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Supported by a grant from the Schoolcraft College Foundation and the Rockall Fund.

About the Artists

Michael Sweeney

Michael Sweeney is originally from Central Pennsylvania and moved to Michigan about four years ago. He has been welding and doing metal sculptures for approximately two years and has had experience in several forms of art including performance art, music, film and video, fashion, he was even a chef! His style falls into the Steampunk genre and conceptual art took some getting used to. Sweeney's campus sculpture is "**Prometheus.**"

Sweeney says that the inspiration for Prometheus of Industry was a mixture of the Greek myth of Prometheus and the history of our modern industry and manufacturing. The industrial revolution was made possible because of the ability to weld and work metals using oxy/acetylene techniques that were discovered. Sweeney's use of reclaimed materials is common in his work and he feels that it helps to push the theme of remembering where we have come from.

Debra Grant

Debra Grant is from White Lake, Michigan. She began welding in January of 2018 while looking for a new hobby/skill to learn and came across the Sculpture Welding Certificate program at Schoolcraft. After enrolling, Grant was very quickly hooked. Not only did she learn a new skill but the instructor and environment of the sculpture classes brought out an artistic side of her that she had never used prior to beginning this program. Grant has two sculptures on campus. They are "**Inner Peace**" and "**Voyage.**"

Grant says that the inspiration for "Inner Peace" was due to a family member suffering from a terminal illness. This family member is always saying that she does not want any negativity messing with her inner peace. This inspired Grant to make a visual representation of a person's inner peace. The stainless steel structure in the middle is the inner peace and the rusted angles represent the negativity that needs to be kept out.

Her inspiration for "Voyage" follows the same idea of keeping positivity in our lives. Grant says her inspiration was the voyage throughout life and the waves and winds that challenge our wanted path. Grant says that "we are continually navigating these challenges in order to live the life we want."

Kelly O'Neill

Kelly O'Neill currently resides in Brighton, Michigan but is originally from Farmington. She has been welding for five years now. O'Neill has three sculptures on campus. They are "**Building Blocks**", "**Birds in Flight at Sunset**" and "**Hope.**"

O'Neill was inspired to create "Building Blocks" due to the location of the sculpture and the metal she found. "Building Blocks" is located between the science and welding lab. This sculpture represents bend tests that are a metaphor for the structure of a living cell. Each cell in an organism is part of the foundation

of the organism. Hence, the building of the bend tests into a sculpture is like the building of cells into an organism.

The metal pieces used for the top of the sculpture are the students' test results of their bend test. Each welding student is required to weld two pieces of metal together that must withstand the extreme bend pressure. This determines the quality and strength of the weld. This is important because every steel structure is only as strong as it welds. The foundation is the quality of the craftsmanship that goes into the structure.

The inspiration for “Birds in Flight at Sunset” was the result of a class assignment to construct kinetic art on a small base with the movement out of reach and harm of the viewer. Hence, the very vertical execution. O’Neill used an ombré powder coating effect to depict a beautiful Lake Michigan sunset with the silhouettes of seagulls circling the sea for dinner.

“Hope” was inspired by the piece of scrap metal that Grant found. She used the negative space of the hand to produce a positive space for the flowers. This piece signifies the decay of society by the “Hand of Man” and illustrated by the rusted building structure overtaken by growth. The purpose of the wind mill is to show that through clean energy we can return the earth to health, which is illustrated by the colorful flowers growing from the rusted stems.

Michael McClintock

Michael McClintock is a 31-year-old welding student. He returned to Schoolcraft in 2017, to finish a degree that he started in 2006. He has been creating metal sculptures in the Schoolcraft metal sculpture program since Winter Semester 2018. McClintock is now post grad since the spring 2018 semester and earned the metal sculpture certificate in the winter 2019 semester. He plans to continue to audit the sculpture program because as an artist and student, it allows him to express himself to others while being able to make an impact on their reaction. Making metal sculptures is part of what has given Michael's life new meaning and purpose. McClintock has two sculptures on campus. They are “**Land and Sea**” and “**Sparrows in Flight.**”

“Land and Sea” was created to represent the fall spawning season as the salmon swim upstream to spawn and die. The universal shape of the sculpture could represent many different meanings to an individual.

The inspiration for “Sparrows in Flight” was to ‘advertise’ the welding and sculpture program. This sculpture turns in the wind just as the sparrows dive and bob.

Dennis Cook

Dennis Cook experimented with found object sculptures during his undergraduate years at Wayne State University (WSU). He would create sculptures with pieces he picked up along the way as he drove to the WSU campus. One day he saw an advertisement for the Schoolcraft Welding Sculpture Program and decided to give it a go! The first class led to a second one and before long Dennis completed all classes that qualified for a Certificate in Welded Sculpture. Along the way Melissa Machnee guided him and he then began working with larger and larger pieces. At Melissa's urging, he participated in the ArtPrize



Competition in Grand Rapids three times, including one year he was chosen to have his Sculpture displayed at the entrance of the Gerald R. Ford Museum. Cook has two sculptures on campus. They are **"Hello"** and **"Cosmic Communicator."**

"Hello" came together after Cook was able to purchase multiple lengths of rare aluminum I-Beam. After several years of staring at it, he finally built a scale model out of wood and began hot gluing the pieces together. By a happy accident "Hello" was born. he saw the main mass as a family unit with the large dominant parent figure surrounded by the whirl of children. The smallest is looking at an outsider who stands slightly away and seemingly says: "Hello". The piece debuted at ArtPrize 2018 and was then assembled on the Schoolcraft Campus.

The inspiration for "Cosmic Communicator" grew out of an experiment in class in hot forging steel half spheres. After the parts had cooled down and were trimmed Cook said that they looked like an asteroid or something from outer space. At the time, Welding Instructor Melissa Machnee was guiding Cook towards building a Kinetic Sculpture. One of the basic shapes looks like half a flying saucer and when the saucer shape and the planets were combined, "Cosmic Communicator" came together. Cook used his Engineering background to design a bearing system so it would spin easily. The base was built and coated in a truck bed liner and a solder powered and color changing led light was put on the top.

Marilyn Strandt

Marilyn Strandt began taking welding classes at Schoolcraft in 2005. She believed in the saying "when the student is ready, the teacher will appear." At the time Strandt decided to begin sculpting courses, Melissa Machnee was hired to be a welding professor at Schoolcraft College. Strandt feels that she made her decision at the right time. Her goal is to weld into her eighties, so she will continue to enjoy this creative adventure. Strandt has three sculptures on campus. They are **"Set Your Goals on Fire"**, **"Schoolcraft, The Wind..."** and **"The Purple Pitcher Plant."**

She wanted one of her sculptures to be a large spiral that students could walk into and interact with. Once she decided that, "Set Your Goals on Fire" was born. She had a vision of herself being in the metal sculpture with the hot sun beating down on the metal rod. When she was envisioning this, it had burst into flames in her imagination. She was then in a large bonfire, which set her goals on fire. By putting a mirror on the inside of the fire, the viewer sees him/herself and asks themselves if their actions are getting them what they really want out of life." You can visit this sculpture outside of the McDowell Center and use the sheets inside of the drop box to plan your goals.

When Strandt was eighteen and left home for college, she started a completely new life. She said it was both wonderful and terrifying at the same time. "Schoolcraft, The Wind..." is meant for people to stand in front of it as though the wings are part of you. This is meant to be a picture taking moment. Strandt said that "Schoolcraft and its fine staff of educators can help lift you to higher levels. They can help you achieve your goals and prepare you for jobs that will help make you the person you want to be in the future. They are an important part of your wind."

Her third sculpture is different than her other two. The Purple Pitcher Plant is a real native, wild flower which lives in marshes near the coast line of Lake Huron near Roger City. The leaves are shaped like a

water pitcher and actually hold rain water in which to drown the insects that fall in. The insects fall into the pitcher shaped leaves because some of the pitcher plants are known to give off sweet smelling narcotic odors that can mesmerize the unknowing insect and lead him to be devoured by the carnivorous plant.

Angela Larson

Angela Larson grew up in Ypsilanti and now lives in Plymouth, Michigan. She took a welding course eight years ago with Melissa Machnee and got hooked on welding ever since! Larson's campus sculpture is "**Emergence.**"

Larson said that she enjoys the challenge of turning a hard, industrial material into an organic sculpture. "Emergence" was born with an inspiration of nature in mind. This shows through the flower piece that emerge from the sculpture.

The installation of these sculptures is supported by a grant from the Schoolcraft College Foundation and the Rockall Fund.