

There's a difference between Process and Procedure, though the two overlap: Process being the more fundamental and creative--the God separating light from darkness sort of thing; and Procedure having to do with the step-by-step description of materials and methods for getting from Creation in concept to the Garden of Eden in fact.

You're more interested in Process, I'm sure, as that's where the magic resides, we've been told; Procedure is all learned, teachable to anyone with a zeal for acquiring it. Yet the old adage is true: Art (and any number of other things) is "10% inspiration and 90% perspiration." Most of us would rather believe the percentages are reversed, because then we can simply admire the Michelangeloes of the world, and retire to our television sets, comfortable in the knowledge that certainly we're not artists and therefore needn't bother trying.

I object! Well, perhaps Mozart was simply a reincarnation, the artist-soul leaping fully born into our world as Amadeus. But for most, life doesn't possess that kind of self-knowledge, but is plagued by struggle and suffering, as the Buddha taught, and the creation of ourselves through action, as Sartre might have said. We can't know who we are, nor what we can be, without effort, and reaching toward what we do not know, but aspire to be. We all fail at this, and are embarrassed by our self-delusions, if we are lucky, from time to time. But the labor toward achievement is essential to art, and few are willing to make the effort.

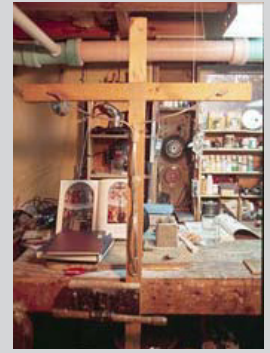
Besides effort, or in neat counterbalance to it, rests "receptivity," or the non-directed tranquillity of an alert mind. In this state of being, a seed germinates, the spark falls, an idea appears. I think it was

the English Romantic poet Shelley who spoke of the artist as like an instrument, propped in a breezy window casement, whose strings are moved to music by the fingers of the wind. What the music will be, if music at all, is entirely Chance or the will of Aeolus; the artist is simply the "avenue of expression."

And so, if I were to describe "my process," I must concede, "it's not mine, not by any means." No, the process is simply employment of a Universal balance; work and rest, delicately in balance. Delicately, did I say? Not always! And perhaps not even often. I may work sometimes to exhaustion, to little effect, and then in sleep, a dream, or even from a moment of simple distraction, the "missing link" lies there before me, a scene comes suddenly into view, an idea drops like fruit into my hand. Oh, but true it is that "Chance favors the well-prepared."

Sculpture, the fumbling with form, adds an element to this balance of work and rest: physical stuff, tangible matter. Many has been the time, indeed, when I hatched a brilliant idea and rushed to my studio bench, eager to give it form--only to find, within a few strokes or shapings, that the idea, for all its apparent intellectual vitality, was lifeless once brought into actuality through clay or wood. Being from a bookish family, and with experience as an English teacher hopeful at one time of a Ph.D, I've a weakness for abstractions, whose feet crumble, once made of clay. Now, however, (thank the Muses) I no longer feel constrained to underline when I read, and believe I am beginning to understand, and employ, the language of Form. Oh glory, what a language!

So there you have it, as far as process goes: labor, surrender, and the glory of the physical world, Amen!



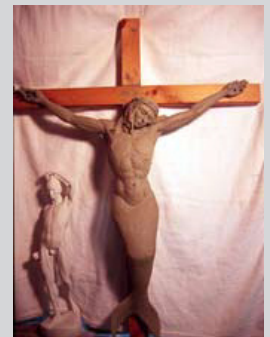
armature



1st clay layer



more clay



final form



Queen of the Seas