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Bryon Hartley

University of Nebraska - Lincoln, bhartleystudio@gmail.com

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pause

by

Bryon Hartley

A Thesis

Presented to the faculty of
The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska
In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements
For the Degree of Master of Fine Art

Major: Art
Under the Supervision of Professor Santiago Cal
Lincoln, Nebraska
April 2017

pause

Bryon Hartley, M.F.A.

University of Nebraska, 2017

Advisor: Santiago Cal

Creating art honors the traditions of making by hand and presents an arena where I am the designer and the maker. When I make, I hunt myself down; I pursue that moment when a piece is finished and I can pause.

The making process totally consumes me, hours are spent planning, sketching, fabricating, jig building and mold making. I reach the point of exhaustion trying to figure out positive and negative space, a faultless line, curve, or form. Sleep is longed for, but I drive on. I am chasing perfection and once it is reached, I am at peace. It is a euphoric high.

Inspiration comes from my rock. It is a magnificent place where I can stay all day. The melody of the wind plays through the valley and over the hills, swaying sawgrass to the rhythm. Each phrom is like a fine lady's fan, grasped by soft fingers, waving away the summer's oppressive heat. In its mass it is woven together and holds strong, as a chorus line moving in unison refusing to give up the stage. Light dances and wild flowers sing along. The sea is the bass line that drives the song, waves glide and flow in graceful expression. Water cascades freely down the cliff, giving into gravity, not following any predetermined path. The falls leave traces of minerals, painting the cliff like a canvas, requiring centuries to complete. As fresh water enters salt water, patterned sand is rippled and mounded, a record of what has come before, redrawn over and over by water and wind. As evening approaches I notice the sky, it has faded from its vibrant blue of midday, softer blues and yellows emerge which slip into amber and slowly turn crimson. Shadows grow long and the day's end is near...its last breath, is amazing. The imminent darkness ushers me back and I return to studio life. With sketchbook in hand I set to work.

The materials that I have chosen to work with are glass, wood and metal. Glass is like no other material. Nothing else looks like glass, feels like glass or has the presence of glass. Wood also has its own unique qualities. No two pieces of wood are the same. They can be cut to the same dimensions but having once been a living, growing tree no one piece can be duplicated. Wood also has the ability to take on differing surfaces. It can be finely sanded and polished to an ultra smooth finish or it can be left with the rough edges. Steel, known for its strength and toughness starts to take on light when manipulated and can bring into mind questions of its durability. Rust on the surface can show signs that even steel's strength can be compromised. I combine glass, wood and metal in a way that I control the outcome. I present art with room for the viewer to bring to it what they will and invite them to pause.

Bryon Hartley

















