

# Testing Their Metal

Seven Maine sculptors forge ahead

## *Stephen Porter*

**On Deep Roots in Maine and in Art:** My family has owned an island in Penobscot Bay since 1912. I have spent all or part of every summer there with my family including my father, the photographer Eliot Porter, and my uncle, artist and critic Fairfield Porter.

**On the Influence of Sculpture's History:** My work is influenced by primitive and Neolithic art as well as sculptors like Brancusi, Henry Moore, Jacques Lipschitz, and Anthony Caro.

**On the Bitter and the Sweet:** I don't really enjoy the polishing process—it is dirty and hard. But I like what I can do with stainless steel and the effect I get with the mirror polish.

**On the Path to Brilliant Reflection:** I sold my first sculpture when I was 8 or 10 years old. As an undergraduate and during the first years of graduate school, my sculptures were rough carvings and welded steel. In about 1965 I started working in a more refined way. I have been working in stainless steel since about 1985.

**For More Porter:** [stephenporterstudio.com](http://stephenporterstudio.com), Greenhut Gallery, June LaCombe Sculpture, Carver Hill Gallery, Courthouse Gallery Fine Art, Turtle Gallery

*Series 10, #4, 2007*  
Stainless steel  
69" x 21" x 25"

CRAFT OF MAINE  
by Candace Karu  
Photography Scott Dorrance



## Jac Ouellette

**On the Moment She Knew:** I went on a field trip to New York City with my Maine College of Art class. On the way back we stopped at Storm King Sculpture Garden. It changed my life. I saw all the large sculptures by Calder and David Smith and said without any doubt, "This is what I want to do."

**On the Value of the Journey:** The process is the best part. I never really know what is going to happen with the forms. I start by drawing flowing curves on the steel, cutting them with a plasma cutter and grinding them smooth. When it's all together, I go over it with a fine-tooth comb and see all my imperfections and figure out how I can make it better next time. It's always about the next piece.

**On the Beauty of Curves and Color:** Feminine forms intrigue me. I love taking the straight sharp lines of steel that is delivered from the big guy at the steel company and turn it to a soft flowing feminine form. Adding color adds to the softness, visually and texturally.

**For More Ouellette:** [anviljac.com](http://anviljac.com)



*Rising*, 2008  
Powdercoated steel  
8' x 6' x 4'

## *Sandy Macleod*

**On Tools and Influences:** I grew up in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and the industrial landscape has been a major influence on my aesthetic. For seven years I was a studio assistant to Mark DiSuvero, the artist who has been the most influential force behind my sculpture. He introduced me to the crane as a sculpture tool.

**On Casting for Answers:** The process I use for the bronze sculptures is lost wax casting. I build the whole sculpture in wax and then create a mold and cast the piece in bronze. I do all of my own casting, fabrication, engineering, and installations. I feel strongly that artists should make their own work.

**On the Boldness of Scale:** Working with steel and large timbers opened up opportunities to address issues of balance and cantilevers. It has allowed me to explore many new connections and ways of attaching elements.

**For More Macleod:** [sandymacleod.com](http://sandymacleod.com)



*Pavillion*, 2006  
Bronze and marble  
22" x 19" x 19"





## Celeste Roberge

**On the Extraordinary Qualities of Metal:** I am awed by the versatility and generative possibilities of metals. The fluidity and permanence, the elasticity and strength of metal, its brutal qualities as well as its elegance—these all contribute to making it an endlessly fascinating material to explore.

**On the Influence of Woman and Nature:** The northern landscape is the driving force behind nearly all of my work. The relentless imagination of Louise Bourgeois is a constant inspiration.

**On Learning and Teaching, North and South:** I've studied sculpture in Maine, Quebec, and Nova Scotia. I maintain a studio in South Portland and teach sculpture at the University of Florida, School of Art and Art History.

**For More Roberge:** celesteroberge.com, The Portland Museum of Art, The Farnsworth Art Museum, Aucocisco Gallery

*Rising Cairn*, 1999-2000  
Welded steel, granite  
58" x 54" x 42"  
Collection of the  
Portland Museum of Art



**On Humor, Music, and Recycling:** I recycle vintage steel parts and various found steel objects as opposed to “pulling” the steel off a rack. The parts eventually suggest images or movement, and I just follow along. Humor and music are important also.

**On Letting the Elements Guide Me:** In the past I used to forge quite a bit and make parts to fit, but now I let the elements of the piece guide me in a way. I work much faster and the finished product is cleaner, with greater attention to fabrication and surface finish. I can guarantee my work for 300 years.

**On the Beauty of Vintage Steel:** I am always humbled by the properties of the material and in many cases grateful that another person came before me to provide me with a beautifully crafted tool or industrial element. I love to find and work with vintage steel because it’s just not made anymore.

**For More Plourde:** [patplourde.com](http://patplourde.com), Foundry Lane Gallery, Galeyrie Fine Arts, The Gallery on Chase Hill

*Pat Plourde*

*Pine Cone, 2008*  
Recycled shovels  
4' x 3' x 3'



## James Strickland

**On Finding His Way to Maine:** After a life spent living around the world, I met my significant other, Patricia Shea, in New York. We moved to Cape Cod, where we bought and restored an elegant wooden boat and sailed to Belfast, Maine in 1999. Been here ever since.

**On a Delightfully Rounded Education:** I have a BFA in sculpture, and MFA in jewelry, and a PhD in theology and philosophy.

**On the Magic of the Materials:** The fantastic thing about working in metal is its strength and its immediacy. Shapes can be quickly formed and placed in a matter of moments—no gluing or clamping, just cut, weld in place, and ‘wham!,’ each element fits into the overall composition almost spontaneously and with immediate structural honesty.

**For More Strickland:** Carver Hill Gallery, [bonnevilleconsulting.com](http://bonnevilleconsulting.com), [jamesstricklandart.com](http://jamesstricklandart.com)



*Divided Light*, 2006  
Kinetic wind-driven  
sculpture rotating on  
plinth.  
Chromali aircraft tubing,  
aluminum and bronze,  
24k gold leaf  
14' x 10' x 6'



## Sumner Winebaum

**On Almost Being a Mainer:** I was born in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, in 1928 but my first summer was spent in York, Maine. In 1980 I built a house in York on Godfrey Cove on land my family has owned since before World War II. I have been in Maine, I think, for some time every year of my life.

**On Masters and Saints:** I am not an academic. I have had no teacher who influenced me, helped me, or promoted me. Rodin is my master. He is all you need to know about sculpture. Picasso is my saint because he said he would never abstract something in such a way that you could not know what he started with.

**On the Thought Behind the Process:** I work with my hands mostly, rather than tools. I like to see the fingerprints. I often use myself as my model, particularly my hands. I believe I am a craftsman, perhaps a creative one. Before the Romantic period, all artists were people in a trade: Michelangelo, Giotto, Tiepolo—me too.

**For More Winebaum:** [sumnerwinebaum.com](http://sumnerwinebaum.com), The Barn Gallery, Greenhut Gallery



*Cherry, 2007*  
Bronze  
27" x 7.5" x 6.5"



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