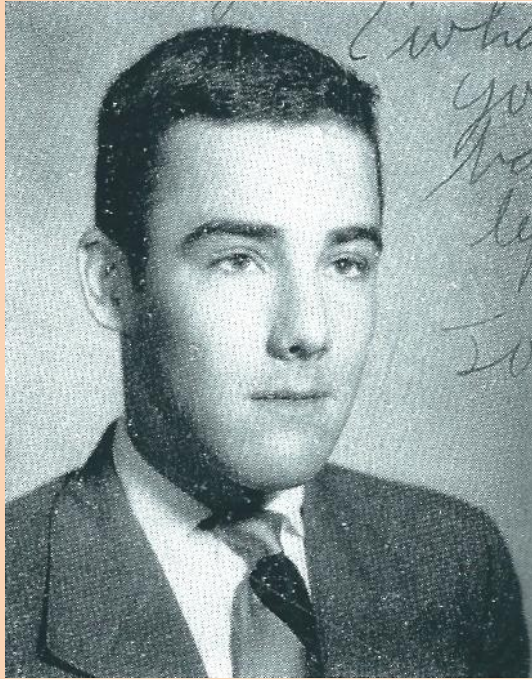


Joseph Sheppard, Class of 1948

Artist and Sculptor



Student, Teacher, and Artist

For internationally renowned painter and sculptor, Joseph Sheppard, *art does indeed imitate life*. As one of the great contemporary masters of figurative art in the realist tradition, Sheppard believes that to portray the human figure in any medium, one must first understand its intricate anatomy. So he has made that awareness a central focus of his life's work, as a student, a teacher, and an artist.

Training and Education

Sheppard first discovered his innate talent and meticulous eye for detail at the age of 12. Determined to make his own mark as an artist, he earned a scholarship to the Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA). Although Sheppard began his studies there at a time when modernist abstraction was the latest craze, he quickly rekindled his passion for three-dimensional form and perspective under the influence of Jacques Maroger, the legendary classical painter and former art conservator at the Louvre.

Much to Sheppard's delight, Maroger taught both painting *and* anatomy, as a foundation for understanding the technical genius of the great 17th and 18th century Dutch and Flemish masters. Using an out-of-print book of anatomy charts, Maroger lectured on the importance of basic anatomical forms in drawing; lessons that inspired Sheppard to spend hours in the library tracing all 110 of the book's plates.

Maroger also introduced his students to American social realist painter, Reginald Marsh, who encouraged Sheppard to recreate Baltimore's urban life on canvas. Calling upon his classical training, the young artist painted vividly realistic human figures, against a colorful backdrop of city streets, barrooms, and strip joints—soon receiving local and national acclaim for his life-sized painting of Baltimore burlesque queen Blaze Starr.

While artist-in-residence at Dickinson College in 1957, Sheppard landed a Guggenheim Fellowship. Traveling to Europe, he studied the work of Paul Rubens, and drew from the many classical Greek and Renaissance statues he saw in Italy and Paris. Returning home to Maryland, Sheppard continued to forge his career as a working artist, using what he had learned to further his own inimitable style.

The Six Realists

In 1961, he co-founded the Six Realists, a group of young artists who, determined to promote their work, took over a vacant gallery in Baltimore. But after drawing 2,000 people on opening night, the three-week exhibition turned into a three-year venture, earning tremendous acclaim and support for the six enterprising organizers. Sheppard also returned to MICA, this time to teach painting and life drawing to a new generation of emerging artists. And in looking for ways to help his students better understand the human form, developed his own extensive series of anatomy charts. He subsequently compiled these charts into the first of seven books he wrote and illustrated, all of which are now both highly respected and widely translated.

Collections and Honors

In the decades that followed, Sheppard built an enviable reputation in the art world. He has been awarded numerous honors, including The Gold Medal of Honor in 1994 from the National Sculpture Society, and more recently, the XVIII Premio Internazionale Pietrasanta e la Versilia nel Mondo in Italy. In addition, his work can be found in the collections of such prestigious institutions as the Baltimore Museum of Art, the Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburgh, the Butler Institute of American Art in Ohio, the Malcolm Forbes Collection in New York, the University of Maryland University College, the Columbus Museum of Fine Arts in Ohio, The Midwest museum of American Art in Indiana, The National Art Museum of Sports in Indiana, The National Portrait Gallery in Washington D.C., and the Museo Dei Bozzetti in Pietrasanta in Italy.

Portraits and Sculptures

Throughout his remarkable career, Sheppard has painted portraits of, among other distinguished notables, President and Mrs. George H. W. Bush, Senator Barbara Milulski, former Governor William Donald Schaefer, Cardinal William H. Keeler, and film director John Waters (now on display at the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, D.C.). He has also produced a compelling portfolio of figurative paintings and drawings, many of which either depict the impact of adversity on the human spirit, or capture his longstanding fascination with boxing (having been a regular participant at the Mack Lewis Professional Boxing Gym for two years). His extraordinary murals have brought life off of the streets and on to the walls, in a variety of public and private institutions, both here in Maryland and around the country.

Over the past 20 years, Sheppard has turned his enormous talent to sculpture, invoking his extensive knowledge of composition, perspective, draftsmanship, and anatomy to “celebrate the aesthetics of the human form” in stone and bronze. This shift in focus led him to Pietrasanta, Italy—a Tuscan town known primarily for its rich marble quarries—where he now lives and works six months out of every year.

Like his paintings, Sheppard’s sculptures capture both life’s agony and its ecstasy, by delineating every nuance of the human figure in action. For example, in *Man Pulling*, Sheppard details every straining muscle to convey the physical anguish of heavy labor. Moreover, in creating the centerpiece for Baltimore’s renowned Holocaust Memorial, he meticulously depicts the broken, emaciated, and naked bodies of camp victims, as they cling to the “flame of death,” as a powerful symbol of their horrifying fate.

Several years ago, Sheppard’s talents also caught the attention of the Catholic Archdiocese of Baltimore, and so began a long and mutually beneficial relationship, which has produced a number of outstanding portraits and sculptures. His extraordinary seven-foot sculpture of Pope John Paul II embracing two children during his visit to Baltimore in 1995, serves as the focal point of the city’s Pope John Paul II Prayer Garden. In 2007 Sheppard was also commissioned to paint an official portrait of the current pontiff, Benedict XVI.

Courtesy of <http://www.josephsheppard.com/index.html>, http://www.umuc.edu/sheppard_center/bio.shtml
<http://www.mikemccracken.com/legacy/sheppard.html>

Training

Maryland Institute of Art, 1948-1952
Guggenheim Traveling Fellowship to Florence,
Italy, 1957

Awards and Prizes (partial listing)

XVIII Premio Internazionale Pietrasanta e la
Versilia nel Mondo, 2008
Gold Medal, Percival Dietsch Prize, National
Sculpture Society, 1994
Silver Medal of Honor, Allied Artists of America,
1986
Agop Agapoff memorial Prize, National Sculpture
Society, 1986
William Meyerowitz Memorial Award, Allied
Artists of America, 1985
Paul Puzinas Award, Allied Artists of America,
1983
Tallix Foundry Prize, National Sculpture Society,
1983
Governor's Prize, Maryland Artist's Exhibition,
1971
John McDonough Prize, Butler Institute of
American Art, 1967
First Purchase Award, Butler Institute of American
Art, 1963
Bronze Metal of Honor, Allied Artists of America,
1963
John F. and Anne Lee Stacey Scholarship Award,
1958
Emily Low Prize, Allied Artists of America, 1956
Peale Museum, Baltimore, Maryland

Museums/Collections (partial listing)

University of Maryland University College,
Adelphi, Maryland
Westervelt-Warner Museum of American Art,
Tuscaloosa, Alabama
Midwest Museum Of American Art, Elkhart,
Indiana
National Portrait Gallery, Washington, D.C.
Butler Institute of American Art, Youngstown, Ohio
Davenport Municipal Art Gallery, Davenport, Iowa
Arizona Museum of Art, Tucson, Arizona
Columbus Museum of Fine Arts, Columbus, Ohio
Westmoreland Museum of Art, Greensburg,
Pennsylvania
Norfolk Museum of Arts and Sciences, Norfolk,
Virginia
Baltimore Museum of Art, Baltimore, Maryland
Brookgreen Gardens Museum of American
Sculpture, Murrells Inlet, South Carolina
Fine Arts Museum of the South, Mobile, Alabama
New Britain Museum of Art, New Britain,
Connecticut
Carnegie Institute Museum of Art, Pittsburgh,
Pennsylvania
Malcom Forbes Collection, New York, New York
Musco Dei Bozzetti Di Pietrasanta, Italy
Consiglio della Toscana, Florence, Italy
National Art Museum of Sport, Indianapolis,
Indiana