Public Abstract
Mark Alan Mueller
MFA
Sculpture
Understanding Gay Culture
Advisor: Professor James H. Calvin

Advisor Signature Date 20 Oct. 2004

Graduation Term: Fall 2004

Understanding is the first step toward a greater acceptance of something unknown. Such is the case with the works presented in the thesis documentation and exhibition Understanding.

In the past, perceptions of gay culture have been generally negative. Some artists, in response to these perceptions, created works that emphasized the distinctions and differences of gay culture. However, over the past few decades an acceptance of alternative lifestyles in mainstream culture has changed these negative perceptions.

For the thesis artist, sculpture is that one line of communication to help reach a goal of co-existence with the heterosexual culture. In the past, he has reacted aggressively toward the prevailing norms of society by creating works that shocked and disturbed the viewer. Examples of this type of sculpture include My Toy Box and Final Solution. However, as time has passed, there has been a conscious effort to emphasize the common humanity between our cultures in such works as Walk, Journey, 7 Days and Momisms/Dadisms.

Paramount to the artist is that his life should be a positive representation of what gay culture is. Gay men are not sexual deviants out to subvert the young of American or a source of flawless designer health and beauty tips trying to clean up the straight men of America. Rather they are just ordinary men, determined to live ordinary lives. It is his fervent hope that with this thesis work; just one person may fully understand why the gay community says, "We are just like everyone else".