

THE COPPER METAL MOVEMENT
An Introduction to Raising
Production #5892

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My direction since starting this Master Of Fine Arts program has been to teach. Oddly, no prerequisites or mandatory classes are prescribed for the professor of higher education. One does not have to study instructional methods or philosophy of education in order to teach at the college level. Because of this, my research requirement became a forum to investigate the possibilities of using video to assist in instruction of techniques in metalsmithing. The equipment and staff are provided by the University and I worked with the Office of Instructional Services and in doing so, gave up ownership of the product. The experience of working within the University framework was natural and the notion of self propriety of the product seemed inconsequential. The ease of coordinating with the office and the experience of working with a professional production staff complimented my decision.

A concern about instructional videos is whether or not they are an effective medium. That is, do students get anything from them, or, are they just another form of entertainment? In our society television has been used predominantly for enjoyment but it's use for educational purposes has not been fully utilized. My challenge was to approach this project as an educational endeavor and to take advantage of the power the medium has inherent in it, yet also allow it to perform as expected: to

entertain. I wanted the video to be as much inspirational as instructional; that is, to motivate the student who views the tape to want to try the technique displayed. Education should be fun - it should be an activity students are excited about and desire to take part in, not just for the grade but for what he or she will gain and use in life. Most young children have the excitement of learning that I want to capture. They wake up and all day act with curiosity towards life, exploring and experimenting thereby expanding their knowledge base. Art classes tend to bring out some of this child-like curiosity and creativeness still within adults. The classes should encourage exploration without fear.

The technique I chose to explore in the video is an introduction to raising metal. Most students who view it will have already taken beginning metalsmith classes and should already have a desire to produce in metal. The procedure is not complicated, yet, like many art techniques, until the student works hard to overcome the novelty, it can appear difficult. My wish is to introduce the technique of raising at a successful level for the student. Attempting a new method without frustration can lead the student to make great advances, after successive attempts, at raising. Therefore the form I chose is a simple vessel. The vessel I raised had vertical sides so as to promote the idea of raising the metal to a goblet appearance

rather than simply making a cereal bowl.

The development of the opening of the tape took many hours of work on my part and input and support from the production crew as well. My intent is to show the opening of a flower from a bud to a fully open flower in time-lapse video. Following that the video then blends into a flat sheet of metal which is then raised up into a vessel by way of time-lapse. The development of both of these forms takes only twenty seconds or so. My rationale is to relate the splendor of a flower opening to the excitement of the process of raising a vessel from a flat sheet of metal. Both are acts of nature and my intent is for students to relate to them as such. Rarely does one sit and watch a flower open, rather it is seen in bud form or in bloom. To experience a flower opening, one would sit and watch and wait a long time. The same holds true for the process of raising. It takes time and perseverance to watch the piece of metal grow from a flat piece to an erect form. Sometimes the artist allows certain stages of the process to go unnoticed being absorbed in the development. Many students question how many hours it takes to raise a piece of metal. I really don't know as I'm engrossed in the enjoyment I receive from the process. My desire is for the opening of the video to encourage the student to be inspired and excited and at the same time to relate the process of the two developments.

To construct the time lapse portion of the video, I used nine eight-inch discs raised at different stages. The taped segments of each stage of development were then blended to accomplish the feeling of the vessel growing from a flat sheet. I used a tulip as the flower selection because of its relatively short opening duration which allowed tapping to be shorter and less time consuming. Because of the video format, the growth of both the metal and the flower are slightly jerky. If 16mm film would have been available the transitions would have been smoother, but I believe the concept comes across in the video. I also used the computer graphics department at Instructional Services to assist visually with some details in the technique. The graphics allow an escape from the demonstration to view part of the process from another angle. The graphics took the place of a black board and helped to clarify the two different methods of approaching the technique of raising.

I did encounter problems while working on the video. The first day of shooting we encountered technical problems and lost video for the first five hours of taping. Frustrating? not really, as the day proved to be an orientation to the crew, to the task at hand and to test my perseverance. From that possibly disastrous first day everything went smoothly thereafter. I became aware of how crucial it is to take care in developing relationships with the crew, who impart become the framework of

any film production. The energy and input from them became influential to the end product as they became as interested as the creator in the process of production. The crew was intent and aware of perceptions the actor and director may miss or take for granted. For this reason I needed to be open and honest with them and to allow their creativity into the process.

After three days of shooting we had accumulated fifteen hours of set shooting which resulted in four hours of original tape. We then decided it was time to edit and edit and edit . . . The crew and I spent twenty-seven hours in the editing room and ironically, the complete viewing time of the video is twenty-seven minutes, forty-four seconds. The approximate total cost calculated by the Office of Instructional Services was \$5,400.00.

My research project resulted in the successful production of an instructional video on raising. The experience has been extremely worthwhile to me as an educator. I experienced how the video format allows for formal instruction with the reflective feature that students may use the video to refer to and re-view certain steps easily. The end product is consistent in the steps taken, resulting in a cohesive base of knowledge for the student to assimilate. This project of producing an instructional video has been two-fold. Not only is the student/viewer stimulated to

attempt the particular technique, I as the instructor am allowed to objectively view myself and my instructional methods on the video. As with many creative endeavors one sees more potential and gains future insights from the finished project but this project has left me with the desire to begin production on a series of instructional videos. The video has allowed yet another avenue of expression for my creativity.