

ART 208: Sample Self- Assessment by Shannon Rafferty

(Note how this assessment completely addresses the provided assessment questions in over 1900 words!)

Project Two Self Assessment

1. Summarize your expressive goals ...

Describe the meanings you wanted this artwork to communicate including both its more direct, apparent meanings and its secondary, connotative meanings. (one page)



The most poignant memories that I have are ones that are marked by physical sensations and emotion. For the memory writing assignment, I chose to talk about my memory of jumping off a bridge unsupervised as a kid and how it felt to be suspended, letting go and falling into uncertainty. I remember feeling excited as I fell through the air but also terrified because I knew that what I was doing was wrong. For my project, I did not want to literally represent the fall, but instead tried to capture the fall by creating gestures through the wire that mimicked the feel and the trajectory of the fall. Since during the fall

I knew that I would be in a lot of trouble if I was caught or hurt, there was a level of insecurity I wanted to convey in the sculpture. I did not want the final sculpture to be totally streamlined and balanced so I designed it to be slightly off in order to better express the tangle of emotions that I felt during this experience.

I wanted the sculpture to both be visually interesting and work with the ideas of tension, space and bodies of movements that I am thinking about in my SMP. I love sinuous lines that come together to form something else, which is part of the reason that I chose to make my sculpture through interweaving wire. I have been layering different kinds of materials and rhythms in my paintings and tried to do this with wire and welding.

2. Take stock of your accomplishment...

Name the single most successful thing about your sculpture. Explain why it was successful (describe the specific quality and how it best advanced your expressive goals.)

I think that the middle two “balls of energy” are the most successful since they create tension with the rods that shoot straight up and each other. They show the progression of the fall. The thinner wires that make up the mass of each sphere-like shape are shaped the best. In those two, I had the tendrils extending into each other, which helped create more visual interest and a dialogue between those two shapes. I tried to replicate the tendrils of movement in the other two masses, but they looked out of place. Perhaps I could have made more of the masses so that they were closer together and could have been more easily connected, but I also enjoy the openness of the sculpture and the simplicity of the composition since the four masses are so dense within themselves.

3. Reconsider specific decisions...

Name four specific things that could have been done differently to create a better sculpture. No more than one should focus on construction faults. For each of the four...

- Identify the problem and explain why it is a problem in terms of the sculpture's expressive goals.
- Describe what caused the problem. Be very specific, for instance don't just say *the motion could have been more fluid*, instead explain what specifically in the sculpture made the motion less fluid.
- Describe no less than three specific solutions postulating how each might better suit the work's expressive goal. It will be hard to come up with three, this is my intention. You might need to go beyond the obvious or what was said in the class critique. Drawings, drawing on photos, photo collages etc. are welcome!

1) The welding- I was totally scared of the welder when we first started using it. I had to practice a lot with it and eventually I felt like I got the hand of it. I got to a certain point where it was really difficult to maneuver the sculpture on the welding table and I think that some of the welds that connected the wires could have been more seamless or grinded down. To solve this, I could have spent more time practicing welding wires together instead of beads. Another way could have been to weld the same spot from different angles to ensure a solid weld. I also did not want

to use the grinder because of the different kind of shine and would change the overall sheen.

2) The “golf club”- I wanted the sculpture to not feel totally graceful and fluid, so I made the last leg of the sculpture jut out a little bit to throw off the balance.

However, several people commented on how it looked like a golf club and got away from my goal of expressing a fall. I think that having the bottom mass veer off in a different direction worked more in the drawing than when it became a three dimensional form. In order to make the sculpture look less like a golf club, I could have forgotten about making it be off balanced. I think that the feeling of being pulled down may have been better expressed by making everything have a sharp upward pull instead of jutting outwards. In addition, I could have added more rods to the fourth mass so that it felt more connected to the rest of the sculpture and so that it created more tension between the final mass and the top. I think that adding the wire rods that connected the masses and tapered at the top really helped to realize my expressive goals and I could have done this more. Finally, I could have added another mass beneath the fourth one so that there was a continuation with the momentum of being thrown off course. I think that it would have completely changed the mood and the dynamic of the whole piece.

3) Color- I opted to leave the color the natural tone of the metal wire. I decided to do this because I thought that in my models having the lighter colors and colors of different sizes became messy and it was difficult to see the lines. However, looking at the sculpture now, I think that it possibly could have been darker so that it would have stood out even more from the background. I toyed around with the idea of adding a strand of bright color that would liven up the piece and make it seem more playful. I think that maybe adding one strand that I could weave through the other

masses would help to make the different drops feel more connected. Furthermore, I also considered “animating” the lines by wrapping yarn around the wire. In my initial models, I experimented with dripping yarn and glue along with the wire but having so many materials created a mess. However, I could have completely eliminated the feel and color of the wire by wrapping it in yarn, which would have made it in a fuzzy, crazy wrapped object. I think this would have been visually interesting, but that it would have gotten away from my goal of portraying the slick drop.

4) Tear drop shape- My initial model was a single drop that was suspended from the air. I think that this was successful because of the simplicity, the tugging of the lines and the contour of the shape. I lost this a little bit in the final sculpture but the form was still heavier at the bottom and tapered at the top. I could have made each wire mass into a tear drop shape instead of a twisty sphere-like bundle. I was originally aiming for this, but got carried away in the process of making the sculpture. Also, I could have added more of the wire rods, perhaps at shorter lengths placed at the sides of the bundles and have them taper off. The bundles would stay the same, but they would be activated differently. Lastly, I think that I could have made the bundles more exaggerated so that the ones at the top were small and open compared to the ones at the bottom, which could have been much denser. This would have added to the feeling of weight and gravity, helping to pull the eye downwards.

4. Reconsider basic assumptions...

Question 3 above asked you to look at how specific elements might have been handled differently to create a better sculpture. This question asks you to reconsider on a more basic level. Describe something about your initial design (in your final model) that, if you were to pursue this overall idea again, you might do differently. Describe why you'd do it differently and what you might do instead. It could be very broad, in other words, challenge your basic assumptions.

I think that I would reconsider what it means to fall through the air. I think that I got a little carried away with the fun of creating sinuous, droopy forms that my initial intentions became a little blurred. When something falls quickly through space, it has a dense, smooth area at the point closest to the Earth and then leaves a trail wicking away behind it. I think that I could have better captured the feeling of falling rapidly through space if I made the sculpture more meteor-like. I think that my final sculpture captures the feeling of gravity and density but did not really get at the feeling of dropping quickly downwards.

Process

Briefly comment on strengths and weaknesses of your working process. Specifically what might have you done to improve your results?

Unlike last project, where I had a pretty set idea of what I wanted from the get-go, this project I scrambled around in the beginning. I made a few models that I really liked and I was excited about, but I had difficulty translating them into something for the final model. I started out with yarn, which responded very differently than the wire we were working with. I think that this was the root of my frustrations, because once I was able to manipulate the yarn in way that I liked, it did not transfer over to the wire. I went through multiple stages of redevelopment for the final model and ended up scrapping several designs because they got away from my expressive goals. I was finally able to make a paper representation of what my final sculpture would be which was really helpful since I was able to manipulate scale and composition without having to commit. Despite my struggles in the beginning, I was able to work through that and problem-solve in order to find a solution that matched my materials and goals. I spent a lot of time in the studio during advising day and I found that I was much more efficient outside of class than during class

since I did not have to wait for other people to finish using the machines I needed. I was able to spend the last few days working on the sculpture carefully considering small changes as opposed to scrambling around to get it done.

Self- grade

If you were the teacher, what grade would you give for the following:

- effort
- design assignments
- final sculpture

I did several versions of the final model and I was able to manage my time well enough to have a few days to think about it, come back and alter the sculpture. In order to get all of that done, I put in a lot of hours outside of class especially in the beginning so I would give myself an A for effort and design assignments, and between a B to an A- for the final sculpture.