

## **ART 208: SAMPLE SELF-ASSESSMENT by Chelsea Tynan**

Note how this student draws on photographs of her final sculpture as a way to explain how improvements might have been made.

Answer the following as a way to learn from strengths and weaknesses of your artwork. You MUST be looking at the sculpture as you write this. This writing should total no less than **4 pages** (1400 words). (This one is 1575!)

### **1. Summarize your expressive goals ...**

I attempted to convey the idea of the absurd, or, that the originating thought within ourselves is a difficult trial to birth into the external world in its primary state.

To address this idea, I placed an arm like figure in contention with three pieces comprising the 'head'. Behind the middle piece of the 'head', at the very top, sea-green fabric was pinned and stretched to the palm of the 'hand' representation, conveying an ephemeral thought. The sea-green 'thought' fabric runs down the interior of the 'arm'. I attempted to sculpt the arm from the ground moving upwards towards the air. By flinging fingers away from the face, I tried to relay the shock at the difficulty in producing intentions from inside into the exterior world. The total composition tries to show the final purpose of human bodies (in this particular case, the arm) to relay the initial, inspired commands of a thinking agent (the green thought) from within its bodily confines.

While the previous final model had a painted interior and an absent, wood grain exterior, this final piece was left with just the wood grain inside and outside. Each brick had an original color and quality, which allows me to contemplate our universal individualism. The lack of finish and rough grit attempts to show the rugged, dog-eat-dog character of all biological components of beings and our will to survive.

The 'head' components were spliced into three pieces to relay its ubiquity: we can assume that there is a compartment cradled within the angled pieces, even if we do not initially think they constitute a 'head' figure. While these pieces are not as gnarled and robust as the arm itself, these pieces attempt to construct an inner circle. The dreamy, see-through thought is pierced into the back of the center head component and stretched to the palm, allowing the head piece to lean back in reaction to the pulling hand.

## **2. Take stock of your accomplishment...**

I think the most successful thing about my sculpture is showing the difference between the character of the thought and the character of the body. By choosing an outside object of fabric to relay the idea of a thought, I think I successfully relayed its whimsical, unattainable nature in relation to the body. I think the fabric well described the dreamy nature of intangible experiences inside the mind. Using another medium, such as wood or wire, would not have best described the ephemeral nature of cognition and my difficulty in grasping it for external use or functions.

Using wood for the body I think relays the hardy, brusque physicality of living beings and the need for survival. Put in contention with the fleeting, wafting thought, the stacked and shaped 2x4 makes the fabric seem softer and more difficult to grasp. While the head does not mirror the same brusque texture as the arm, the solid nature of each piece suggests a grounded presence. Describing this conflicting nature in conscious animals I think is my most successful accomplishment.

## **3. Reconsider specific decisions...**

### **1) The head does not relay a coherent head representation with an internal mind area for thoughts to reside.**

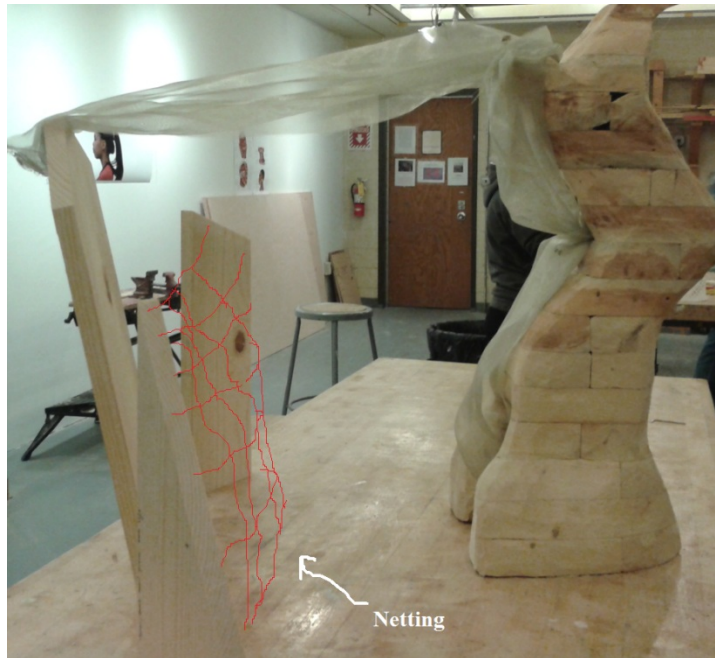
Assuming that the three pieces hold a relationship with each other, it is not immediately obvious that these headpieces create an encompassed a head area. This detracts from the point of the sculpture: it is difficult to understand that the thought is being pulled from inside the head with no internal head space. Creating an internal head area, by using netting, weaving hemp, or cutting pieces of plywood to create a circle may help create this internal area for which thoughts/fabric could reside. An internal head area could also be created by creating a box for the thoughts with the 2x4



Piece of plywood creating box for inner thought fabric



Pieces of Plywood



**2) The fabric itself not an effective representation of the airy nature of thoughts due to the way it has been pinned behind the top of the head.**

The way the thought piece, the sea-green fabric, is pinned to the head relays the difficulty in which it is being pulled from the mind, but does not accurately describe the way we expect thoughts to exist within or outside the mind. By not utilizing the fabric in other, dreamy fashions, within the head or around it, the representation of the fabric as a thought is difficult to ascertain and does not fully reflect what a thought should be in a tangible manner. By creating fabric to flow over the head piece and around the head, the fabric could further relay the digressing nature of thinking (we think one thing, which leads to another, which leads to another...) and how they act in the brain, by manicuring the fabric in a dreamy fashion. Perhaps by further fraying the edges of the fabric, or choosing a different color, could relay the airy state of thoughts in the mind.

**3) Not choosing to create fingers in the arm impairs the representation of the 2x4 lamination as an arm or hand.**

The arm itself has a vague figure as it is not proportional and does not contain defining

characteristics, such as fingers or a wrist. Without being able to immediately identify the figure as an arm or hand, it is possible, with the vague nature of the head representation, to be unsure of the other four critical pieces within the sculpture (the thought, and three head components). Without viewing the wooden lamination as an arm or hand, it is hard to determine the purpose of the sculpture or its action. By creating defining characteristics, such as a wrist, fingers, proportional bone structure and muscle tone, one may be able to understand its relationship within a human figure. This problem may also be fixed by sculpting an actual hand as opposed to an entire arm, with five fingers that grasp the thought to showcase the action of acting on our inner thoughts. Lastly, painting the arm would allow the viewer to see past the details or the segments of the 2x4 bricks and focus on the arm representation in its entirety, not just its details.

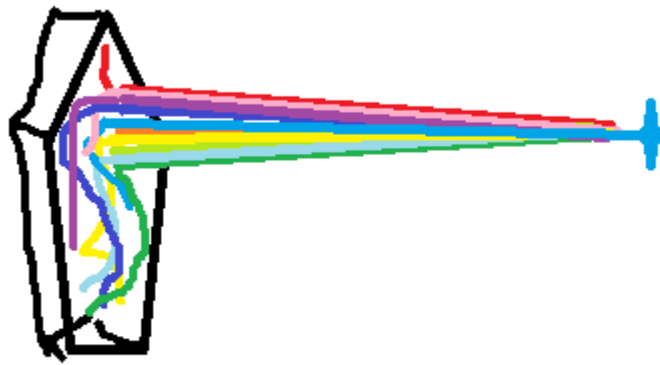
**4) The head pieces do not have an explicit relationship with each other.**

The separation of the three pieces creates uncertainty for the role of each piece and does not institute a single, cohesive meaning. Due to their ambiguous arc and their lack of apparent relationship, the sculpture seems unfinished and confusing. There seems to be no inside or outside of the head itself. Unifying these three head pieces by paint or structure would give them a more explicit role with each other. Creating a frontal for the head, or a face, may create a relationship between the two end pieces of the head, giving these pieces together a direct relationship. Using the fabric as a mechanism for showing the inside of the head may also create a relationship for these pieces as well, by perhaps wrapping the thought representing fabric around the head pieces or piling the thought pieces into the head container.

**4. Reconsider basic assumptions...**

I think the initial idea I chose to develop could be improved by simply removing the arms entirely and showing the development of thoughts from the head into something objectified and empirical. The purity and complexity of thought itself is difficult to reproduce due to the limitations of communication and language – there are no words for the intangible that perfectly describe it. I think I could further this

idea in a more direct, basic way, by using a multitude of colored fabrics perhaps coming from a single head space. These fabrics would reach into space in front of the head and resolve at one single point, one single color and be defined by a single color and name. I think this idea better focuses on the role of the head, which is more important as the bearer of thinking concepts, more than the arm, which was the focus of the last piece. Shifting this focus will better show the responsibility of our brains for our thoughts and their important origin without complicating the idea of complex, indescribable thought concepts in a three-dimensional world.



### **5. Self- Evaluate...**

If you were the teacher, what grade would you give yourself for this project? What, in all honesty, do you feel you deserve for your effort and for the outcome?

If I were the teacher, I would give myself a B+. I think I put a lot of effort into grinding the laminated pieces of 2x4 with the arm and conceptualized the head in a curious way to make the pieces interesting. However, I think I could have been more receptive to feedback and created a more direct interpretation that truly grasps the concept of acting upon thoughts. By spending more time and placing more effort into honing a poignant idea that represents the difficulty of expositing dynamic, divergent thought concepts, I think I could have better represented my ideas at their essence or core.