

Human Relations in Education

Dr. Barbara Bridges

Sculpture Assignment

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Artist Statement

“Box of Fear”

My idea for a sculpture was cemented in my brain on the first day of class. I even bragged to some of you that it would be a masterpiece of glass and mirrors, and I felt good the sculpture portion of this class out of the way. And then the learning started. I learned about the Hmong, American Indians, black people, white people, gay people, men, and women, and many others. Mostly I learned I had a lot more inner fear about “the other” than I had expected. So I had to change my sculpture, because I wanted to show what I had learned, not what I thought I knew. The title of my sculpture is, “Box of Fear”.

Elements and Principles of Design

Elements of Design

- Color – The final design is a mixture of black and deep red, and speckles of gray and white. The colors are meant to intimidate.
- Texture – I used a faux-granite spray paint to give the box the look of stone, something cold and dreary.
- Shape – The shape of a box, with its sharp corners, is meant to look bulky and uninviting, yet it is there and needs to be dealt with.

Principles of Design

- Harmony – The box joints used in assembly can be seen in every corner, providing a similar look throughout the design.
- Balance – The two boxes combine to create one box.
- Proportion – Of the two boxes, the smaller box is on top. The larger box is the most important box and is on the bottom.



Fear and ignorance feed racism and bigotry. This sculpture represents the fear we all have of the unknown. It represents the ugliness of fear and ignorance, bigotry and racism. It also represents the inner beauty we all have, once we get over ourselves and collect the data: What’s inside that scary box?

The sculpture consists of two boxes made from one. Box joints were used in assembly to represent our connection to each other; whether it’s by fear or acceptance, we are all connected in some way. The box was sawed in half to make two boxes, the upper box is smaller, and represents the irrational fears we have of people different from ourselves. The lower box is much bigger and represents the love and acceptance we are all capable of once we get past our initial fears.

It’s important to know this sculpture is interactive. The user is asked to conquer their fears by putting their hand into the opening in the top of the box in search of a small key. The experience is meant to be uncomfortable, navigating your hand past odd, unfamiliar and unseen shapes and textures.

A key is hidden inside the upper, scary portion of the box. It represents the searching of one’s soul. Once the key (knowledge) is secured, the user may open the lower box to find the true beauty inside, a small message that says, “Peace on Earth”. My initial idea for this sculpture was for the user to open the bottom box to reveal flowers, but I recalled the song, “One Tin Soldier” and I liked the simplicity of its message. True beauty doesn’t come from wealth or material goods, it comes from acceptance, which feeds love.

Dan Collins, the principal of Twin Lakes Elementary in Elk River, has agreed to put “Box of Fear” on display in his school in August.

Creating “Box of Fear”

The entire sculpture is made of ½” pine and ¼” oak plywood. I cut the sides in four equal pieces and assembled them using box joints.





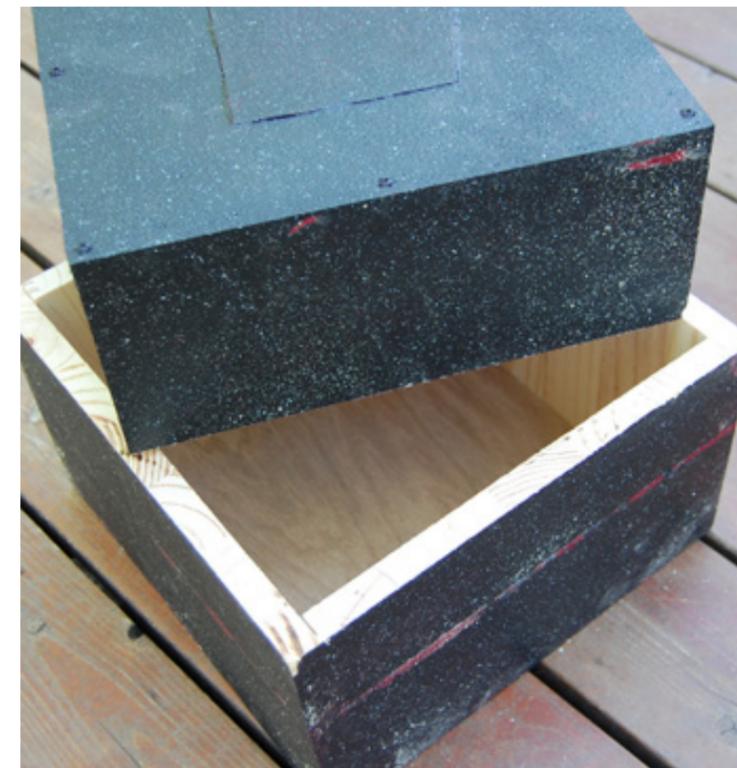
Next, I put a few objects inside the upper portion of the box. These objects are intended to make the user experience physically uncomfortable.

Then I added a top and cut a hole through it roughly the size of my hand.

I gave the box a base coat of red paint because I knew the granite treatment wouldn't provide full coverage. I wanted the red to show through ever so slightly to add to the uncomfortable effect.

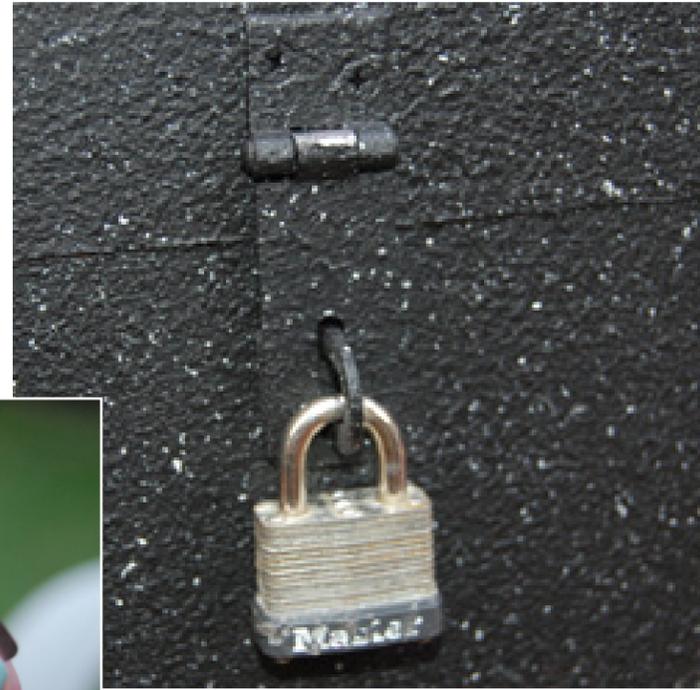


The small square on the top of the lid is actually a rubber membrane. I cut two slits through the membrane in order to prevent anyone from looking inside, while allowing the user to put their hand into the box.



Once the box was painted, I cut it in two to make two boxes. I knew I would ding it up during cutting so I gave it one more final coat.

I added a hasp and painted it during the final coat. Then I locked it shut with a small lock. I put the key inside the top portion of the box and asked an assistant (my daughter) to give it a try.



Eventually, she found the key and was able to open the box.

The treasure inside isn't a big car or a mansion or a big pile of money.



As expected the experience was not pleasant. But she conquered her fears and searched for the key.



As you can see, the paint was still a little wet.



If we find the strength to get past our fears, we can find the beauty within ourselves and others.

“Box of Fear”



Thank you for observing "Box of Fear".

Please feel free to give your honest opinion of the sculpture below.

Comments:

Sign and date (optional) _____