

PREVIEW: *Massachusetts*

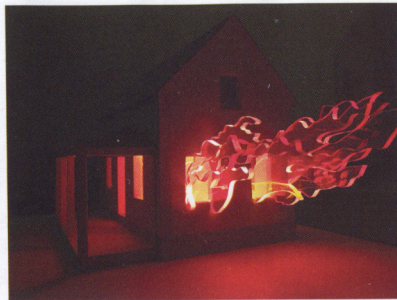
BREATH AND MATTER: ARTISTS AND POETS AT BOSTON SCULPTORS GALLERY

Boston Sculptors Gallery • Boston, MA • bostonsculptors.com • July 18–August 12, 2018

Have poets and visual artists stopped talking with one another? If so, what has been lost? These questions drive the exhibition *Breath and Matter*, for which 24 member artists from the Boston Sculptors Gallery reached out to poets to create collaborative work. Gallery member artist Andy Moerlein initiated the project

to nudge artists from their silos, in response to what he calls a “missing link of connectivity between the arts.”

“The original invitation was, meet a poet, talk with them, visit with them and study their work...and have them perhaps do a piece that reacts to your pieces, or vice versa,” Moerlein explains. Yet as the teams began working together, the notion of collaboration took on some surprising configurations. Eric Sealine’s sculpture depicting vibrant paper flames pushing out from



L to r: Andy Moerlein, *Uncharted*, 2017, red oak, plywood, beech, 38 x 28 x 30". Photo: Andy Moerlein. Eric Sealine, *Mi Casa Es Su Casa*, 2018, basswood, mahogany, Plexiglas, LED lights, 7½ x 25 x 10". Courtesy of Boston Sculptors Gallery.

the glowing windows of a spare, empty house, for instance, is companion to Sophie Wadsworth’s text, part of which reads: “The burn boss talks me into my gear / and straps a drip torch and silver shelter / Like a pair of wings on my back.”

Moerlein and his collaborator Ernestine Hayes, who is Tlingit, found common ground in glaciers. Moerlein’s wood sculpture and Hayes’s words create a metaphor for human connection. Hayes writes, “Glaciers take with them the memories of when they touched other glaciers...

counted their own breaths and the breaths of other glaciers.”

In other collaborations, materials as varied as steel, rawhide, silk, granite, glass, light and sound combine with equally diverse poetic forms: from rhymed couplets to hip-hop, often with elements of the time-honored practice of ekphrastic verse—poetry that responds descriptively to works of visual art. The exhibition title

Breath and Matter speaks to the scope of fertile creative territory—just as poetry (created with the breath) responds to visual art, so can visual art (created from matter) respond to poetry. Or they can emerge together.

Visit the website for a complete listing of poet-sculptor exhibitors, including Robert Pinsky, former U.S. Poet Laureate, working with sculptor Murray Dewart; Mary Bonina and B. Amore; Alison Deming and Susan Lyman.

—**Julianna Thibodeaux**