

Carol Bove

Teaching Resource

Carol Bove: Collage Sculptures / October 16, 2021 – January 9, 2022

About Carol Bove

Carol Bove was born to American parents in Switzerland in 1971. She grew up in Berkeley, CA and now lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. In sculptures from the 1990s and early 2000s, Bove followed a rule that everything included in her artwork had to be found, not purchased. She arranged items into assemblages that included feathers, photographs, seashells, and rare books on bookshelves, platforms, and other supporting elements. Her next series of sculptures retained the combining of new and found elements while pivoting to large-scale steel sculpture made with steel, bronze, and petrified wood.



Carol Bove, 2019. Photo: Jason Schmidt.

Collage Sculptures and Pipe Monsters

In 2015, Bove began exploring the idea of large-scale, metal, abstract sculptures—the kind that are often found in plazas and other public spaces. She creates sculptures by welding and bolting together new square steel tubes along with chunks of found scrap metal and items from previously made work. Some of these pieces are cutoff ends of former sculptures, in the form of small, thick discs that she calls “polka dots.” She refers to this current body of work as “collage sculptures” and “pipe monsters.”

What qualities of Bove’s sculptures make them seem to be alive or moving, like a “pipe monster”?

First Impressions

Bove builds her sculptures with steel, a material that is characterized as heavy, durable, and unyielding. And yet, while using heavy-duty tools to manipulate and shape the steel, she uses a careful amount of pressure and gentle force that results in hard metal resembling soft, draped fabric. Coated with matte paint that gives the appearance of velvet, the steel tubes in these sculptures mimic fabric folds and drapery.

What types of fabric or articles of clothing do the sculptures remind you of? How do you think they would feel if you could touch them?



Carol Bove, *Cutting Corners*, 2018. Stainless steel and urethane paint, 35 7/8 x 38 7/8 x 38 5/8 in. (91 x 99 x 98 cm). Collection of Christopher V. Walker. © Carol Bove. Courtesy the artist and David Zwirner.

Read

Read the quotations from Carol Bove and consider the questions below.

Bove wants “to find out what stainless steel does, what its qualities are. We think stainless steel is hard and strong, and I’m wondering if this really is the case. Is there a gentle and persistent way to act on it so that it will behave differently?”

Can you think of a time when being gentle and persistent was an effective way to achieve something that you wanted?

“Almost everything I make has multiple parts and can be disassembled. Parts are never glued together. This is important to me—it gives the sculptures energy. When they are packed up in a crate, I think of them as being off-duty, relaxed. When they are assembled or configured in an exhibition setting, they are performing.”

Bove thinks of her sculptures as “performing” or “relaxed” depending on whether they are on display. Do you and your family have belongings that are only brought out to “perform” during special occasions or certain times of year?



Carol Bove, 2019. Photo: Jason Schmidt.

Draw

Sketch one of Bove’s sculptures. Pay attention to anything new that you notice as you draw.

What was your first impression of this sculpture? How did this change during the time you took to sketch the sculpture?

Think of different terms – force, balance, gravity – and describe how these come together in Bove’s sculptures.

Color Story

Color studies inform the choices Bove makes in her sculptures. She draws from a wide range of sources that include paintings and photographs, focusing on one or two colors in a composition. Bove specifically cites Willem de Kooning's [Woman and Bicycle](#) of 1952-53 as a source of color inspiration.

View some of Bove's color studies here:

<https://www.davidzwirner.com/viewing-room/2020/studio-carol-bove>.

Where do you find color inspiration for your work?

"There's a set of colors that we are all looking at right now [...]Everybody's perception of color is very mutable and changes and has to do with our fashions and conventions of the moment."

What are some examples of classic color combinations that have been popular for many years? Can you think of any colors that are currently in fashion? What would you choose for your own work, and why?

Additional Resources

Explore the exhibition on the Nasher Web App:

<https://web-app.cuseum.com/?99#!/tour-overview/1902>

Carol Bove Studio: <https://www.davidzwirner.com/viewing-room/2020/studio-carol-bove>

Carol Bove on crushing, crashing and twisting heavy metal into better shape: <https://www.wallpaper.com/art/carol-bove-profile-brooklyn-artist-studio>

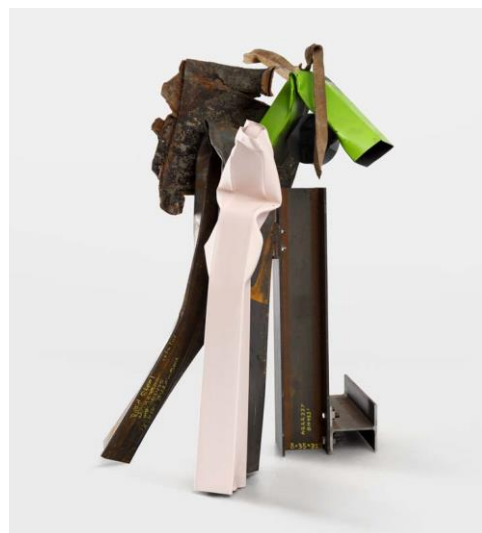
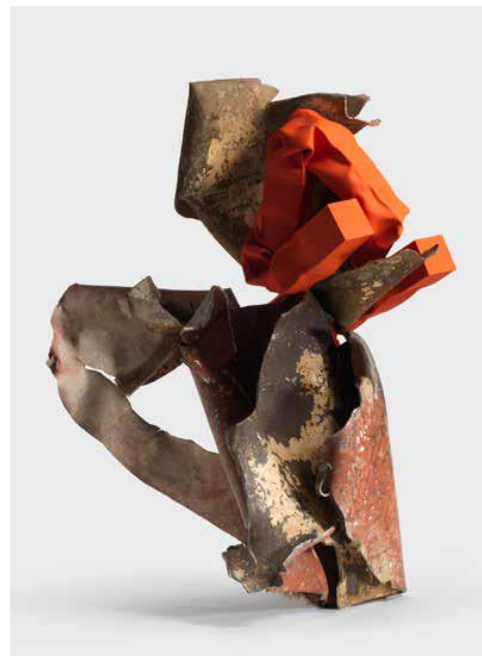
Willem de Kooning, *Woman and Bicycle* at the Whitney Museum: <https://whitney.org/collection/works/1081>

Suggested Curriculum Connections (TEKS)

Fine Arts: Knowledge and Skills | §117.302. Art, Level I (b) (4)

Fine Arts: Critical Evaluation | §117.52. Art, Level I (c) (3) and (4)

English: Reading Comprehension of Literary Nonfiction | §110.31. English I (b) (6)



TOP: Carol Bove, *Offenbach Barcarolle*, 2019. Steel, stainless steel, and urethane paint. 82 x 68 1/4 x 52 1/2 in. (208.3 x 173.4 x 133.3 cm). © Carol Bove. Courtesy the artist and David Zwirner.
BOTTOM: Carol Bove, *Hylomorph I*, 2016. Steel, stainless steel, and urethane paint, 71 1/2 x 42 x 51 in. (181.6 x 106.7 x 129.5 cm). Private collection. © Carol Bove. Courtesy the artist and David Zwirner.

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