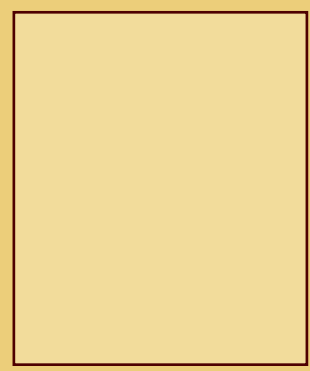


# Two brothers

And Not Just About Color

Paintings and Sculpture  
Reginald and Thornton Baylor  
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Haggerty Museum of Art, Marquette

1878-40



had a lot of different details. The parts were made to look like they were breaking out of a traditional rectangular space. When it came time to make the frame, I used aluminum and bolted the ends together. There was something more enjoyable about making the frame than making the painting — it was more physical. From that point on, I knew that I was a sculptor, not a painter. I need to be able to physically manipulate the material.

CLC: What is it that you like about sculpture?

TB: Sculpture is more physical. Painting doesn't do anything for me. It works for Reggie, but I need a hammer, I need noise, I need to be able to manipulate material. I need to be able to touch all the sides of a piece, to feel texture. I still draw, it is very important, but it is essentially for what I am doing in sculpture. I have to get my ideas down on paper before I can actually start making a piece, otherwise I run into too many problems. I have developed the skills to be able to construct a form in my head, but it helps to be able to turn to a piece of paper just to see what it truly looks like. Something that looks good in your head looks different on paper and translates differently in sculptural form.

CLC: You say that you are interested in structure. Let us talk about that for a moment.

TB: I am, and have always been interested in how things are built, how they are constructed. I am interested in the way sculpture is put together, the way houses, buildings, trucks and pieces of equipment are put together. I love to look under things. I like the inner parts of things, I try to incorporate all of that into my artwork. I try to make structure a focal point of my

I began to paint. I paint in acrylics—I like flat solid images with no visible brush strokes. Acrylics dry quickly which enables me to create the straight edges in my paintings.

CLC: What would you say is most important about your work?

RB: I enjoy what I do. I do not paint to receive a response. I don't paint for praise or recognition. When artists are telling the truth about what they are attempting to accomplish and are being consistent and passionate, I often appreciate that more than the actual work of art. The sacrifices I have made and my wife has made in order for me to be able to paint consistently are what is most important to me. I like to talk about the process—in particular the battle between process and the finished product. It could be called a labor of love or a real struggle.

CLC: How would you describe your process?

RB: The battle between the process and outcome is a struggle, but it is also fun.... It depends on responses. Subjects that might be seen as dark—certain homes or landscapes, for example—could appear as places people may not want to visit. After I add color, however, I can give the subject a completely different perspective. By adding color there is more going on—I try to make everything artificial.

CLC: What do you mean by artificial?

RB: Take for instance the flowers in my paintings...they are purely geometric. They are composed of straight angles and lines—it is like I am giving you a commercial. A dozen artificial roses can still be beautiful, but they are artificial. I can paint an abandoned structure or a beautiful house and make either one appear just as appealing—it is a transformation. In *When the Rectangle Became King*, I started with a pristine landscape and allowed it to be dissolved into triangular forms to show how a landscape might be transformed.

CLC: How does being an artist fit in with being an educator?

Trenton Baylor: Being a teacher allows me to share my passion. There is something wonderful about seeing my students develop their talents. At first they struggle, but by the end of their academic careers they are really focused. I am impressed by the students' willingness to try anything and willingness to fail. When I am done teaching, I get to go home and actually practice what I preach. I know that it is important to students to know that what I teach is actually what I practice.

CLC: Where were you educated?

TB: I studied first at the University of Wisconsin - Parkside as an undergraduate and then completed a Masters in Fine Arts at UW-Madison.

CLC: You studied as a painter, but became a sculptor. What brought about the transition?

TB: My paintings represent what I couldn't do in sculpture because I did not have the means; yet I had to express myself somehow. Later I learned to sculpt. The last painting I did was a large piece about engine parts—it