



FORGIVE NOT FORGET  
Mixed media



LOST  
Mixed media

## Scott Stockdale

### Look Past the Facade

All of my sculptural works contain elements of self-portraiture and autobiography—a way of expressing and reacting to the emotional turmoil of everyday life. When I begin a sculpture, I avoid over-thinking, instead letting the various inspirations—colors, gestures, faces—that have influenced my work take hold. Once a piece is finished I am able to retreat to a distance and examine the elements within and the emotions beneath my work. “Empty Cage” is a representation of withdrawal from the world—a harsh, callous, amoral minefield where money is God and kindness has been forgotten. The cage represents both the heart being torn or locked away and also the inability—or the fear of—allowing deep feeling to return in the face of cruelty and apathy. No where are these feelings more manifest than in our current culture of disposable consumption and haphazard violence, where so

many of us feel powerless to enact change, powerless with rage and grief. As in all my sculpture, the layers of meaning parallel many layers of construction: I often break, reform, repaint, and rebuild my work many times before calling a piece finished.

I choose to sculpt life-size, three-dimensional, altered male and female forms as a tactile way of entering a relationship with my audience. I want the people viewing my sculptures to interact with and create their own intimate story in these figures and faces—to examine their own reactions to loss, longing, and grief. My figures are not whole—not shiny or perfect. They are worn, battered, broken and repaired. Some wear masks, some are missing limbs—the way all of us look beneath our skin, our souls battered and healing from the wounds of the world.

RECONSTRUCTION AND  
DECONSTRUCTION  
Mixed media  
73"x18"x16"

In "Self-Portrait", a theme on suffering, the figure has withstood great loss—a metaphorical and literal broken heart—and yet still reaches out, rusted but made new, bolted together and reassembled. Castings of several different subjects, including myself, form a figure that is truer and more viscerally satisfying to me than the visions of beauty seen in classical sculpture. As an art student traveling abroad, I was given a unique glimpse behind the polished marble on display to the broken pieces waiting for reconstruction: the fractured limbs and bodiless heads, the mounted, hobbled torsos. In these works I saw the reality of human nature: imperfect, striving for cohesion, scarred but still beautiful.

The initial creation of "Reconstruction and Deconstruction" occurred while I was completing my MFA in Sculpture at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. This work explores the loss of sense of self experienced after life-altering change—including the terror and exhilaration of becoming a parent—and the transformation required in building oneself back together. Headless, bolted down, this sculpture represents both loss of identity and its reformulation. As in all of my work, I am attempting to transform emotion into recognizable form, relinquishing its power and presenting the viewer with a visual interpretation to make their own.

"Things That Do Not Heal" is a work related to the personal loss of a friend due to heart failure, but also a meditation on the acting out, or portrayal, of grief. My figure is female—the gender associated with demonstration of outward emotion—but she wears an androgynous, faintly smiling mask in order to function as the world expects in spite of her pain. The multiple meanings, layers and symbols in the work serve to explore the multitude of reactions to grief. Does the ladder represent the escape of feeling or hope for its return? Does the egg suggest a chance for new beginnings or the overwhelming fragility of life? Such questions are the root and purpose of my work.

Despite themes of grief and hopelessness prevalent in my sculptures, I also try to represent rebirth, recreation, and the triumph of honesty. Pain, loss, and transformation are inescapable parts of life, but man is also born with the power to heal, no matter what our wounds are or how broken we may have started out. To look past the facade is to find beauty in truth, not just truth in beauty.

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