

Sashi Plas
Senior Show Paper
BFA Exhibition: Sculpture

Play

In the past year I have been manipulating toys—toys I grew up with-- as the subject for my senior projects. Some of the toys I have chosen were: a bead maze, impression toy, and a G.I. Joe. During the spring semester of 2006, I was in my first public show and I noticed that people were playing with pieces that I made. Observing this really set a tone for my upcoming senior show work. I knew I wanted to have interaction, in some shape or form, between people and the pieces I made. The fulfillment I got from the experience in my first show was deeply satisfying and I wanted to feel that same sense of satisfaction once again. When I finally found an interest, which suited my personality, I began manipulating each by either using characteristics such as: an increasing scale, color, and/or use of repetition.

When I was younger, there was a toy I played with and manipulated all the time. It is probably one of the simplest toys, yet it presents endless possibilities. These intriguing toys are Legos. As a child, I always used Legos to make my own sculptures; never following the directions that came on the packages. (The pieces in my senior show are no exception to this either.) There were many days where it was just a pile of Legos, my own imagination and me. I was always creating my own Lego cars, planes, people, houses, cities, etc. Playing with Legos now has become a way for me to relax and reconnect to that carefree feeling of pure entertainment and enjoyment I had when I was younger.

Now that I'm older, my newfound form of entertainment has been recreational games such as pool, foosball, table hockey, or indoor basketball. When I play these games, I get that same kid-like energy I used to love after I created something with Legos. I wanted to combine things I liked to do in my free time when I was younger with what I like to do now that I'm older; so I decided to create my own Lego-Rec Room. By blending the two experiences together I am rejuvenating my kid like spirit, while not forgetting the basic building blocks of what got me to where I am as an individual and as a sculptor.

The first thing I did was to find a common size that I thought would work well with the construction of the Legos. I multiplied each dimension of an actual Lego by eight times its original size. This gave me 2 ½ and 5 inch common denominators to work with. I then researched the dimensions of an actual pool table, table hockey table, foosball table, indoor basketball, and bar. I either added or subtracted till I got to the nearest common multiple of 2 ½ and 5 inches. Because of the type of the interaction involved and over all scale of each piece, I had to put them together permanently so each work could withstand the intense play that it might be subjected to. I then took a straight edge and a razor blade, after everything had been painted, and made score lines at each 2 ½ and 5 inch division where needed. By making the division lines it gave the illusion of having been put together with over sized Legos.

When painting, I used traditional Duplo Lego colors of red, royal blue, yellow, and green. I wanted each piece to keep its childlike quality, and by keeping it to the basic colors, I was able to achieve the playful look that I wanted. I believe that by keeping true scale, attention to detail, and complexity within each piece, I have shown maturity

both as a as person and as a sculptor. I'm happy to say that I have finally reached a level of confidence in my work that has not always been as clear in my previous works. I have taken personal interests along with personal references to my life and created something of which I am proud.

A Naples - born artist, Giancarlo Neri, made a giant table and chair, titled *The Writer*. His intentions were to convey the emotion of loneliness and to have people engage with his work. I really connected to this artist when I heard him in an interview with BBC news. He stated, "I want people to interact with it, using it as a picnic spot or using the legs as goal posts." What I thought was really surprising was when Neri said, "...people have even graffiti'd on it, but it's ok because it's really engaged people." A lot of Neri's views regarding *The Writer* are what I hope to convey in *Play*, except that I am also focused on conveying a sense of excitement, happiness, fun....the sense of play.

I believe that it is important to relive some of our younger days; I still enjoy playing with toys from my childhood at times. Some of us need to realize that not every moment in our lives must be serious and predictable. I want these pieces to remind viewers that it is perfectly acceptable to return to their youth once in a while. Our younger days, after all, made us who we are today. I hope my project makes the viewer take a step back and just enjoy that particular moment in life and not worry about reality, but just PLAY.

I want everyone to enjoy the fact they can touch and interact with my work. I want everyone to be excited about what they are looking at. I do not want them to forget it the next day either. I know if I walked through a show that combined the child-like

humor of Legos with adult recreation, I would have a new appreciation for art, even if I did not know I was looking at, or interacting with,.... art.