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PETER REGINATO - Painted Steel Sculpture

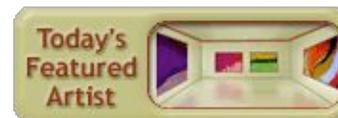
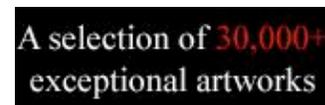
Sculptural work in steel has become one of the most popular media in contemporary art. Many notable sculptors have made their way working with steel over the last five decades. One of the most influential sculptors working in steel today is Peter Reginato.

The welded steel sculptures of Peter Reginato have gone through some interesting stylistic changes over the years. Perhaps his most iconic work is the welded steel nonobjective sculpture made in all sizes - completely abstract in form - then painted in remarkably conceived color combinations ranging from sensational to sublime.

Over the years Peter Reginato has consistently made strongly evocative statements using abstract form and color that compel a range of feeling and understanding of his nonobjective sculptures in steel. You can see much more of his work at his website at <http://www.peterreginato.com/>.

Because Reginato uses impacting color on welded forms that are loaded with movement, he can convey the feelings of life, growth, activity, and a form of social engagement. His sculpture appeals to the brighter parts of a viewer's affect and provides an interactivity that is energizing, often refreshingly playful. I asked Peter for an interview.

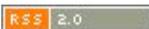
How did you begin in art? "I remember when I was in kindergarten or First grade making large plywood painted constructions and calling them 'tommy guns'. I think, though, I first decided I wanted to be an artist when I painted a weeping willow tree in 2nd grade. When I finished it I was really surprised at how much it looked like a weeping willow tree and how much I enjoyed the process. I also copied cartoons everything - from Disney to Mad Magazine and even made a few of my own original cartoon characters."



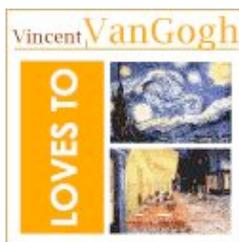
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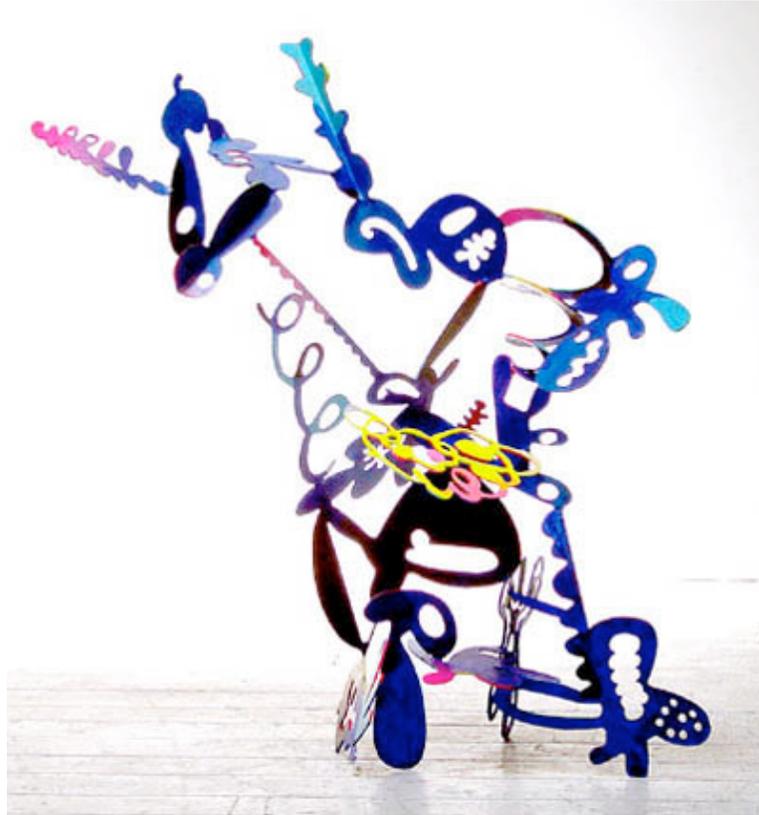
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Do you remember any key events in the development of your interest in sculpture? "I was making shaped canvas paintings in 1965-66 that were made out of plywood and fiberglass and painting them with automotive paint. Some of them looked pretty good on the floor so I started making them a little higher and deeper. One thing led to another and I was making minimalist box-like sculptures. But I think seeing the work of many different artists that was constructed or built rather than carved or modeled was a key influence."

How did you develop your style into its present direction? "I think the idea of drawing has always had a big influence on me. Making the shapes is important to me, freeform shapes, rather than found objects, or neutralized shapes. But I think I'm always searching for, if not style, something new in structure. As far as my style goes it seems that with these new stainless pieces it has changed, but at the same time I'm working with colored pieces that are made out of acrylic paint with a metal armature. They're actually quite different, but people keep telling me that they see them as different but they recognize both of them as mine. It's important to have your own style. It's a commitment to a belief and a set of values. At the same time I don't want to have a style that's so narrow I feel locked in."

What kinds of compositional concerns are important to you? "All aspects of composition are important to me. I'm always searching to come up with something that would be formally new,

particularly in what may be called composition or structure. I guess I haven't done too much with the grid structure. I always find that too safe."



What will be your next project? "I wish I knew. I don't think in terms of projects, it's more about the need to 'get somewhere!'"

Please talk about your use of materials and techniques.
"Basically my technique has been working with steel, but in the last couple of years I started working with stainless and using a plasma arc cutter which has opened a lot of creative doors for me. The plasma arc cutter has given me the ability to cut shapes that were pretty close to impossible with the acetylene torch and now I can really freely construct forms in stainless. But strangely enough with one group of work, the technique keeps changing. How I go about it seems to change as I go along and realize new possibilities, which I think is a very exciting place to be. More or less if you know what you're doing you're not doing anything new

or challenging yourself."

What kind of tools, light, and studio do you prefer? "The best in tools, i.e. heavy duty. The largest studio I can afford with lots of light and keep it clean."

When you look a sculpture in progress over what are you seeing in terms of form and space? In terms or color - during the painting stage? "That is a very tough question to answer. It feels so intuitive to me. As far as the space goes after I get something started I keep playing off of what I started until its working for me. Its the same with the color. Sometimes I do have a preconceived idea about the color or I'm thinking of a color combination that may look really good on this particular piece that would help to define the mood of the sculpture, and sometimes I use the color to pull out a shape you might say recompose with color but its definitely a trial and error process. Sometimes I feel with the space that its a preconceived idea about the structure and how to get to that structure. I did a couple of sculptures that I thought would be almost flat, but because of the structure they became 3-D and almost like a shell. I'm always trying to find a way to make vertical sculpture but its one of the harder formats to be original in because its been covered in so many different ways for the past 500 years."





What are your sources of inspiration? "Women, Mo - other art, walking down the street, life."

What other artists do you admire? "I admire all the usual suspects. Sometimes I'll see a gallery show that excites me. Sometimes I go to the National Gallery in London and look at the 13th-14th century Italian artists. I also have a lot of artist friends whose work I admire. I like this quote by Ornette Coleman, "There is no bad music only bad performances."

What was the most difficult project/commission you've encountered? "I think every commission had surprises, such as I didn't realize how much time, energy, and difficulty some

particular shape would require to be made at a large scale."

Do you have any remarkable experiences you can mention with exhibitions, galleries, collectors or art writers? "Its always a big up to receive some sort of acknowledgement about your work whether its a review, sale, or a gallery giving you a show. On the gossipy side, oh boy do I have stories but nothing I could say here."

What are your interests and feelings about the current art market? "I'm not sure I believe all that is being said and I think some of it isn't as real as the press is making it out to be. A lot of the money that makes this art scene turn is coming from sources that have nothing to do with selling art. That said I'd like to get a piece of that action."

Interestingly the sculptor, Peter Reginato, has maintained the engaging tones of his work even in stainless steel, where many sculptors have pushed form and texture to some rather austere and minimalistic states. Reginato's energy and positive presence radiates even from the elegance of unpainted stainless steel.

Thank you, Peter Reginato for the interview and your style of sculpture. CAG wishes you continued inspiration and creative energy.

- Tia Marks



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