

<http://www.alumni.vt.edu/holtzman/artist/gregg-bechtel.html>

Holtzman Alumni Center

Opened and dedicated in 2005

Leslie Gregg and Larry Bechtel • Artwork currently on exhibit until May 2007

Leslie Gregg Bio

Leslie's formal education in art began at the age of seven with painting classes at the Nelson Art Gallery in Kansas City. She continued her studies with her grandfather, a commercial artist in Washington, D.C. and designer for NASA, and received her degree in Art from VPI&SU in 1979. Additional studies include work with contemporary masters Richard Whitney of New Hampshire and Daniel Greene of New York.

Proficient in a variety of mediums, Leslie turned her artistic skills to working in commercial art and as a biomedical illustrator upon graduation. Her love of working with people led to the specialty of fine art portraiture in the media of colored pencil, pastel and oil, where she demonstrates a special talent for capturing the character and beauty of the human face. Her delicate, realistic, and sometimes narrative portraits are reminiscent of the artists who have inspired her; Bouguereau, Wyeth, Rockwell, Latour, and Sargent.

Having completed over 200 portraits during her career, Ms. Gregg's paintings hang in public and private collections throughout the United States. Her commissions include Senators, University Presidents, physicians, grandparents, musicians, equestrians, and children.

Leslie is a charter member of the Portrait Society of America, the Portrait Society of Atlanta, and the Southeast Pastel Society.

She has been the feature artist in several publications, including having her work showcased for the United States in "Pastel Artist International." For information on Gregg's artwork, please visit <http://www.portraitartist.com/gregg/>.



Larry Bechtel Bio

I was raised in a bookish household, and sincerely thank my parents for that, but making things out of wood, which I did badly but enthusiastically, and whittling faces on pine sticks, was both rebellion and freedom. Woodcraft led me, in a meandering sort of way after college, to work in shops building/repairing boats in Chicago, Oregon, and Texas, and then to building houses with Wilhelmi Construction here in Virginia. In the late 80's, through a separation and divorce, I found therapy in sculpting odd, distorted clay figures, and ax-carving big logs. I met Ann Shawhan, who gave me banana bread and music tapes, and thus inspired I went at sculpture with delight, spawning a whole menagerie of figures and faces. Enthusiastic initiatives to manufacture and market these were promising, then sputtered out, but I have some good stories from these experiences.

For several years beginning in 1990, I devoted myself to building up



<http://www.alumni.vt.edu/holtzman/artist/gregg-bechtel.html>



Holtzman Alumni Center

Opened and dedicated in 2005

Virginia Tech Recycling, which was sculpture in a variety of media all at once. As my work with VTR became administrative, I returned to my own sculpture, joined the National Sculpture Society, and took a workshop with renowned California sculptor Richard MacDonald in 2002.

I had by that time turned to public art commissions. You may be familiar with Officer Down for the Roanoke Police Department, Addison Caldwell for Virginia Tech, or Nannie B. Hairston for Montgomery County. High Ground, my concept for the Vinton War Memorial Gardens, was chosen as a finalist in January, and our design team is currently working on a scale model of the concept for public display beginning in April. Big in Body and Mind, my proposal for a figurative sculpture of Abraham Lincoln as a boy, was submitted to the Hodgenville (KY) Selection Panel in February.



Public commissions have not dimmed my desire to develop a body of creative work, suitable for gallery exhibit. Wheel of Karma, Precarious Balance, and Jacob Wrestling are current sculptures, not yet cast in bronze, dealing with themes of transformation and metamorphosis. I am likewise interested in compositional matters, and therefore look forward to Stanley Bleifeld's April workshop at Brookgreen Gardens, Sculpture Design and Composition.

My "process" is a mix of craft and art, and sometimes awkward. This is a state of risk and learning, and tough for a Virgo. Yet I persist, hoping for surprise. Artful exaggeration can convey vitality where strict realism cannot. I make mistakes, which can be "portals of discovery," to quote James Joyce. In relaxed moments after sustained work on a piece, I can find myself in a moment of altered awareness, when visualized form is experienced and felt. I love these sensations, and would pursue them, but for the circumstances of my life, which I do not regret.

I am honored, my friends and colleagues, that you should choose to spend some time with these sculptures. Thank you!

For information on Bechtel's artwork, please visit <http://www.bechtelsculpture.com/>

Blacksburg
Regional *art* Association
est. 1950

Leslie and Larry are BRAA Exhibiting Artists