

3 + 7

a collaborative sculpture by Jamie Abbott, Barbara Downs, Roy Holmberg

Fabricated and forged steel, with burlap, concrete and vermiculite

About this piece:

On our first trip to walk around the arboretum, looking for inspiration, we quickly zeroed in on a eucalyptus grove; our initial inclination was to build something in the grove using the bark that littered the ground as our main material.

On our second trip, looking at specific sites, we started collecting eucalyptus seed pods, and had an idea about a very large pod or groups of pods. As we collected more samples, Roy found a twig with leaves and pods, and with that in mind we visited yet again to look for a specific site for a large version of that twig. When we saw the fence, we started thinking about the relationship of a twig and a fence.

To some extent, the fence dictates the sculpture, and their relationship is important. The idea that the twig would blow in the wind and be caught by the fence was the genesis of our final sculpture idea.

Working in a collaboration is both rewarding and challenging. We each bring our own skill set and ideas to the mix, with combined experience in metal work, drafting, horticulture, painting, mixed-media sculpture and forging. Our own working methods may be quite different from what we're doing as a group.

Because we're a group, it's helpful to have the sculpture planned in great detail in advance, so we worked with templates and a scale model. This type of planning helped us to cement our ideas (no pun intended), and to articulate with each other what it is that we are after.

Ultimately, we are making the sculpture that we are able to make **with each other**, in a collaboration, and it will be quite different from what each of us might make individually. — *Jamie Abbott, Barbara Downs, Roy Holmberg*

About the artists:

Jamie Abbott

www.jamieabbottdesign.com
jamieabbott47@gmail.com

Born in Syracuse, New York, Jamie Abbott now has a studio in Santa Cruz, California. He earned his BFA and MFA at the San Francisco Art Institute. He was an instructor at Cabrillo College from 1973 to 2013.

He has shown regionally and nationally and has numerous private and public commissions.

“My background in sculpture spans more than forty years and my use of materials and process covers the traditional as well as non-traditional methods. The fundamental aesthetic issues: such as composition, asymmetry, form, line and plane are primary issues/concerns I refer to when designing my work.

The aesthetics of presentation of my sculpture envelops the work from its beginning stages. The visual value of the work as scene by the larger audience is so dependent upon the totality of the finished work. It culminates with the adage that the work must speak for it's self.” — *Jamie Abbott*

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Barbara Downs

www.barbaradowns.com
bgd@bdowns.com

Born in Virginia, Barbara Downs now lives in Santa Cruz, California. In 1983 she earned her BA at UC Santa Cruz in studio art, focusing on traditional lithography on limestone.

During this time, she made her living as a drafts person, doing electro-mechanical drawings on vellum, and later in AutoCAD. Among other jobs, she did mechanical design and drafting for an early private rocket company.

Barbara's art now spans multiple mediums including painting, drawing, encaustic and sculpture. She has shown regionally and nationally. Her work is included in the collection of the University of California as well as various corporate and private collections.

"I work in multiple mediums with little allegiance to specific subject matter, though my bodies of work are conceptually and aesthetically connected. While disassembling and reorganizing the visual information and materials at hand, I investigate themes of containment, confinement, and the protective or aversive shielding of precious internal information.

"My work involves real and vigorous physical action: scraping, erasing, stitching, nailing, welding. I often paint with large rollers for a broad mark, and then scrub and mar the surface. This physicality brings out an "object-ness" in each piece." — *Barbara Downs*

Roy Holmberg

www.royholmberg.com
cruznroy@cruzio.com

Native son of the Golden West, grew up in Southern California and have resided in Santa Cruz since the early 80's. Navy Veteran, registered Landscape Architect and retired bureaucrat. Opened my art studio in the year 2,000 and have been in numerous local, regional and statewide shows.

"I do not engage in the fancy art speak, so I will just describe my processes in terms that a blacksmith would understand.

"I work in metals, ceramics and wood using a variety of tools to shape and mold materials into pieces that strive to capture the spirit of the craftsman era. I particularly enjoy working with hot forged metals which allows a normally rigid material to become plastic and able to be worked into fluid organic shapes. Nothing like getting a piece of steel hot, hitting it hard and shaping it into a thing of beauty.

"For most of my work I use a combination of materials and it is not uncommon for me to incorporate found objects into my pieces. Raw materials may originate from a scrap yard, flea market, yard sale or be found washed up on the coast. Gathering raw materials can often be as challenging yet rewarding as constructing the work. I enjoy creating my pieces and take special satisfaction from turning cast off items into artistic work." — *Roy Holmberg*