

## **Report of Sabbatical Activities During Winter and Spring Term 2007 and Accomplishments in 2008 in Productivity for the College**

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I am grateful to the College, the Visual Arts Department and my colleagues for the two-term sabbatical of 2007, used to pursue some exciting professional development and scholarship in my studio and in art history. My journey was to explore, on site, the archeological findings, at locations and in corresponding museums, the ancient empires of the Mediterranean cultures, c. 2500 B.C. through 330 A.D. I trust the outcomes of this journey will serve the students I teach in ART 204: Survey of Western Art History, Prehistoric to Byzantine.

### **Review of Sabbatical Proposal**

The proposal I submitted with my sabbatical application described a two-pronged approach in professional development and scholarship:

1. To develop a thesis of artwork designed on the influences of Greek mythologies that would culminate in a body of work (prints) for exhibition.
2. To explore and study the sites, cities, and museums of the Ancient Near East, Minoan, Greek and Roman civilizations for the development of curriculum in ART 204: Survey of Western Art History, Prehistoric to Byzantine.

### **Report of Sabbatical Activities**

The first term of my sabbatical was devoted to research here at home. I have attached a bibliography of titles I used in preparation for my visual art thesis. As I read I began to draw out my ideas, using an approach I often do in the studio, working through figurative poses of studies done from nude models. I have historically been known as a “figurative” artist, meaning my artistry works through the venue of the human form. Building a theme in Greek mythology was exciting to me, as the ancient Greeks are known as Humanists.

So, for the winter months I drew and read, then drew some more. My goal was to complete the drawings prior to my travel to Europe in the spring. I purposely delayed carving into the wood until after my actual journey in case I would need to modify compositions. I designed four panels that would “read” in a narrative frieze fashion after the Minoan fresco style. The color palette was inspired by the Villa of Mysteries of Pompeii, a brilliant warm red with pale yellow ochre to offset it.

Another part of my preparation was to create an itinerary of travel that best met my goals of studying the Prehistoric to Byzantine eras of Western art history. Again, I have included a short list of titles in the attached bibliography. The plan was extensive! I was so glad I began working on it as soon as I did, as I was surprised to find long waiting lists for some of the places I wanted to see. I will try to outline it as briefly as I can:

**Milan:** The Last Supper, by Leonardo da Vinci, the Milano Duomo, The Milano Theatre (I included these as I had missed Milan when I was in Italy in 2004).

**Paris:** The Louvre, where I spent three days taking over 350 digital pictures, which I have now incorporated into my lectures (more on that later). As you know, the Louvre houses a lion's share of archeological treasures from Prehistoric Sumerian and Mesopotamian artifacts, to Egyptian, Aegean, Greek, Etruscan, and Roman sculpture. I only regret I didn't spend more days in Paris.

**Tuscany:** I spent two days walking along the coastline villages of the Tyrrhenian Sea in Tuscany, home of the ancient Etruscans, sleeping in a UNESCO preserved village built on the steep hillside of the coastline and exploring an Etruscan tomb site.

**Plovdiv:** Traveled to Plovdiv, Bulgaria to set up my home base for the 2 month long trip in Europe. A week later, I traveled into Greece.

**Thessaloniki:** Home to Greek, Roman and Byzantine empires, I visited the archeological museum (of course) taking more photographs of artifacts, displays, sculpture, sarcophagi, and so on, for my lectures. I explored the ancient ruins of Roman Emperor Galerius of an entire Roman Forum, with baths, temples, basilica, amphitheatre, aqua ducts, mausoleum, and triumphal arches. The Byzantines left a tower and an imposing wall stretching across the upper hills of this coastal city. However, the greatest impact of the Byzantines is the legacy of the Orthodox Church, with one in Thessaloniki dating back to the time of the first Christian Emperor, Constantine, circa 330 A.D. This cathedral is built along the Roman basilica design with appropriate Roman architectural elements. On to Athens:

**Athens:** The Acropolis is iconic to the study of the ancient Greeks and so I took my obligatory trip up the hill to view these amazing ruins. Despite the over-populated tourism aspect, these ruins are so magnificent that it is very easy to understand why Pericles waged a hard fought political battle to celebrate his military victory over the Persians with this massive monument. Walking down the hill are theatres, agora and temples, and last but not least, Hadrian's Library. A visit to the National Archeological Museum of Athens was a study of the trails Greek artists made from the Archaic to Hellenistic periods. Again, hundreds of digital images, my treasure was growing!

**Crete:** In order to better understand the Aegean culture, I journeyed to the island of Crete, home of the Minoans and the legend of the labyrinths of King Minos. I stayed in Hania, a pleasantly small city with a rich collection of prehistoric artifacts in a local archeological museum. A scenic bus ride brought me to the city of Heraklion, where Minoan palaces such as Knossos, Phaistos and Malia are nearby, as well as an important archeological museum housing the great frescos from these ancient sites.

**Upper Bulgaria:** An important conclusion to my tour was back in Bulgaria where new UNESCO sites had just been opened to the public. These sites are major Thracian tumuli or tombs dating to the Classical Greek Empire, circa 450-250 B.C. Thracian tribes were notable horsemen who had come from the vast East Asian

Steppes to settle into the regions along the Danube to the Black Sea and down into the mountains and fertile valleys of central Bulgaria. The tumuli show definitive evidence of their trading with Greek sailors and merchants along the Black Sea Greek colonies. Excavated tumuli reveal Greek architectural elements such as the use of engaged Doric and Ionic columns and Caryatids. Remnants now housed in corresponding museums show a wealth of gold and silver fashioned into repousse vessels, adornments, and crowns. Khoums (kings) were buried with their favorite wives and horses in tumuli built with corbelled and post and lintel construction. Fascinating! Touring into these areas was completely different than that of Greece as these tumuli are located in remote villages, where there is no structure for tourism (yet), no hotels, no English, nada. I went with a guide, or would never have even found these locations. We stayed over in small rustic village homes with vegetable gardens and chickens in the back. I woke up one morning with a flock of geese and a donkey outside my window. I wonder if they found my presence as odd as the villagers did, and had come to take a look at this foreigner!

**Plovdiv:** The area around Plovdiv, where I based this journey is layered with both Greek and Roman ruins. Plovdiv has ancient Greek and Roman city names, as it was a favorite spot to gain a commission if you happened to be a general in an imperial army. This area is in a beautiful valley boasting the tastiest produce you've ever eaten with natural hot springs nearby. Walking through the cosmopolitan streets of the "new" downtown of Plovdiv, one wanders in and out of ancient ruins that have been beautifully incorporated into the city landscape. Unlike in Thessaloniki, where the Roman Forum runs through the city in a linear fashion up the hill, the Greek and Roman ruins are everywhere, as though Plovdiv today is simply sitting on top of the ancient city. I love living in this city, it is small enough to walk, large enough historically to excite, and so far, thankfully, authentic. Plovdivians take a much-deserved pride in their lineage, from Thracian, Greek, Roman and finally Byzantine cultures.

An interesting factor in all of Bulgaria is the lasting cultural influences of the Ottoman Empire of the Turks. In the remote villages where the Thracian tumuli are found, residents still speak Turkish, and are a mix of Islamic and Orthodox. In Plovdiv there is a large Islamic Mosque just a few meters away from an Orthodox Church, where both religious patrons are proud of their historic tolerance of each other. Pretty cool.

### **Product of the Sabbatical**

1. 2008: Completed the body of artworks first started in Winter 2007 prior to my trip to Europe. Exhibited them in downtown Portland, September 2008, at the Elizabeth Loft Gallery and in the Faculty Exhibit at MHCC Visual Arts Gallery, October 2008. The work will travel next to Plovdiv for an exhibit in the Old Town Gallery.
2. 2007-08: Application of my field studies into the Art History curriculum lecture series with support from images taken on site locations and museums. The lectures are in a digital software making them podcasts.

3. 2007-08: Development of Art History 204, 205, and 206 into online courses. Podcast lectures are supported by hundreds of my own digital images.
4. 2008-09: Development of a hybrid Life Drawing course, applying web instruction to highlight the science of the human form (using Leonardo da Vinci as inspiration!). The online portion teaches through podcasts lectures to animate the science of art, while practicing drawing the human form in the studio.
5. 2008: I participated with the Visual Arts Gallery coordinator, Pat Barrett, to curate the **International Viewpoints Exhibit**, shown in April of 2008. The contacts with artists I had made in Italy and Bulgaria were the keystone artists of this exhibit along with printmakers I know through my professional affiliations. The purpose of this exhibit was to showcase points of view by artists who either don't live in the United States, or have lived for significant periods of time outside the U.S.A.

Finally, I want to thank the college, FRDB and my colleagues again for allowing me this time to delve deeply into this fascinating subject of Prehistoric to Byzantine art and architecture. My passion for these earliest forms has been vindicated a thousand fold through this extensive study period. I often hear from my students they are inspired by my passion and enthusiasm. Keeping my "hand" involved keeps my passion strong.

Post Note: I had hoped to work more on a potential study abroad proposal for a summer tour of ancient sites, again based in Plovdiv, Bulgaria; however, the tasks I outlined above took priority. My contacts in Plovdiv remain enthusiastic and are just waiting for this idea to come to fruition.

### **Critical and Literary Bibliography**

In preparation for a thematic context of **Mystic Memories**, a series of print panels exhibited as a narrative frieze, I relied upon this list for inspiration and documentation. These texts were a wonderful resource that enhanced my creativity in the studio and provided invaluable insights during my actual journey through the ancient sites of the Mediterranean landscape.

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