

Travelling artist shares experiences with SOU art students

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The Siskiyou

In the darkness of the art history classroom, an artist waited to show young students her art. Throughout her slide show of sometimes-creepy renditions of the human form, Petra Kralickova gave a speech of how she came to sculpt and where her art was going. The graphic and beautiful figures that she showed gave aspiring artists a chance to view a living artist work and learn what it meant to the artist.

Kralickova was invited to Southern Oregon University earlier this week in order to give lectures and to critic the art of the working students. The director of two galleries at the Ohio University, Kralickova splits

her time between scheduling art exhibitions and working in her studio creating more exquisite sculptures. A well-traveled native of the Czech, Kralickova presents a congenial and sometimes authoritative exterior.

She spoke to students about living in Greece and working at a place that used to be a "gathering place" for a population of people with mental illnesses. One of the stories she shared was about a woman who had gotten lost in an abandoned wing of the building and seemingly prepared herself to die and then did. Kralickova showed a picture of the place where this woman died. On the concrete was a Shroud of Turin-like stain in the shape of a woman. Apparently it was burned into the concrete itself and could not be cleaned off.

Another place that she had visited was the town of Sedlec. This small and unimpressive town is home to one of the most famous churches in the world. Referred to as the Ossuary at Sedlec, this church is entirely decorated with thousands upon thousand of human. No way to really know how many people have unintentionally donated their bones to the macabre eccentricities of the churches decor.

After a few shots of her travels around Europe, Kralickova started to talk about her educational history. She decided to study in the States, although she did not know particularly what it was she wanted to major in. As the fates would allow, she came across sculpting in her first year of college and has continued with it ever since. Moved by the

notion of vulnerability in people, she made her sculptures to represent the fragility of human beings and how they grouped around each other. It was this idea that inspired her toward her Bachelors of Fine Arts exhibition.

Following her graduation from Ohio University, Kralickova went to Dartmouth to go to grad school and continue making her art. It was a rough time for her and it showed up in her work. She went through a "dark phase," as she called it, where she used scarification and tattoos into her work. As the darkness evolved she started cutting and maiming her figures, using disembodied representations and sculpting in a more surrealistic/ abstract form. Influence for her came from many places and times, though she admits little to no consciousness about how or why her art comes about. When asked what it means to her that



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Artist Petra Kralickova speaks to students about her art process.

her art does what it does, she claimed that she didn't force her art and merely use a kind of gentle force to keep the clay that she worked with to get to her goal of her sculpture.