

RELIEF BASED ON BUFFALO'S ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS

Think Tank Project

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FACULTY ADVISOR STATEMENT

Dennis Barraclough

Final Project: Artwork (relief) based on Buffalo's Architectural elements. The piece measures approximately six feet square with a depth of four to six inches. The finished piece will be installed on the Daemen Campus at a site specified upon completion.

Overview of Project: Project was initiated in the early part of the Spring 07 semester and completed at the end of that semester. The process included traveling throughout the community exploring Buffalo's great architectural heritage. The students photographed various architectural elements and collected actual forms to be used in the artwork itself. In working on the project the students truly explored the visual elements, putting numerous hours to reach a wonderful finished work. The artwork is visually complex, conveying the rich aesthetic façade of Buffalo and its heritage. In concluding, I feel that Laura and Jamie did an outstanding job on the piece; fully exploring the concept and challenge of the Think Tank initiative. They should be proud of their accomplishment.

STUDENT STATEMENT

Jamie Callari

Whenever I leave home and people ask, “Where are you from” the response “Buffalo New York” often leads people to identify the city with chicken wings, hockey, and snow. Unfortunately most of the time, if not all, people never identify Buffalo as a city rich in beautiful historic architecture. Even many of our neighbors don’t identify Buffalo and it’s surrounding suburbs in this way. In the midst of a depressed economy and past complacencies in city government I can understand how *Buffalonians* may struggle to first see beauty in our surroundings, but it’s presence makes our city shine in spite of our struggles.

With this Think Tank scholarship opportunity our aim was to somehow capture many of Buffalo’s rich architectural details in one piece of artwork. The final aesthetic was far from our grasp in the beginning, so we sprang forward with our visual research and historical context in hand. We also initially knew that we wanted to achieve a very rich surface texture.

From the many pictures we took of architectural forms in our citywide research we were able to isolate and exaggerate elements from the images. By layering medium we started to spin these very formal architectural forms into a symphony of beautiful urban decay; marrying the broken and beautiful. At a distance the piece almost resembles a graffiti wall but as the spectator focuses in on the piece historical buildings and images surface. From city hall to Shea’s and spray-painted parking numbers to carved wooden details, history resonates from the depths of the vibrant chaos.

The final direction of our artwork was altered and reinterpreted throughout our created process. In the end it became a social statement about the beauty that Buffalo's architecture brings to a city that has and is facing times of struggle. It's as if the foundations of our once booming city still manage to shine amongst the tarnished.

STUDENT STATEMENT

Laura James

The process of the Think Tank played a vital role in the result of the project. When looking back on our notes, it is obvious that the result is not what the initial intentions were. The journey the project took led it to be unique. The major transition in change was from the visual heritage of the city to a stronger focus in the architecture of Buffalo, which gives the city its famous culture. The historical buildings and factories of Buffalo are standing proof of the evolution within the city as well as the effort for it to remain the same. We incorporated aspects of the city through intense photography documentation, resources from antique stores, others' trash, old newspapers, magazines, etc. Using these resources, we created a collage that as a whole represents the architectural style of the city of Buffalo. A lot of the inspiration was driven from photographs we collected and simply by driving around Buffalo. This gave us a better/deeper understanding of what makes the city, Buffalo. For example, from photographs of the Shea's Theatre sign, we were inspired by the light bulbs and incorporated the same style of light bulbs into the piece. Actual antique doorknobs and plates were also used to emphasize the architectural style of buildings in Buffalo. All of these resources were added to the piece in a meaningful/intentional style. The color used, photographs, and found objects are all balanced throughout the piece. Documentation of our process explains the layers and layers of color, images, and objects. From blocks of colors and collaged photographs evolved a style of application and unity. The process became very "as you go" and seeing where the project was heading, as we went along. When a visual issue would surface, we would solve it with on the spot solutions. This is the nature of any piece of art and very rarely is the initial ideas the final

product. The Think Tank was a continuous effort towards a finished work of art representing the visual images of Buffalo Architecture.

We also drew inspiration from other artists. The center of the Think Tank is Louise Nevelson inspired. Her famous sculptures are a collection of found objects in New York City that she painted a solid color—usually black. She arranged the objects to portray a larger idea. Imitating Nevelson's style, we also collected scraps of wood and molding, painted them black. Several key components also have a hint of color to bring down the contrast from the middle and the surrounding colors—unifying the piece.

Think Tank Log

RELIEF BASED ON BUFFALO'S ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS

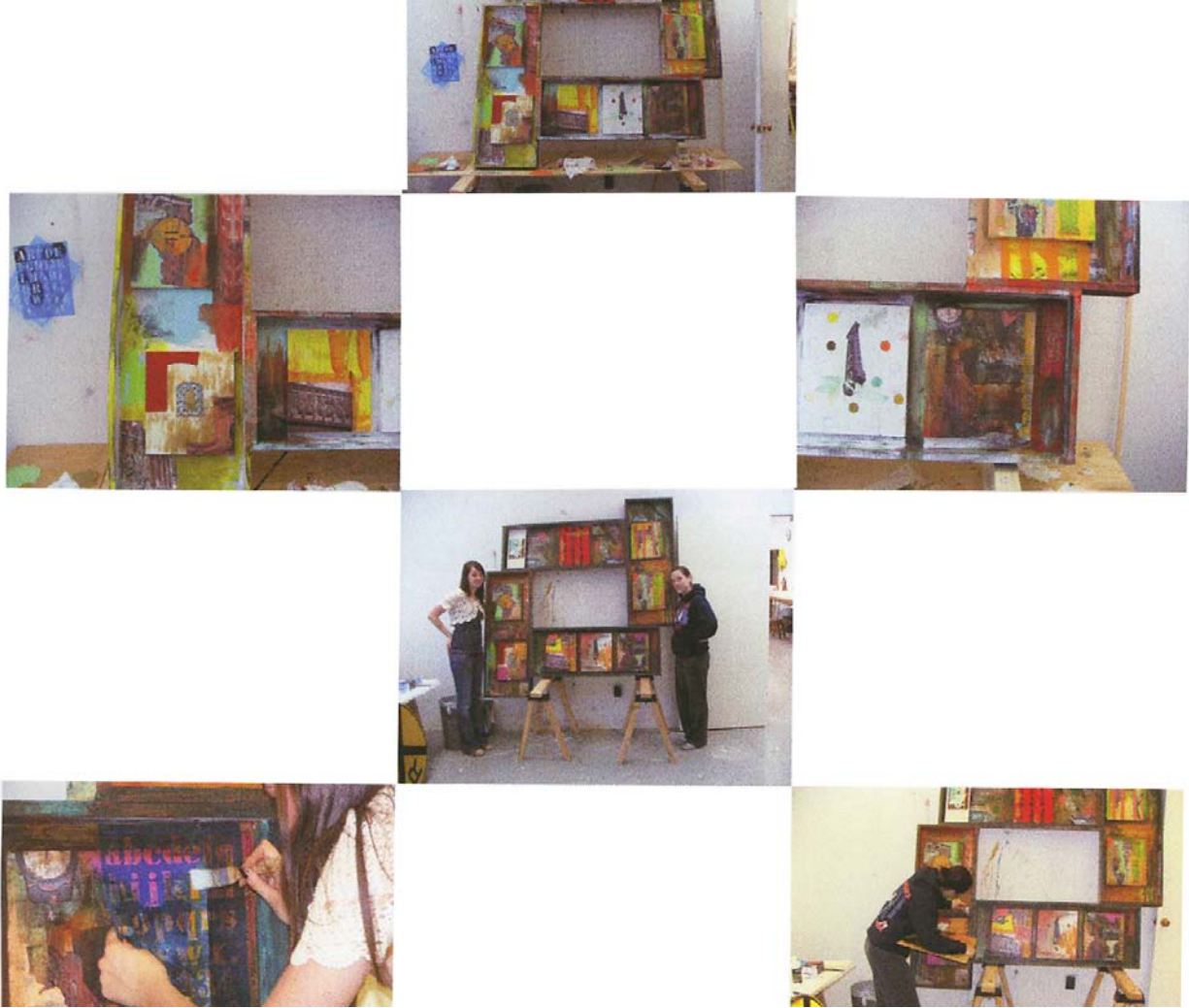
Date	Log information	Miles
March 19, 2007	<p>Today we discussed our visual concept. We've decided on the composition of our structure and the elements that will be added within the structure. There will be a rectangle of negative space surrounded by concave rectangular boxes. The concave boxes will have a layered background of photographs of historical sites in Buffalo (close up, abstract and from far away) with layers of plexi glass on top of the photographic surface. The plexi glass surface will also have prints of historical sites of Buffalo, but will resemble the silhouette/shadow of the site. The inner negative space will be composed of 3D objects from around Buffalo to represent the culture of the city. Tomorrow we are meeting at 4pm to go to Home Depot and AC Moore for supplies to begin construction on our project.</p>	
March 20, 2007	<p>Today we went to Home Depot to purchase our first materials for building the four rectangular boxes that will act as the frame to the installation. We purchased plywood, nails, and L-brackets while at Home Depot. We also went to A.C. Moore to purchase some art supplies. We bought matte medium, paintbrushes, and acrylic paints. These materials will allow us to begin the first steps of our building.</p>	20 miles
March 23, 2007	<p>Today we (Laura and Jamie) spent all day downtown taking pictures of architectural features on buildings. We started our trip on Main Street and walked all the way down to Chippewa St. In this part of Buffalo we took notice of buildings like the M&T bank building, Shea's Theatre, and various buildings in the theatre district with intricate architectural detail. After walking Main St. we headed toward the Allentown/Elmwood District to collect visual data of Buffalo's artistic (both musically and visually) district. We found a lot of the Art Deco style in the architecture in this area. We also found old Western New York magazines for sale from the 1960's and 1970's. We purchased two of these magazines for images to begin creating a collage surface. After the Allen/Elmwood district we headed to the old Buffalo Psychiatric building on Forest St. We documented this building as a historic landmark in Buffalo. After Forest we headed to Niagara Street. On Niagara St. we started to document some industrial buildings and structures. This concluded our day of visual data collection.</p>	40 miles
26-Mar-07	<p>Today we collaborated on how we would construct the four modules for the installation. We decided to build four identical shallow boxes that we can later rearrange to fit the vision we</p>	

see fit. Today we also set up our workspace in the sculpture room. We arranged tables and cleared out the space so that we will have a sufficient area to work in.

- 30-Mar-07 This weekend we (Laura and Jamie) will prime the four structures black so we can begin applying photos to the surface of the installation.
- 2-Apr-07 Today we decided on the orientation and order of the four modules in relation to each other. We faceted the modules together and will begin applying surface treatment.
- 11-Apr-07 Today we printed out the photos that we collected from our Buffalo trip. With the help of Professor Kegler we were able to use the graphic design lab printers and we can now begin applying those photographs to the surface. We also discussed the idea of adding low relief forms to the insides of the modules to add depth to the structure. We will be picking out forms and shapes from our research of Buffalo to construct these forms and apply them as low relief forms to the installation.
- 22-Apr-07 Laura and Jamie collected found objects around the city today to apply to the artwork to add visual depth and interest. We collected old doorknobs, hinges, signs, and key-plates. We also purchased architectural elements from Home Depot to apply to the artwork. 40 miles
- 24-Apr-07 Today we discussed how we would continue to collaborate on the development of the project after meeting to work on the piece together. We decided that we would alternate coming in at different times to add to the piece what we see fit. This means altering previous work and adding our own artistic elements to the piece. We will meet in a few weeks to discuss our collaborative progress.
- May-8-07 We met today to critique our progress since April 24th. Each of us has been spending many hours on building up the piece. We have covered most of the bare primed surface with rich texture from paint and photographs. We discussed what is and is not successful in the piece so far. We've agreed to decide where to put our found objects together to carefully create a desired visual gestalt. We decided to add a back panel to the negative space.
- May-21-07 Today we discussed our on going progress of the piece since we last critiqued collaboratively. We've decided to add solid blocks of color to add areas of interest so the eye can rest. We are in agreement that we need only to add a few more

PHOTOGRAPHS
Collecting Visual Data





PHOTOGRAPHS
Final Result

