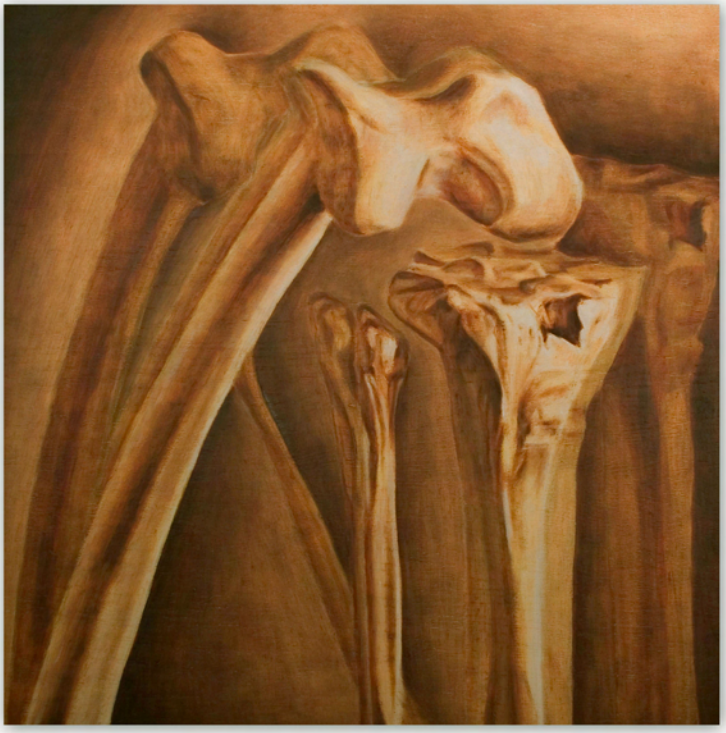

Action, Unification

A PERFECTED COMMUNION

RACHEL STEELY

November 7, 2008

wUG LAKU'S STUDIO & gARAGE

Action, Unification

A Perfected Communion

"If one could see the remnants of the past fade as the present takes place, how would this be composed? ... I have created this imaginary experience with bone joints that are juxtaposed in order to capture action and unification. ... In the ideal joint, there is a true freedom for its members. Due to this infinite uniqueness of action, a perfected communion arises between its members."

- Rachel Steely
www.rachelsteely.com/

Artists Statement

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'Action, Unification'

continues by appointment through November 28.

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Bones as Landscape

Natural substances, both great and small, reflect similarities that are noticeable upon reflection. The other night as I was studying the texture of the bone in front of me, I pondered upon how the cragginess of the bone was reminiscent of a rocky mountain in a landscape. How the mountain hid a molten center of power and how the bone encases a storehouse of life. The advantages of the bones come in their mobility and the manner in which they relate to each other. They are not static or mounted to the ground.

Construct Not Disembody

Compose Not Decay: Articulating Articulations

Sometimes one can find particular compound subjects which inter-relate not only intimately, but also freely and purposefully. One of these cases appears to be the dynamic and interlocking skeletal joints that we find at the core of our physical bodies. This example can perhaps be expanded through reference, in the thirty-seventh chapter of Ezekiel, to the story of 'dry bones' coming to life. Furthermore, one can exceed to the resurrection life that comes from death. Care to visual representation, along with ideas that connect to the work, may awaken this poetry while encouraging an active continuing referral to beyond what is explicit.

The word "articulation" denotes a joint of bones, a correlation or interconnection of ideas, or an act of utterance. This body of work "articulates articulations." Using joint-like articulations to create titles, the names of the works are meant to prompt a contemplative connecting that starts between the verbal and the visual. These works were created, on both material and contemplative levels, in order to suggest particularity of relationships, life, and quintessential hope.

Assemble Not Dispersion

Vigor Not Quietude

Here, drawings and paintings present moveable joints of human, skeletal, dry bones. Dramatically lit artificial skeletons are placed in settings that include drapery, glass, panel, and/or negative spaces of marks that react to the joint. The orientation of the paper for the drawings, which suggests portrait space, complements the orientation of the paintings, which prompts a more environmental, horizontal setting. Sometimes there is a piece of glass in the background that reflects the bone in a way that may parallel the 'reflection' of the bone in the viewer. When this happens, a type of trinity emerges as an intersection of the following ideas: general lifelessness (mere reflection on glass), possibility for actualization (given joint), and the realized life of the viewer. Sometimes the negative spaces seem interwoven into a reaction of the positive joint. Perhaps there is a struggle or energy reflecting life. Purposefully, in order to join the negative and positive space, the joints are often placed in non-central locations in the works. Then again, the background might be a tangible thing such as a panel or drapery that allows a shadow to fall against it. Consequently, a second trio of shadow, object, and reflection might appear.

Gesture As Indication

Temporary As Preliminary

Presence As Hasten

Perhaps one can consider the implications of a treatment of craft that reflects the tenuous, life, texture, and color of a bone. The support is primed in order to be reminiscent of the texture and color of bone. Bone illusions are formed using additive (graphite/turpentine, or paint) and subtractive (eraser, or rag) work that is layered complexly, and created in a manner that flows from larger general forms toward more particular detail. The pace of gesture and calligraphic marks, that acquires strength as the joint forms illusionally, begins with a "gestural core." This is commonly associated with responsive "life" drawing. A somewhat theatric setting, described through intentional lighting and diagonal directions of the cropped, enlarged joints of bones, is the stage in which fairly aggressive marks create an ironic sense of detail. A whole person approach to drawing, including an athletic response of the body and mark maker to the referent, results in marks that are particular, corrected, and layered. A combination of referent and the faith of the drawer-painter perhaps created and stirred life on the page. In fact, when these were created, the maker was in a shadow and cried out with every work for the life and renewal to continue forth from inner wells of hope and faith.

Entrance

Action, Unification

Humans are bound by time. We are not able to truly revisit and experience the past. Nor can an individual view the past and present simultaneously. If one could see the remnants of the past fade as the present took place, how would this be composed? In response, I have created this imaginary experience with bone joints that are juxtaposed in order to capture action and unification.

This series investigates a world in which time overlaps, and bones are observed as either moving as a joint or assembling to create a single entity. It begins with bones that are moving as a unit and develops into an exploration of how the parts of a joint unite to create a whole. The first few pieces in this body experiment with light radiating from the bones. The titles of these earlier works reflect the movement as a whole. Later works use theatrical light to create a fluid stage upon which the bones can narrate. Their titles initiate contemplation on the selfless accommodation for each other as they unite to form a single joint. Supports for these paintings shift from canvases to rough wood panels with natural texture that parallels the organic bone surface.

Fluctuation

Descending

Pendulum

Appearing

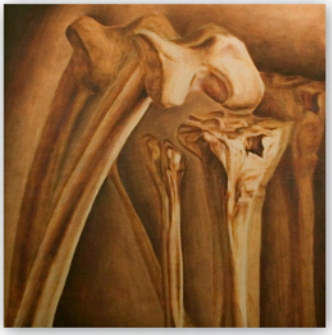
Converging

Emerging

These depictions were painted to portray life rather than following the cultural iconography that connects the deadening metaphor of bones to death. Oil color, applied in limited palettes, infers possible vitality in the referent through relation and juxtaposition of value, hue, and saturation. Joints of bones are of interest not only because they are at the physical core of our stability and mechanics but also particular compound subjects which inter-relate. This relation is not solely intimate but free and purposeful. A narrative is formed as these joints, which are incomplete, assemble and interact in a process of renewal. One bone selflessly gives way as the other advances. Their shapes are formed in order to fit and interact in a beautiful empathy. In the ideal joint, there is a true freedom for its members. The purpose of the joint is support and connection, and this freedom is bounded within that purpose. Due to this infinite uniqueness of action, a perfected communion arises between its members.

Rachel Steely

Adjoining



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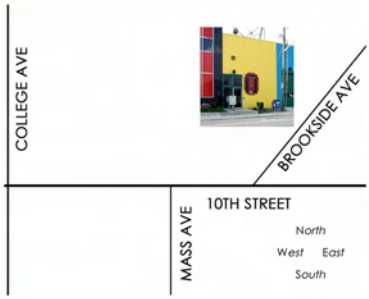
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