

Notes on the Workshop *Figure Modeling* from the Instructor Stephen Perkins

This workshop gives students a working method and technique with which to create a figure sculpture. There are different techniques, ways of describing the figure. They are not all the same. This is the best that I know of. It comes from old instructors from the tradition of Grafley, Chapu, the PAFA influence in America and the French Academy. It is based on what was called “deep modeling”, and understanding of the forms of the figure and how this is all given life through the unifying, vivifying quality of rhythm.

We will start with a simple idea of the structure of the figure, its main forms simplified and how we all conform to that. Male/Female, young/old, differences in body type and regardless of ethnicity, we are all the same in this way. We then go further in the elaboration of that simplicity. A figure in visual art develops from simple to complex. We will examine each step and the characteristics of each form. From a simple, somewhat abstract start the figure starts to come into focus as the medium and smaller forms appear. It is akin to slowly turning the image into focus in a camera lens. We will focus on the characteristics of each form as they are the same in all of us. It is the proportions that make us all unique and we will look at that as well of course. Gender, age, and ethnicity will all affect the proportions in subtle and not so subtle ways.

Given time, we will delve into examine parts of the figure in detail, the arm comes to mind. This allows students to see how each area progresses to further development. We work from male and female life models. Demonstrations and individual critiques are the norm.

We study art in various ways, with different instructors teaching differing methods etc. My goal here is to impart to you the best of what I have learned about the figure in 3d. In the end, each artist creates themselves, their method of work and the results that reflect that, their style based on what they have chosen to believe and work by. Chose well.