

Broadfoot builds on European roots

'I learned to respect the fact that a brick wants to be a brick'

BY PAUL HAIST

Sculptor, painter and PNWS member Olinka Broadfoot has created a life in art in her two homes of heart, Oregon and the Czech Republic. Today, her Oregon home is Portland. In the Czech Republic, where she is now, home is a place called Stod, about 73 miles southwest of Prague. She originally settled in Oregon in the 1970s with her husband Fred in Fall Creek, southeast of Eugene.



BROADFOOT

When her husband passed away, and later, one of her sons, Chad, Broadfoot left Oregon "for a very long time," eventually to return "mainly because I missed the smell of the woods."

"I have lived all over this country," she said, "but home was always Oregon. This is where my children grew up, where we built a house, where I studied with Weltzin Blix and was mentored by Jan Zach."

Her affection for Oregon notwithstanding, Broadfoot spends about three months a year in Stod where she works on her art in what seems—judging from photographs—a spacious, 120-year-old, converted brick kiln on the grounds of the TONDACH brick factory. The facility is one of several brick and roofing slate plants operated



OLINKA BROADFOOT'S studio in Stod in the Czech Republic is a retired brick kiln made available to her by its owner, TONDACH, one of the world's largest manufacturers of bricks and roof tile.

in various Eastern European countries by Wienerberger AG, the world's largest producer of bricks and the number-one maker of clay roof tiles in Europe. The company is based in Austria and also has plants in the United States.

Broadfoot, whose work in the Czech Republic has been underwritten annually by TONDACH since 2002, was born there just after the end of World War II. The family's home was in Prague. She and her parents immigrated to Argentina in 1948 when she was four years old, just two days ahead of the Communist takeover of what was then Czechoslovakia. Eight years later, the family came to America and settled in New York in the Bronx.

This year, Broadfoot will remain in Stod until the end of October. She said she goes there every summer and works with bricks and roofing tiles.

"TONDACH has become, in essence, my patron," she said. "The factory provides me with a place to stay and a studio which I would kill for in the States." The facility doubles as a museum when Broadfoot is not present.

TONDACH is generous in its support of the artist. Besides the studio and apartment, the company provides a small gallery room and land on which Broadfoot has installed large-scale sculpture.

"They also provide me with all materials—paint, frames, clay, engobes (similar to clay slip), waxes and access to any and all operations of the brick and roofing tile operation," she said.

This summer, she has been at work on, among other things, a commission

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Pacific Northwest SCULPTORS

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The Pacific Northwest Sculptors Newsletter is published monthly by Pacific Northwest Sculptors, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to serving the public through educational programs and sculpture exhibitions. We are a dynamic, inclusive community of artists who inspire and support each other's growth with ideas, skills and knowledge.

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**Submissions deadline for
the November 2016 edition is
Wednesday, October 26, 2016.**

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<http://www.pnwsculptors.org>

New members' packet made more informative

A moment ago, I sent off the new member packet to our board secretary, Isabelle Johnston-Haist, for distribution. We recently had somewhat of a meltdown in the membership area. We use Wild Apricot association management software to handle such things and it was running nicely on automatic until it wasn't.

As a result, many members received very little information upon renewing their membership or joining PNWS. Isabelle and now board member and Treasurer Diana Rogero spent a good deal of time under the hood and now have it functioning much better.

What Apricot was sending to members upon joining or renewing was basic

and not very informative. The remedy for that—which a number of us worked

on—was what amounts to a table of contents for Pacific Northwest Sculptors. It contains information on member benefits such as the online gallery, the Wild Apricot member database, writing for the newsletter and accessing our publicity avenues for your announcements, whether it be a show or a class you teach. There are many benefits to membership but they are useless unless one knows what they are.

Hopefully, this will remedy the problem. We've also included a clickable list of Northwest galleries. This was

a result of the newsletter going digital. We had to find web addresses for all the galleries we had been snail mailing. Once that was compiled, it seemed logical to share it. Hope you find it useful. If you know of a gallery that is not listed and should be, please contact me at gheath6006@msn.com. We will also send them a sample newsletter.

The September members' meeting at Rob Arp's Form 3D Foundry was postponed at the very last minute due to unavoidable circumstances. We hope the word got out in time and not too many showed up. Steve, an employee there, said he would give a brief tour to any who showed up, so that was helpful. By the time you read this, it should be rescheduled so please check the website www.pnwsculptors.org calendar for updates.

I want to thank Carole Murphy for hosting a jubilation (memorial) for Rick Gregg. It was nicely done and very well attended. I saw people I'd not seen in a long time. Some friendships were renewed and it was a great treat to meet Rick's family. They are lovely and fun people. I hope to see them again. As can be imagined, there were ample stories. Rick would have been very pleased.

Thanks to all for being a part of PNWS,

George Heath

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PNWS members demo at art fest



PACIFIC NORTHWEST SCULPTORS board member and metal sculptor Dave "Gonzo" Gonzales (www.davegonzosculpture.com) demonstrated how he torch welds at the Fall Festival of the Arts at Glenn Otto Park in Troutdale over the first weekend of October. Gonzales was joined by fellow PNWS members Roderick Neswick (demo-ing wood sculpture, <http://rodneswicksculptor.wixsite.com/mycreations>), and Andy Kennedy (demo-ing in clay, <http://www.andything.com>). The above photo is taken from a video recorded by PNWS member Rip Caswell.

Upcoming Meetings

October Board Meeting

Friday, Oct. 7th at 10 a.m.
 Dave Gonzo Gonzalez Residence
 3354 SE 19th (in the red barn
 out back)
 Portland, OR 97202
 503-270-9394

All members are encouraged to attend board meetings. This is where we figure out what we want to do. If you have an idea for an event, show or other activity, bring it!

At this meeting we will discuss having an exhibition at the Newport Visual Arts Center on the coast, Sculpture Day 2017, contents of the new member packet and various other issues in regard to making the organization more effective.

Members may attend in person or via Skype. Contact George if you wish to Skype, Skype participants limited to 25.

October Member's Meeting

Friday, Oct. 13, 7 p.m.
 Potluck—bring a dish/beverage
 Hosted by Bill Leigh at his home and studio
 5015 NW 127th
 Vancouver, WA. 98685
www.billeigh.com

Board weighs Rick Gregg scholarship

The PNWS board is exploring whether and how to establish a scholarship for aspiring metal artists as a way of commemorating in perpetuity the contributions and the artistic gift of the late PNWS board member and distinguished metal sculptor Rick Gregg.

Gregg died Aug. 5 after a long illness.

The issue was addressed at the PNWS September board meeting where the conversation focused on Gregg's desire that a scholarship be created in his name and that it might

be appropriate to create such a scholarship in welding, a skill for which Gregg was widely renowned.

It was decided to research whether a foundation or educational institution might underwrite such a scholarship. It was noted that two art schools and two community colleges in the Portland area offer welding programs

A person has been assigned to contact those institutions and the Regional Arts and Culture Council for advice.

The board plans to continue the discussion.

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OLGA KIRSHINA PHOTO

147 FACES created during Broadfoot's first year in Stod, she said she thought it had to do with all the people who have worked there.



A WALL RELIEF at the TONDACH plant in Stod. It is about 40 feet long, made of roofing tile "and (is) about the Czech Republic, what grows here and family," said the artist.



ALL IMAGES: © BY OLINKA BROADFOOT, WWW.OLINKABROADFOOT.COM

VARIOUS TECHNIQUES: Left, head from hammered brick; center, sun and moon mask in terracotta; right, spiral stela in brick clay.

BROADFOOT: Able to work without outside pressure

'This is not something most artists get to do'

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for a portrait sculpture of Wienerberger CEO Heimo Scheuch, as a gift on the occasion of his 50th birthday.

Of the freedom afforded her by her relationship with TONDACH, Broadfoot says in the artist's statement on her website, "I feel very, very lucky. I have been given the opportunity to work without any outside pressure."

She says she creates whatever she wants and whenever she wants without having to worry about rent, materials and studio costs.

"This is not something that most artists get to do and I doubt my work would be 'mine' had it not been for that," she said, emphasizing "mine" in the sense that her work reflects who

she is.

The work she does at her brick factory studio creates technical challenges for Broadfoot.

"After 14 years of working with this material, I learned to respect the fact that a brick wants to be a brick, but I was able to push this medium within its own parameters to a great extent," she said.

Bricks are manufactured with different additives in the clay for use in various applications, she explained. That requires her to treat each type of brick differently.

"That is why some work is hammered, some carved, etcetera," she said. "The pieces are shaped after they are manufactured but before they are fired—then dried (and) then fired, then reassembled in the studio and finished."

She adds elsewhere, "I enjoy seeing how far I can push any given medium and I enjoy being forced to create within the material's parameters."

Broadfoot assesses her work by a simple yard stick, "I know a piece is good when I am no longer aware of myself while creating it."

Broadfoot's subject matter ranges from figurative to abstract with many stops in between.

Again citing her artist's statement, she says, "My work is varied because life is varied and I create from at least three different cultural backgrounds."

While her work "is inspired by all three cultures (Czech, Argentinian and American)," her geographic focus for now remains north of the equator.

"I plan on splitting my time between Oregon and Prague because as far as I can tell I belong to both these places as much as I belong anywhere else."

Of her goal as an artist, Broadfoot said, "I would like the viewer to see what I see. I want that 'YES' moment."

Learn more about Olinka Broadfoot and her work online at <http://olinkabroadfoot-gallery.com>.