



**Tom Claassen (2004), Bronze, 87" x 61" x 55"; 63" x 68" x 45"**

The sculptures of Dutch artist Tom Claassen often feature larger than life animals and are not what they seem to be. It's this surprise element that he brings to his sculptures that has made him one of the most popular public sculptures.

## LOOK

By painting two enormous rabbits cast in cold hard bronze white, Claassen creates an illusion of soft, squishy, marshmallow fluff. Their skin is smooth and shiny and invites us to touch, but when we do we are surprised by its stiffness. The rabbits are larger than life, but their cute cartoon looks and friendly rounded shape makes them playful and even huggable. Their accessibility and friendliness are further enhanced by the way they are positioned. The rabbits sit directly on the ground rather than on a pedestal in an attempt to bring the sculptures "down to earth," so we can face them directly and meet them on equal terms; a departure from the way we usually view monuments and public sculpture.

## SEE

What does the way each rabbit is sitting say about them and their relationship? (One is alert and the other is relaxing)

What do you think each rabbit is thinking?

Which rabbit are you most like?

What did the artist do to create the illusion that the rabbits are soft and cuddly?

## DO

1. Have students sketch the rabbits from two different angles and discuss the different stories these perspectives tell.
2. Discuss techniques artists use to create endearing yet enormous sculptures.
3. Create your own surprising story with the rabbits as the main characters. Consider: the main idea, the sequence of events, the conclusion. Is there a lesson to learn from your story? Do the rabbits possess special powers? Are they friendly and playful? What about the way they look makes them look friendly? (i.e. oversized, round shapes and curves—no hard edges) What are these rabbits doing in Citygarden? What would you name them?
4. A maquette is a sculptor's small preliminary model of a sculpture. Have your students mold a maquette of their own rabbit.

### MODELING CLAY

#### Materials

- 2 cups salt
- 2/3 cups water
- Saucepan
- 1 cup cornstarch
- 1/2 cup cold water

#### Directions

1. Stir salt and water in a saucepan over heat 4-5 minutes.
2. Remove from heat; add cornstarch and cold water.
3. Stir until smooth; return to heat and cook until thick.
4. Allow the clay to cool, then shape as desired.
5. Store unused clay in a Ziploc bag.



**Mark di Suvero (1990), Painted Steel, 11'-5" x 32'-4.5" x 13'-7.5"**

The artist, Mark di Suvero, titles this sculpture *Aesop's Fables*. Aesop was a storyteller who lived in Ancient Greece. He created stories about animals acting wise or foolish to teach lessons or morals about everyday life. Here are two examples of *Aesop's Fables* to read aloud while you look at the statue.

THE FOX AND THE GOAT

A Fox fell into a well, and though it was not very deep, he found that he could not get out again. After he had been in the well a long time, a thirsty Goat came by. The Goat thought the Fox had gone down to drink, and so he asked if the water was good.

"The finest in the whole country," said the crafty Fox, "jump in and try it. There is more than enough for both of us."

The thirsty Goat immediately jumped in and began to drink. The Fox just as quickly jumped on the Goat's back and leaped from the tip of the Goat's horns out of the well.

The foolish Goat now saw what a plight he had got into, and begged the Fox to help him out. But the Fox was already on his way to the woods.

"If you had as much sense as you have beard, old fellow," he said as he ran, "you would have been more cautious about finding a way to get out again before you jumped in."

MORAL

Look before you leap

## LOOK

Assembling *Aesop's Fables* was a feat of engineering. Made of industrial I-beams welded and bolted together, it called for the same coordination, planning and equipment used in the construction of a skyscraper. Yet despite its scale and complexity di Suvero has managed to create a sculpture that is simple and charming much like *Aesop's Fables*. So walk around, underneath, climb on top, and look at the sculpture from different angles and perspectives.

## SEE

Describe what you see when you look at the sculpture. Note the shapes on the left side and the right side of the sculpture. How are they the same? How are they different? How are they connected? Why do you think the artist chose the color red? Do you think an artist can tell a story using shapes and colors? What letters of the alphabet do you see? What do you think the lesson of this sculpture might be?

## DO

1. Have the class form a circle around the sculpture and ask them to sketch the sculpture from their point of view. Do their different perspectives tell a different story?
2. Mark di Suvero was injured early in his career and told he would never walk or work again. During his recovery he learned to master advanced welding techniques that he used to create his massive masterpieces. Can you think of times when you've turned a bad situation into something positive?
3. The sculpture is titled *Aesop's Fables*. Why do you think he chose that title? What is your favorite fable? Draw a sculpture of your favorite fable.



**Tom Otterness (2001), Bronze, 104.5" x 68" x 65.5"**

Tom Otterness was inspired by cartoon characters, Disney films, and the games and stories he learned as a young boy. Public art is his focus and has been regarded by some as "the world's best public sculptor." He is also one of only a handful of contemporary artists to have been invited to design a balloon for the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. In 2005 his tumbling Humpty-Dumpty was a crowd favorite.

## LOOK

At first glance, *Kindly Geppetto* appears comical, but it carries a serious message as it explores the relationship between the creator and his creation. Pinocchio wants desperately to be a real boy, but first must prove to Geppetto that he can be truthful and knows the difference between right and wrong. If you look closely you'll see that Geppetto is frowning as he is about to strike his puppet with a mallet. However, it is up to interpretation why Geppetto is frowning and whether he is doing so in the process of crafting Pinocchio or in the midst of destroying the puppet.

## SEE

Describe what's happening in the sculpture.

Who are these characters?

Who is the bigger one?

The smaller one?

Look at their faces. Are they smiling or frowning?

What do you think each one is thinking? Why?

What do you think is about to happen?

How would you describe Geppetto?

The artist calls this sculpture *Kindly Geppetto*. What is kindness?

Do you think Geppetto is kind?

Why would the artist describe Geppetto as kind when we suspect he doesn't really think he is? Can you think of examples when you say the opposite of what you really mean?

What do you think this piece should really be called?

## DO

1. Print out these sketches which take you through Tom Otterness's sculpting process.  
<http://www.tomostudio.com/making-the-sculpture>  
How is this similar or different to making a sculpture in art class?
2. Sketch your own rough draft of the next sculpture you would like to make for Citygarden.
3. Every sculpture starts with a small model. Using clay create your own model for your sculpture.



**Igor Mitoraj (1999), Bronze, 89" x 146" x 114"**

Igor Mitoraj creates larger than life sculptures that look like fragments from ancient civilizations, like this giant head of Eros.

## LOOK

In Greek mythology, ancient gods and goddesses were like superheroes and heroines. Eros, the god of love and desire, is usually portrayed as a young winged boy with a bow and arrow who would shoot arrows at the hearts of gods and mortals to arouse their desire and make them fall in love. In this sculpture, the large bronze head of Eros lies on its side flat against the earth wrapped in bandages to symbolize his imprisoned desires. The disembodied head is a comment on the suffering the artist saw around him, and the powerful image of this virile god fallen from the sky remind us that in today's world these Greek gods no longer hold the power they once held over mortal men.

## SEE

Describe the sculpture.

Do you believe that it symbolizes that civilization is broken beyond repair or being held together despite destructive forces?

Why do you think Eros has bandages on his head? Is Eros hurt, or is he healing?

One interpretation is that he has bandages over his eyes to symbolize that love is blind. Why do you think this could be so?

Does Eros still have his powers?

What super powers would you most like to possess?

How would you use them?

Notice the tension the artist has created between the ground and the head. How does it make you feel?

Step inside Eros' head and peer out of Eros' eyes and note how things look from his point of view.

Does Eros remind you of anyone you know who appears during

Valentine's Day? Why do you suppose Eros is a man in Greek Mythology but Cupid is a baby in Roman Mythology?

## DO

1. Step inside the head and look out of Eros' eyes. Sketch what you see.

2. Pair your students up and have them draw their partners face without looking at their drawing or picking up their pencil.

3. This sculpture's title is *Eros Bendato Screpolato* which translates to Eros blindfolded and cracked. To illustrate texture, ask your students to wad a piece of paper up, then smooth it flat. Then ask them to use the wrinkle lines to sketch the head and face of Eros.

4. We know what Eros' head looks like, but what about his body? Ask your students to sketch Eros' body. Including anything he would carry. Invite them to use their imagination.





Jim Dine (2009), Painted Bronze, 14'-7" x 11'-3" x 5'-8"

## LOOK

Jim Dine is an American painter and graphic artist best known for his iconic subject matter. After seeing the movie *Pinocchio* as a child, Dine, who identified with the story of a wooden puppet whose lies got him into trouble, became infatuated and went on to make *Pinocchio* his muse in drawing, paintings and sculptures. He has said of *Pinocchio*, "His poor burned feet, his misguided judgment, his vanity about his large nose, his temporary donkey ears, all add up to the real sum of his parts. In the end it is his great heart that holds me. I have carried him on my back like landscape since I was six years old. Sixty-four years is a long time to get to know someone, yet his depth and secrets are endless."

## LOOK

*Pinocchio* appears to be welcoming visitors to the park with open arms. However, if you look at the sculpture from behind, underneath, or at a distance, it could tell a completely different story.

## SEE

If this sculpture came to life, what do you think *Pinocchio* would say?

The artist has said that he related to *Pinocchio* when he was a boy because he also told a fib or two, but as his gigantic *Pinocchio* sculpture came to life he felt more kinship to Geppetto. Why? How is Dine similar to Geppetto?

Just like Geppetto, Dine brings Pinocchio to life because he believes “the idea of a talking stick becoming a boy is a metaphor for art.” Is Pinocchio a real or a wooden boy in this sculpture?

Pinocchio is twelve feet tall. Why would the artist make a sculpture this big?

Why did Dine put Pinocchio on four wheels?

## DO

1. Sketch the sculpture from different angles in the style of a cartoon, and using thought bubbles, share Pinocchio’s thoughts and feelings.

2. Play “Two Truths and a Lie.” Go around a circle and each student say two things that are true about them and one thing that isn’t. The rest of the class has to figure out which is the lie.

3. Play “Who is the “Puppet Master?” Form a circle and send one person away so they can’t see or hear what is being said. While that person is gone, designate one person in the circle to be the Puppet Master. Then ask the person who was sent away to come back. Everyone in the circle follows the Puppet Master’s movements until the person who was sent away can guess who the Puppet Master is.