

The Enlarged Object

Aim

formal: To introduce the studio fundamentals scale, proportion, mass and form. Also to demonstrate ways of large scale construction.

conceptual: To introduce the aspects of **context** and **content** regarding **scale**.

Task

To enlarge a small everyday object to a greater scale while focusing on detail and proportion in order to see the contextual associations to that object.

Research/Homework- Before coming to class, select and bring a number of solid small objects that have an interesting form or curious association. You could use your found object from the multiples project.

- a) Do several sketches of each object from different angles (minimum 10)
- b) List a number of places that this enlarged object could be placed to increase the contrast of its context. (Where can you put it to seem out of place AND where might it seemingly belong)
- c) Look at examples of other artists' work that demonstrate a change in scale of something familiar in addition to its context.
- d) Begin planning the construction method and material that best suits the form you will be sculpting. Make a list of things you will need and bring them to class.
- e) Think about the finishing touches as you are working: Are you going to paint it? Is it going to be covered with another material?

Scale/Grid/Proportion- Separate hand out.

Considerations – Be sure to choose your object and your material very carefully. Some objects lend themselves better to one material or the other. Also, consider how to use the material most efficiently and economically to encourage less weight in the final piece.

Installation & Presentation- You will have to install your enlarged object somewhere on or off campus and photograph it for the critique. You should take many images with a digital camera. One image should be in context and one should appear out of place. You need 2 final digital photos and your sculpture. The images will be shown alongside your piece for the critique.

Please discuss potential locations with me well in advance, if the location is on campus we may need to get permission.

Reading- Launching the Imagination 231 – 232 (scale and proportion), 242 – 246 (materials and increasing strength), 260 – 271 (representation and presentation)

Vocabulary

scale, proportion, form, mass, visual weight, volume

Artists to Reference

Claes Oldenburg, Jeff Koons, Charles Ray, Ron Mueck, Paul McCarthy

Assessment

Technical

Skill with material, satisfaction of problem requirements, craftsmanship, quality

Work Process

Evidence of reworking, research, processing of feedback, self critique, understanding context of assignment, sketches, sources, discussion, questioning

Conceptual

Invention, comprehension of ideas presented in project, communication of those ideas in the work and your intent, rationale for object selection, **content**

Ambition and Innovation

Character or individual personality, impact of the work, expression, formal structure, content

Finished Work & Critique

Meets requirements outlined in the assignment, constructive participation, explanation of work, vocabulary

Work Ethic

Class attendance, participation in discussions, **use of class time**

Project Value: 15%

10% for Object Enlargement (sculpture)

5% for photos of work in context

Tentative Schedule

March 10 Intro to Assignment

March 15 & 17 Spring Break

March 22 & 24 Studio time

March 29 Critique of The Enlarged Object (Be ready to start at the beginning of class)

Notes on Scale

Discussion: When studying scale in two-dimensional art, we distinguish between **size** and **scale**. **Size** is meaningful only in terms of how big an object is in relationship to something else (e.g., "something is bigger than a bread box..."). Once we measure something, we can play with its scale. **Scale** is generally understood as an object's size in relationship to a system of measurement. When we speak of things as being large or small in scale, we are referring to the size of an object in relationship with a clear set of measurements. For example, if you tell me that the shoes you just drew are "half scale," I would assume that they were half the measured length of the actual object--that is, one-half "full" or "actual size."

When we move into some of the design professions, like architecture or industrial design for instance, other conventions apply. For example, if I said I want a drawing in "1/4 scale", generally I mean that I want a drawing in which "1/4 inch equals 1 foot." In this case, instead of measuring the actual object against a system of measurement, we are relating two sets of measurements.

Proportion refers to the **ratio** between the parts of a larger whole. If we go back to the shoe example, a drawing--at virtually any scale--that represented the shoes in "correct" proportion would show the actual relationship of height, width, and depth. I could alter the scale of the object without changing the proportions. Or, if I wanted to exaggerate the proportions (like a circus clown might do), I might make the length of the shoes twice the length of the original shoe and preserve the height and the width. In so doing, I have changed the proportions of the object--that is, I have changed the ratio of the parts describing the whole. If the original ratio of height, width, and depth could be represented by the following expression: 1:1:1, the *new* clown shoes could be represented by 1:1:2, where the 2 represents the new exaggerated depth (or length).

A **grid** is a system of fixed horizontal and vertical divisions. Anything, no matter how complicated or irregularly shaped, can be conceived of in terms of X (horizontal) and Y (vertical) axes. The mechanical regularity of a grid can be useful in determining relationships between the parts of a painting or other graphic work (a map for instance). A grid can also be a useful tool for translating a given image from one scale to another or altering the proportions of an image.

Sometimes scaling operations in 3D are represented by changes in **percent** of the X, Y or Z axes. For example, imagine a drawing of the outline of a house in which the height, width, and depth each equal 100%. If you were to change the X axis to 25%, the house would be 1/4 its original width. If you were to change the Y axis (vertical) to 200% of its original size, the house would be twice as tall. By changing the X, Y and Z axes, you could transform the house into a completely different looking one.

The "house to tower" example above makes it clear that you needn't scale the X, Y, and Z axes equally--however, in so doing you alter the "meaning" of the object.

We do not need to change the proportions of an object to change its meaning. By simply changing the scale of an object (maintaining its 1:1:1 ratio), we can radically alter its meaning and expressive power. The American artist, Claes Oldenburg, scales up everyday objects. In addition to creating representational enlargements of objects, he changes their functions by placing them in unexpected **contexts**. The context of an object is the physical and cultural circumstances in which an object is situated. Our understanding of the meaning of a work is largely a result of seeing the work "in context"--that is, in understanding the relationship of the object to its surrounding circumstances. Once we take a work out of context, meanings can change and different situations or commentary can occur.