



Brent Kington: Mythic Metalsmith - Activities

Illinois State Museum

Lesson Plan: Influences 2

Inspiration: Here is a quote from Kington's oral history [interview](#) of 2001 (Smithsonian Archives):

“Richard (Mawdsley) and I have always encouraged students in self-directed research. As an example, [Mary Lee Hu](#), when she was here, she was taking a weaving class, and she was having problems finding anything personal to express in her metalwork. I'd been experimenting with weaving metal wires. I found the results interesting, but it bored me, so I badgered her into working with wire. That was when she got to wire structuring. I would make suggestions to students and push them if I thought a process or concept was suitable; or if they had areas of interest that appeared worth exploring, I would make suggestions and try to encourage the students into pursuing it. Some of our students have become very closely identified with a concept or process. ”

Goal: Students will demonstrate their understanding of artistic influences by viewing the work of a teacher and his students, looking for visual or technical influences and discussing them.

Concepts: 1) artists are influenced by other artists' ideas; 2) artists are influenced by other artists' techniques and materials; 3) artists are influenced by their own culture and other cultures

Pre-test and Post-test questions to answer and keep in mind as you look at various blacksmith's work:

- What does a student learn from his/her teachers? (skill, technique, work ethic, style, use of material, knowledge)
- Does student work ever look like the work of the teacher? Why or why not?
- Is it possible to tell by looking at the work that a student had a particular teacher? What do you look for? What might the student have learned that does not show up in the work itself?
- How can a teacher influence his students without their copying his/her style?

Web sites:

- L. Brent Kington - gallery of Kington's work on this Web site
- [Mary Lee Hu](http://www.flintridgefoundation.org/visualarts/recipients20012002_maryleehu.html), jewelry maker, professor
http://www.flintridgefoundation.org/visualarts/recipients20012002_maryleehu.html
- [Harlan Butt](http://www.harlanbutt.com/), incredible vessels, professor <http://www.harlanbutt.com/>
- [Daryl Meier](http://meiersteel.com/), damascus knife maker <http://meiersteel.com/>
- [James Wallace](http://metalmuseum.americommerce.com/), Metal Museum, Memphis
<http://metalmuseum.americommerce.com/>
- [Phillip Baldwin](http://www.shiningwave.com/), reactive metals; mokume gane <http://www.shiningwave.com/>
- [Sarah Perkins](http://www.ganoksin.com/borisat/nenam/sarah-perkins-enamelware.htm), vessels <http://www.ganoksin.com/borisat/nenam/sarah-perkins-enamelware.htm>
- [John Medwedeff](http://www.johnmedwedeff.com/index2.htm), southern Illinois sculptor
<http://www.johnmedwedeff.com/index2.htm>
- [Arthur Johns](http://arthursforge.com/_wsn/page10.html), sculpture http://arthursforge.com/_wsn/page10.html

Look at these web sites to look for the characteristics, skills, style, materials, and aesthetic of metalsmiths who have studied under Brent Kington at SIUC.

Activity: Discuss the characteristics of Brent Kington's work. Compare and contrast the work you find online of the former students listed above. Are there any characteristics that are similar? style? use of materials? scale? attention to detail? general mood or feeling? Was there influence to go into education for any of them?

National Art Standards for grades 7-8 students addressed in this lesson:

Content Standard 3: Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas [-]

Students use subjects, themes, and symbols that demonstrate knowledge of contexts, values, and aesthetics that communicate intended meaning in artworks

Content Standard 4: Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures [-]

Students analyze, describe, and demonstrate how factors of time and place (such as climate, resources, ideas, and technology) influence visual characteristics that give meaning and value to a work of art

Illinois Visual Arts Standards for grades 7-8 and 9-10 students addressed in this lesson:

25.B.4 [-]

Analyze and evaluate similar and distinctive characteristics of works in two or more of the arts that share the same historical period or societal context.