JOSEPH G., M.F.A. Explorations. (2006)  
Directed by Professor Andrew Dunnill. 3 pp.

I find that there is little difference between the worlds of reality and fantasy. I place myself in a position to be inspired by both. I also inquire into the possible permutations of an existing form, and perhaps the creation of a new one. My goal is to create sculpture that calls this difference into question. I do this through; a conflation of found and formed, recognizable and uncanny, metaphor and actuality. The result is odd, idiosyncratic, ulterior composites derived from commonplace detritus.

EXPLORATIONS

by

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A Thesis Submitted to the  
Faculty of The Graduate School at  
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro  
in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Fine Arts

Greensboro  
2006

Approved by

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## EXPLORATIONS

Making sculpture is a way for me to find my place in the world through research and material manipulation. My research is rooted in an exploration of the man made world. I observe things that I come into contact with every day, for example, architecture, vehicles, and appliances. I question the relationship between form and function, aesthetic appreciation and ergonomic utility. I absorb this mundane information in order to fuel my imagination and explore a personal visual language. Steel is a man made utilitarian material. It is a product of industry, and is a part of our everyday life. I take this material that is ordinary and transform it into the extraordinary. I create forms that allude to buildings, devices, and vehicles, spaces that are containers of human activity.

For me sculpture is a process of problem solving. Each problem solved opens or closes the door of possibilities. I plan and map a series of actions, but also give myself license to change a course of action in response to the actuality before me. Almost always the original form or form relationships lead me down an alternate path. Working with steel I can add and remove at anytime during the construction of a sculpture. The process is flexible and at the same time direct. The principle criteria prevalent in my sculptural endeavors are presence, scale, mass, volume, process, material, transformation, viewer interaction, and functionality. It is through the integration of these concepts that my forms evolve.

My thesis work is comprised of four sculptures. The first of this group and the impetus for the rest is *Circumambulatory Encapsulate Panoptic Psychoteracela* (C.E.P.P.)(Image 1). With C.E.P.P. the idea was to create a structure that functioned on two levels, as a sculpture and a functional object.

It is a monolithic four-sided structure, yet it is made of thin sheet metal in a way that gives it the appearance of density. The form itself is derived from the figure and parts allude to eyes, legs, and the head. The scale is domestic and personal similar to utilitarian structures such as a vehicle, an outhouse, or a telephone booth.

When the viewer enters C.E.P.P., sits down and close the door, the only light comes from strategically placed peepholes. The peepholes allow the observer to survey the outside world in complete concealment. In addition to the visual experience there is an auditory device. Through an augmented car muffler it is possible to communicate. The voice is altered through the acoustics of the device to create a mechanical sound. The objective of this sculpture is that it functions externally as an object, yet when one enters the sculpture it becomes a self-contained environment.

*Hovertron* (Image 2) is made of sheet metal, found objects and structural angle iron. The interactive behavioral response is implied rather than actual. The most prominent aspect of the sculpture's presence is its relationship to the ground. It is a horizontal piece that questions its relationship to the ground. The feet of the sculpture have the appearance of suction cups and give the illusion of other forces than gravity. The main frame is parallel to the ground yet appears to have an oppositional relationship to the ground plane. The sculpture has a bilateral symmetry and its rectilinear shape implies

potential for multiple movements like a lunar landing module. There are two apertures that function as receptacles for eyes and headlights. To the rear there is a seat like construction that implies viewer interaction.

*Uchunkmisloth* ( Image 3) has built within it contradictions. It is inextricably grounded but is deconstructed in such a way that leaves the viewer unable to discern the interior from the exterior. It is a constructed planet of found objects and steel that appears to be so dense that it has its own gravity. To create that density I used a bulbous ball like composition. Within the composition there are openings that create black holes blocking the view of the interior. Other holes allow a view of the interior, and breakdown the apparent solidity of the form. This perceptual change is the crux of the sculpture.

In the final sculpture *Battaglia* ( Image 4) there is an oppositional relationship created between two volumes of steel that are similar in size and shape. The volumes are paired down and interlocked to create a feeling of solidity. The sculpture appears to inflate, levitate, yet is tethered to itself. This creates a tension between the two juxtaposed forms. The sculpture has both man made and human qualities. From certain angles the form suggests the cheek and eye socket of the human face. Limbs, orifices, and torso are all easily associated with the form, yet they have a mechanical appearance. It is ultimately a sculpture battling itself.

I find that there is little difference between the worlds of reality and fantasy. I place myself in a position to be inspired by both. I also inquire into the possible permutations of an existing form, and perhaps the creation of a new one. My goal is to create sculpture that calls this difference into question. I do this through; a conflation of found and formed, recognizable and uncanny, metaphor and actuality. The result is odd, idiosyncratic, ulterior composites derived from commonplace detritus.



## CATALOGUE

Kopfler III, Joseph G. *C.E.P.P.* Steel Sculpture with Peepholes 2005.

Kopfler III, Joseph G. *Hovertron.* Steel Sculpture. 2005.

Kopfler III, Joseph G. *Uchunkmisloth.* Steel Sculpture. 2005.

Kopfler III, Joseph G. *Battaglia.* Steel Sculpture. 2006.