

The Educational Art School was started in 1895 by Henry McBride to help immigrant youth build a portfolio so that they could apply to 'uptown' art schools. Many of the Social Realist artists of the 1930's and 1940's gained their first training at the Educational Alliance, including Saul Berman, Peter Blume, Philip Evergood, Ben Shahn, Moses and Isaac Soyer. Other students who became leading artists of the Twentieth Century include Saul Baizerman, Chaim Gross, Adolph Gottlieb, Louise Nevelson, Jules Olitski and Abraham Walkowitz.

Today the Art School offers after school and weekend classes for teenagers from all over the city. The Art School has an active program for adults with studios for welding, stone carving, clay sculpture and pottery, painting and a photo darkroom.

The Art Gallery is an equally important component of the Art School, presenting contemporary and historical artwork to the diverse population that uses the services of the Educational Alliance and the community of Lower Manhattan. Student and faculty exhibits are held annually in the Gallery.

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THE EDUCATIONAL ALLIANCE

ERNEST RUBENSTEIN GALLERY



Walt Zucker, Pied Piper

"Break the Mold: Honoring Walt Zucker"
Sculpture by a master mold maker and by some of those he touched

Walt Zucker, Ailene Fields, Roy Kortick, Barbara Lubliner,
Meryl Meisler, Kate Moon, Tom Otterness, Sidney Simon,
Kiki Smith, Mary Ting, Trudell, Eileen Weitzman

July 12 to August 9, 2006

Reception: Wednesday, July 12, 6:00 to 8:00 pm

“Break the Mold: Honoring Walt Zucker”

Sculpture by a master mold maker and by some of those he touched

In colloquial usage when you say something “breaks the mold,” it means it’s a one of a kind, superior and different from the usual, outstanding! “Break the mold” has another meaning in the realm of fine art casting; when casting a limited edition sculpture, you literally break the mold after completing the allotted number of castings. “Break the Mold” is a fitting name for a show honoring the life and work of Walt Zucker.

Walt Zucker touched many people with his kind and gentle soul. Quiet and soft-spoken, he had a special aura that drew people to him. Zucker made castings and molds for hundreds of artists of all stripes. He brought his care and down-to-earth manner to every project. Zucker applied technical skill, an artistic eye, and his depth of experience to his careful thoughtful solutions to mold making challenges. Rather than over-engineering molds, Zucker used his knowledge to leverage the inherent qualities of materials and methods in order to make simple and efficient solutions.

As an artist, Zucker often used mold-making materials in his work. His light touch transformed humble burlap, latex, plaster and cement into a variety of whimsical animated figures and creatures. Some appear to be flying out of the walls. Others capture a gesture with humor and warmth. They all are tremendously appealing.

Zucker made molds for world-renowned artists Tom Otterness and Kiki Smith in the 1980s. They are both represented in the exhibit. Otterness is known for his bronze cartoon-like figures. His metaphorical pieces are both playful and sophisticated. Smith has used materials as diverse as plaster, bronze, glass, paper, and wax in her sculptures that are evocative of the visceral body and the dualities of nature.

Included in the exhibit is a piece by Sidney Simon, the late, esteemed artist and educator. Also included in the exhibit are works by highly acclaimed sculptors, Ailene Fields and Trudell. They both work in the figurative tradition using their imagination to transform the ordinary into personal visions ripe with fantasy and magic.

One of Zucker’s special talents was helping artists to learn the often frustrating mold making and casting process. Exhibiting artists Roy Kortick, Meryl Meisler, Mary Ting, Eileen Weitzman, and Kate Moon took Zucker’s class at the Educational Alliance where he taught mold making for 17 years. Kortick now incorporates cast elements into his frescos, ceramics, and architectural fountains. New media artist Meisler uses her casting skills to expand her work into sculpture. Zucker’s class inspired Ting to create objects that are extensions of her performance and installation work. Weitzman explored using latex and cast elements in her fabric structures. Moon casts her family of hybrid creature shapes in wax. I took the class and became Zucker’s assistant. He taught me how to cast newspaper.

Walt Zucker enjoyed the simple pleasure of crafting materials. He was generous with his talents. Zucker appreciated diverse and interesting art. He was humble and didn’t like a big fuss. In a simple direct way, the work in “Break the Mold” honors and celebrates his integrity, skill and lovable spirit.

Barbara Lubliner, Curator

The exhibit is produced by Sculptors Alliance, Inc., a not for profit organization devoted to the promotion of sculpture in the community, of which Walt Zucker was a long time member.