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FORENSIC SCULPTURE WORKSHOP



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The New York Academy of Art's Forensic Sculpture Workshop, created in 2015, is the result of a unique partnership between the Academy and the New York City Office of the Medical Examiner, in which art students used skulls from actual "cold cases" to recreate the faces of the victims, in the hope of identifying unknown persons.

For the week-long sculpture course, Academy students each receive a replica of the skull from a real unidentified body, and use their sculptural and artistic training to accurately reconstruct the face of the victim in clay, under the instruction of Joe Mullins, a forensic imaging specialist. Bradley J. Adams, the director of forensic anthropology for the Office of the New York City Medical Examiner, called clay facial reconstructions the "last-ditch effort" to identify unknown homicide victims, after methods such as fingerprinting, dental records and DNA testing fail to yield results. Nationally, thousands of skeletal remains await identification. The pilot program at the Academy in 2015 marked the first time the Office of the Medical Examiner had ever attempted this project with an art school, and resulted in 11 busts created from New York City skeletal remains and one positive identification. In 2016, the program was expanded from New York to include skulls from a variety of cold cases all over the country, from Delaware to California, and included two 19th-century skulls from unknown soldiers killed during the Civil War.



The New York Academy of Art is the national leader in teaching contemporary figurative art and its students follow a rigorous technical course of anatomical drawing, *écorché* and drawing from life. This specific artistic training allows Academy students to actively interpret the landscape of a skull and skillfully portray features and flesh.

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THEY WENT TO ART SCHOOL BUT THEY MIGHT END UP SOLVING MURDERS

By Sophia Rosenbaum
March 14, 2016 | 3:25pm



This is some killer art!

Big Apple art students are using their sculpting skills to help solve cold-case murders across the country. The exhibit includes 15 clay busts created by NY Academy of Art students and the New York City Office of Chief Medical Examiner.

The New York Academy of Art teamed up with the New York City Office of Chief Medical Examiner to create 15 facial reconstructions of murder victims whose deaths have never been solved.

"It's not an exact replica of the person, but hopefully they're close enough that someone will say, 'Oh, that looks like Uncle So-and-So,'" said John Volk, who created the five-day forensic sculpture workshop. "When there are no medical records, the forensic reconstruction is the last chance."

Last year's workshop led to the successful identification of one victim after a woman came forward and said she recognized a family member from a story about the initiative, which digs into the country's enormous backlog of cold cases. No details about that case were released.

"It's a huge problem so it was a great opportunity for us to help out," Volk said, noting that there are at least 1,200 unidentified skulls in New York's system alone.

Officials provided as much detail as possible — including age, ethnicity and hair type — and then each student was given a 3D printed copy of the skull. Students carve clay replicating the faces of murder victims from unsolved cases.

This year's skulls include two from men who fought in the Civil War who were discovered in Virginia and South Carolina in the late 1800s, as well as six from the New York metro area.

The most recent discovery included in the project was a skeletonized body of a middle-aged black male with good teeth who was found off the Belt Parkway in 2015.

Others include a teenage girl who was found fully clothed — wearing a leather jacket, purple sweater and jeans — behind a power plant in Queens in 1994 and a 40-to-60-year old male with a gray beard found behind a building in 1999 in the Bronx.

Volk said it usually takes about three days for the artist's to sculpt the busts.

"It's always so strange to walk in the room. All of a sudden, it's much more quiet and it's no longer just 15 artists — it's 30 people in the room," he said.

The artwork is now on display through March 23 at the art academy's headquarters in Tribeca.

Volk said he's received a lot of positive feedback from the students about the workshop, which he said could expand into a full 15-week course available for the New York Academy's master's candidates.

"They're using their sculpture skills and their knowledge of anatomy to help the community so it's very satisfying for them," he said. "Some of them have actually talked about pursuing this as a career."



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NYC ART STUDENTS RECONSTRUCT FACES USING SKULLS FROM REAL COLD CASES

said John Volk, director of the school's Continuing Studies Program.

Through the direction of Joe Mullins — who teaches the workshop — the students are asked to select a skull and are then given details on each victim. Some of the details include age range, where the body was found, anything that was left with the body, a guess on gender, and more. Then, through five days in mid January, the students begin to form the faces, using the knowledge they already gained through classes at the school such as anatomical drawing and écorché — where students sculpt a body from bone to muscles.

“When you walk in and you’ve come from 15 people to now there is 30 people in the room at the same time it’s a very strange and eerie kind of feeling,” Volk said. “And now [the skulls] are no longer an abstract idea, this is somebody.”

This year, the replica of the skulls — which were created through a 3D printer — came from cold cases all over the country such as Delaware and California, along with six cases from the New York metro area.

For first-year student Allison Hill-Edgar the idea of building faces out of just a skull seemed impossible. However as each day went by, the impossible slowly transformed into an amazing possibility. “When we got to the end of the class and everyone had these vastly different people staring back at them I was completely amazed. I was blown away,” Hill-Edgar said.

The painting major, who never dabbled in sculpting before, added that she waited until the rest of her classmates selected a skull and took the last one on the table.

To her surprise, the skull she picked came with a unique history. The skull belonged to a member of the 54th Massachusetts Infantry, the first all-African-American civil war regiment. And although she said she initially

wanted to recreate the face of a cold case victim, she was always fascinated about the story of the regiment and this felt like helping form a part of history.

“To be able to put a face for someone that was unidentified, that was so cool,” she said.

Hill-Edgar, who used to be a doctor, said she utilized her medical background to understanding the anatomy behind the reconstruction and said she helped her classmates when questions came up. She added that during the last day many of the students took the time to make sure details matched the information they were given because unlike other art projects — where they are given the freedom to express themselves creatively — this assignment had more meaning to each piece.

“Each day there was a step that we added, so it was wild to watch them come alive,” Hill-Edgar said. “Doing it right was very important. I think we all felt a certain amount of responsibility.”

The face models will be on view in the windows of the school facing Franklin Street until March 23.

Once the exhibition is over, the models will be photographed and uploaded to Name Us, a website which is maintained by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, with the hope that someone will recognize a face and possibly give an identity to a victim.

“It was just really rewarding to be a part of the art world being able to help people,” Volk said. “It’s like instant gratification.”

Angy Altamirano
Reporter
March 14, 2016

A group of New York City students have used the power of art to help finally give a face to some unknown homicide victims — and opened the door to one day finding out their stories.

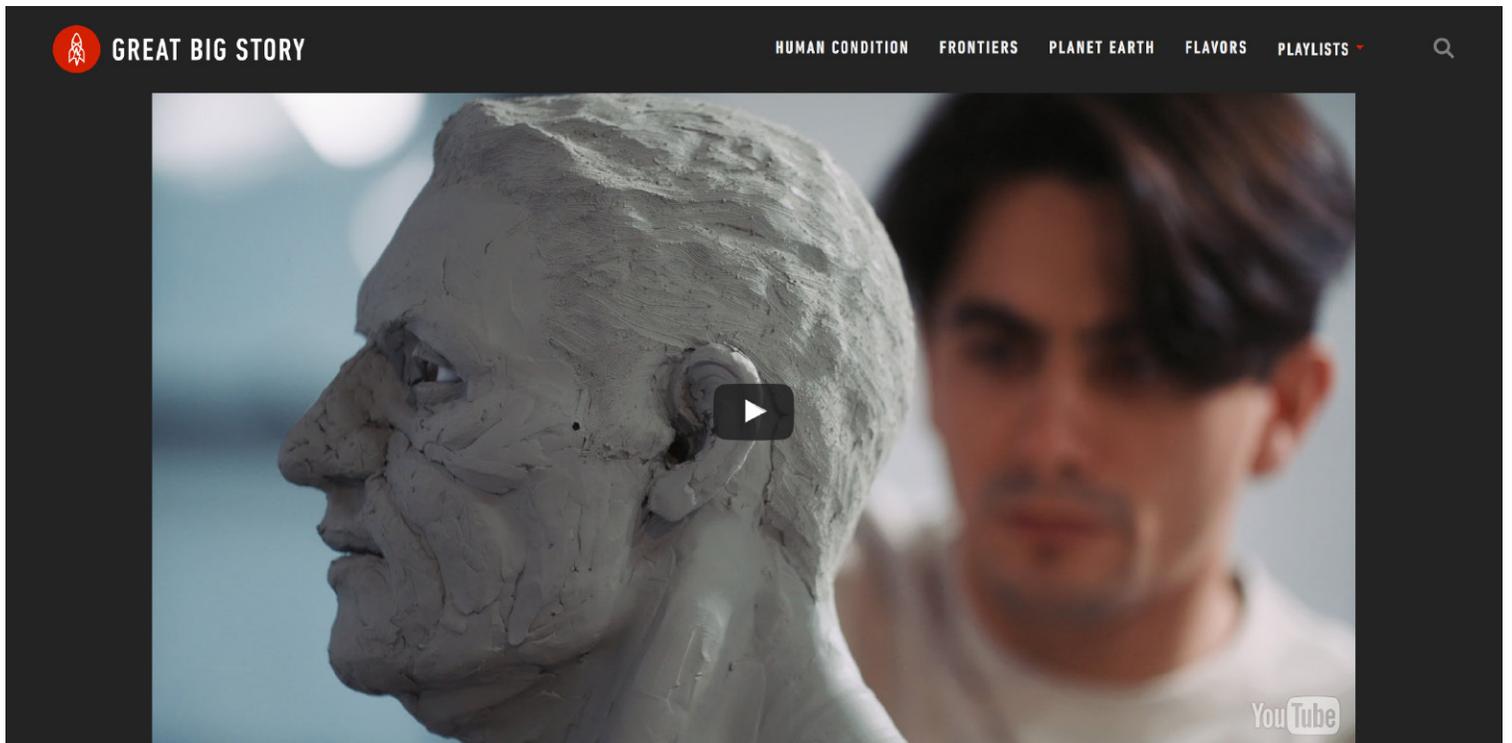
Starting this month, the New York Academy of Art, at 111 Franklin St. in Manhattan, is hosting an exhibition of clay models and featuring the work of students from the school's Forensic Sculpture Workshop who recreated the faces of unidentified victims from real cold cases. Through the workshop — which is a partnership between the graduate school and the New York City Office of the Medical Examiner — 15 students were each given a replica of a skull of an unknown individual and asked to recreate the face of the victim.

This is the second year the graduate school has partnered with the medical examiner. Students first reconstructed faces a year ago for 11 victims — one who later was a positively identified and another who is currently in the process of being identified. “This is very exciting because it is very fun to do for the students but you recognize that you are doing a service for someone and there is the possibility that you can help someone,”



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From Cold Case to Positive ID: An Art Class Helps Uncover Victims

The Forensic Sculpture Workshop at the New York Academy of Art pairs sculpture students with skulls from actual cold cases. Their mission is to create clay busts, which are then used to identify unknown murder victims.

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Students Sculpt and Help Solve Crimes at New York Academy of Art Workshop

By Stephanie Simon

Monday, March 14, 2016 at 12:51 PM EDT

NY1 VIDEO: Iggy Pop posing nude for a drawing class at The New York Academy of Art recently caused quite a stir and raised a few eyebrows in the art world and beyond. However, there's another art class at the academy that is even more of a "mystery." NY1's Stephanie Simon explains in this Arts and Culture report.

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INTERNATIONAL EDITION
THE ART NEWSPAPER

Student sculptors revive the faces of cold-case victims

Forensic busts based on 3D printed skulls have led to at least one positive DNA identification

by **GABRIELLA ANGELETI** | 4 April 2016

The New York Academy of Art (NYAA) in the Tribeca neighbourhood of Manhattan relaunched a five-day forensic sculpture workshop where students produce clay model busts of cold-case murder victims by using 3-D printed, plaster replicas of their skulls. The class has proven so popular that John Volk, the director of the continuing studies programme at the school, told the New York Post last month that he hopes to expand the workshop into a 15-week course that will be available to school's Master students.

The university first partnered with the New York City Office of Chief Medical Examiner last year and provided the students with 11 skulls and all the victims' known forensic and biographical information including age, height, race, hair type and points of bludgeoning. The sculpted busts were displayed on the windows of the university "in a last-ditch effort to identify unknown homicide victims, after methods such as fingerprinting, dental records and DNA testing failed to yield results", Bradley J. Adams, the director of forensic anthropology for the Office of the City Medical Examiner, said in a press release.

Last year, one of the skulls led to a positive DNA identification, and the match was further confirmed by a family member of the subject. "Someone saw a photo of [a bust] and contacted us to say that they believed it was their relative", Angharad Coates, the director of communications at the NYAA, told The Art Newspaper, "Cases like this show the intensive anatomical training that we offer to our students."

This year, the students in the workshop produced 15 busts. The skulls came from a variety of cold-case cases around the US. Two of the skulls belonged to men who fought in the civil war and were discovered in the late 1800s, while six came from the New York metro area, including one that belonged to a middle-aged black male found in 2015 off the Belt Parkway highway that connects Brooklyn and Queens.

The busts took around three days to complete, and were displayed on the windows of the university that face Franklin Street last month. Images of the finished busts will be added to the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUS) online database, and will be available to the New York City Police Department.

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People

New York Art Students Create 3-D Renderings from Skulls to Help Identify Unknown Murder Victims

At this very moment, in medical examiners' offices all across America, the skulls of tens of thousands of anonymous homicide victims sit in evidence boxes, waiting to be identified.

Each of those skulls is tied to a detective – haunted by the enduring mysteries surrounding that unknown person's death – as well as fractured families who are clinging to shreds of hope that their missing loved ones are still alive.

To make a dent in the backlog of unidentified skulls, investigators need to think outside the box. That's where Joe Mullins, a forensic artist who works with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, comes in: Mullins has teamed up with graduate students at the New York Academy of Art, who use the skulls and whatever police clues exist – about the victim's age and race, for instance – to create 3-D facial models out of clay to help make identifications.

"These people have lost their identities and we want to give it back to them," Mullins tells PEOPLE. "These skulls are people who are frozen in uncertainty. They are somebody's son, somebody's nephew – someone's relative.

There's got to be someone out there wondering where this person is, what became of them. Someone has questions and we're are trying to provide them with answers."

Last summer in Boston, artists helped provide answers about "Baby Doe," an unidentified 2-year-old whose decomposed body was found washed up on an area beach.

Desperate for leads after three months, investigators contacted the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children in Virginia, where a forensic artist was charged with reconstructing the toddler's face. The artist's rendering was released to media outlets and within two weeks, was shared by more than 50 million people on social media.

That facial reconstruction, according to Mullins, helped identify the victim as Bella Bond, leading to the arrests of her mother and the mother's boyfriend in her death.

"Bella Bond was such an innocent, young victim and that captured everyone's attention," Mullins offers. "There are lots of other cases just like hers; thousands, in fact. They all deserve 50 million views, too." Student Artist: 'It's About Helping People Find Closure' Mullins' workshop shows that there are practical uses for the students' creative skills, says Angharad Coates, the school's communications director.

"For these projects, the students are purely relying on science and anatomy, and have to avoid artistic freedom," Coates tells PEOPLE. "They use the classical sculpting techniques taught here to help identify these people, and it's the one project they can't keep – because it becomes evidence."



Adds Coates, "The students never lose sight of the fact that they're working on a real person," she explains.

Last year, student Marco Palli was able to help bring closure to the family of Daniel Miranda. In 2004, work crews found the young Hispanic man's remains while cleaning a Brooklyn highway.

Miranda's body was found wrapped in a blanket, and for years, police tried to identify his skeleton. While DNA evidence ultimately helped police put a name to the skull, Palli's reconstructive work helped Miranda's family process his death.

"It becomes personal for you after a little while and you just want to help this person," Palli comments to PEOPLE. "During this workshop, it's not about making a great sculpture. It's about helping people find closure and it's really enriching – not in the artistic sense but in the social spectrum."

The busts the students recently created will be displayed online and in what Mullins calls "a portrait gallery with purpose." Mullins says he is hopeful someone will see the newest images and recognize one of the faces.

Mullins is interested in expanding the program to other art schools across the country, he says.

"When people realize these busts are unidentified homicide victims, these sculptures will have a deeper impact," Mullins explains. "People realize they're not looking at works of art, but people – victims."

By Chris Harris @chrisharrisment
02/01/2016 AT 11:30 AM EST

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PRI Public Radio International



How art school students are helping solve cold cases

John Volk started a forensic art workshop for his students at the New York Academy of Art because he thought it would help them hone their skills in sculpture and anatomy. Now those students are helping the City of New York solve cold cases.

"It's a beautiful and really kind of an eerie process" Volk tells Brent Bambury of Day 6.

Each student in the Forensic Art Workshop receives a replica skull from the New York Office of the Chief Medical Examiner. Then over the next five days, students use clay to reconstruct the faces of their unknown victims.

"When the students walk, the very first thing they're told is to check their artistic license at the door."

Volk says paying attention to the skull's shape, its DNA and tissue depth are all key elements in getting the face right.

Last year one student's facial reconstructions was recognised by the victim's aunt, after she saw a picture of it in the New York Times.

"She was a little flabbergasted," says Volk. "Her nephew had been missing for quite a while."

Because of the growing interest in the Forensic Art Workshop, Volk is considering making it a fifteen week course.

He says students like exploring the forensics, working as a team on the investigation and definitely want to give back to the community.

"We always take leadership in our community. We always want to make a difference."

Allison Hill-Edgar took part in this year's Forensic Art Workshop at the New York Academy of Art.

Hear Allison talk about participating in the workshop and the man whose face she reconstructed.

She reconstructed the skull of a Civil War soldier from the 54th Regiment of the Union Army, the first free African American unit in the country.



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2015 | **The New York Times**
Hyperallergic
The Huffington Post
CBS Evening News
The Times of London

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2015 PRESS

The New York Times *Through Art and Forensics, Faces of Unidentified Victims Emerge*

By COREY KILGANNON JAN. 20, 2015



Anyone who walked into Room 501 at the New York Academy of Art in Tri-BeCa the other day would have seen a roomful of sculpture students molding clay into faces that looked nearly alive.

But the people represented by the sculptures had all met ugly deaths and were found as skeletons in desolate places across New York City — train tracks, wooded areas, in a basement.

Most of the bodies bore various violent clues, including dismemberment, bullets to the head and other blunt force trauma, the instructor, Joe Mullins, told the art students. The bodies all had one thing in common.

“They lost their identity,” said Mr. Mullins, a forensic imaging specialist. “We’re going to give it back to them.”

That was the point of a weeklong workshop this month in which fine art students tried to give faces to 11 unidentified crime victims found over the years who were now being handled by the city medical examiner’s office. The agency teamed up with the academy for this project.

The medical examiner’s office gets an average of about a dozen skeletonized cases a year, and the work of these artists is a “last-ditch effort” to identify these victims, as a comfort to relatives, and perhaps to open cold cases and, in homicides, find their killers, said Dr. Bradley J. Adams, the agency’s director of forensic anthropology.

Since his office has only done a few skull reconstructions like these, he told the students, “selfishly, I’m going to get 11 reconstructions done in a week.”

Depending on the results, the medical examiner’s office would consider working with the academy on a somewhat regular basis.

For this class, each student was given a skull — a replica made by the medical examiner’s office of each victim — and a block of clay to sculpt a face. The students were told to incorporate whatever information investigators recorded in finding and examining the skeleton, including estimates of the victim’s age and height, maybe a hair type or style, and possible clothing sizes.

Some cases came with additional clues, like a young man believed to be Hispanic who was found in 2004 wrapped in a blanket near the Jackie Robinson Parkway with strands of hair with his remains. There was also a young woman believed to be black who was found in Jamaica Bay in 1991 and who had two gold teeth.

The details hinted at grim stories, of souls found in mysterious and depraved circumstances that often suggested gruesome deaths. The left side of the woman’s skull, for instance, had been crushed.

Mr. Mullins, who works for the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children in Alexandria, Va., told the class that it was the first time he knew of art students’ trying to help identify homicide victims.

“You guys are a part of history,” he said. “Putting that face on them is our last hope of getting these people identified.”

Mr. Mullins told the students to work like police sketch artists. They were not there for art’s sake, but rather to

make a likeness close enough that it might prompt someone who knew or encountered the victims to recognize them. He said his own sculptures of anonymous skulls had yielded over 30 such hits.

Photographs of the students’ sculptures would be turned over to New York police investigators and posted on an online public database of missing persons run by the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System.

Of the roughly 1,200 still-unidentified bodies the medical examiner’s office has received in the past 25 years, some of its coldest cases are those that arrive skeletonized or so badly decomposed that the face is nonexistent, Mr. Adams said.

The city has begun trying to use the skull to sculpt a face when more traditional methods, such as fingerprinting, dental records and DNA testing, fail.

“This is like the end of the road,” Mr. Adams told the class. “This is something we are going to do if there are no other leads.”

The class seemed an ideal fit for the fine art students at the academy, given its emphasis on anatomical study, said John Volk, the school’s director of continuing education.

One student in the class, Marco Palli, who was sculpting a young man with corn rows, said, “The whole point is having someone say, ‘Hey, that looks like my uncle or my cousin.’”

Mr. Palli said that while he worked on a face for the missing man, “I felt like he was talking to me and that he’d be happy I was doing this for him.”

Since relatives might remember the man through photographs, Mr. Palli said he sculpted the face with a slight smile, “because people usually smile in pictures.”

The skulls seemed generic and similar at first glance. But as Mr. Mullins told the students, each would serve as a distinct blueprint, with its bone structure dictating facial features, as layers of clay were added to create the flesh, skin and cartilage that would rebuild the victim’s face.

Mr. Mullins opened a bag of marbles and placed a pair on each student’s desk, to make eyeballs. He distributed toothpicks to make a structure for the nose by following the lines of the nasal aperture.

He told students to stick closely to whatever the skull and other clues provided. The goal was not to create a brilliant likeness of a specific person, but rather a slightly generic look that might still elicit an identification.

“There is no room for artistic license,” he said.

Carmen Bilton, 48, worked on a skull of the young woman with the gold teeth. Ms. Bilton sculpted the woman with the mouth slightly open, so the teeth could be seen as an identification clue.

Ms. Bilton, a teacher from Eutawville, S.C., said she came to the class in the hope that a realistic rendering might help a family find someone they lost.

“It’s the sense that I would get it right,” Ms. Bilton said, “that maybe I ought to do this.”



HYPERALLERGIC

Last month, students in the Forensic Sculpture Workshop at the New York Academy of Art (NYAA) made faces for 11 anonymous skulls belonging to unidentified victims of crimes. Now those reconstructions are on view in the windows of the Tribeca university, part of an effort to get more eyes on them in the hopes that they can be identified.

In a New York Times feature on the continuing education workshop, instructor Joe Mullins, a forensic artist at the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, noted that this was the only instance he knew of art students participating in identifying homicide victims. The NYAA, with its curriculum focused on anatomy from the bone up, is uniquely equipped to collaborate on forensic reconstruction.

“The Academy teaches anatomy so that artists will know the human figure well enough to depict it from their imaginations, without having to rely on a model being present as a reference,” David Kratz, NYAA president, told Hyperallergic. “This class utilizes exactly those skills.”

In collaboration with the New York City Office of Chief Medical Examiner, 11 plaster replicas of skulls were distributed to students with all the known details about the victims, from general biographical data like gender, race, and age, right down to the bullet holes and bludgeoned bone. By examining the shape of the skull and this evidence, faces emerged of men, women, and a child, something they haven’t had since their decomposed remains were discovered. In addition to the window display, images of the completed sculptures will be added to the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs) database and shared with the New York City Police Department.

“The partnership is a great real world example of how the students can apply their highly skilled training in sculpture with their extensive knowledge of anatomy, unique skills sets of Academy artists that are necessary for forensic sculpture,” John Volk, director of the continuing education program at NYAA, told Hyperallergic. “At the end of the day if we can help trigger new leads in cold cases to provide some relief for the victims’ families left behind then I would consider it an honor and a job well done.”

by Allison Meier on February 3, 2015



One of the unidentified crime victims from the New York Academy of Art's Forensic Sculpture Workshop (photograph by Stefania Panepinto, MFA 2015, courtesy New York Academy of Art)



The reconstructed faces on view in the NYAA windows (photograph by the author for Hyperallergic)

FORENSIC SCULPTURE WORKSHOP

2015 PRESS

THE HUFFINGTON POST

Each student at the Forensic Sculpture Workshop at the New York Academy of Art (NYAA) begins with a skull. More specifically, each begins with a plaster replica of a real human skull made by a medical examiner, a facsimile of an unidentified crime victim in New York City.

From this foundation, the students sculpt a face, using a block of clay and whatever information they can glean from the ongoing investigations — such as age, height, gender and race. They also included grimmer details, such as the locations of bullet holes or crushed bones.

The resulting sculptures, lifelike in their realistic portrayals, capture the likenesses of unknown citizens who faced cruel and untimely deaths from a variety of gruesome circumstances, in the hopes that someone walking by the university windows will see a face and recognize it.

“They lost their identity,” Joe Mullins, a forensic imaging specialist told *The New York Times*. “We’re going to give it back to them.”

“The idea for a Continuing Education forensic sculpture workshop has been on the table for many years,” Academy’s Director of Continuing Education John Volk explained to *The Huffington Post* in an email. “It wasn’t until a colleague introduced me to Joe Mullins — a National Center for Missing & Exploited Children forensic imaging specialist — who has a relationship with the Medical Examiner’s office, that the idea was finally able to come to fruition.

“Our partnership is the perfect marriage of art and science. Having students use art and their extensive knowledge of anatomy for a bigger purpose and real world application to help the community at large was an opportunity worth waiting for and one we hope to replicate for years to come.” For the duration of the workshop, the forensic sculptors are not working to create the most beautiful works of art possible, but the most accurate likeness of a once living, breathing human. In that sense, the mission is more like a police sketch than an artistic sculpture.

This Is Forensic Sculpture, A Combination Of Art And Science That Aims To Solve Cold Cases

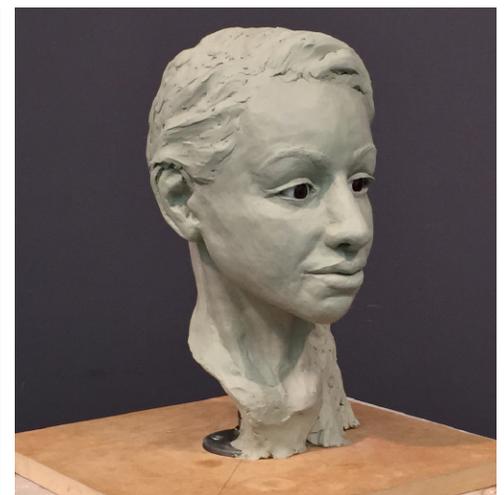


The hope is that, when the completed sculptures are displayed in the university windows, someone who knew one of the victims — maybe a relative, neighbor or an old friend — will recognize the likeness, thus restoring an identity to what are now only skeletons. Images of the sculptures will also be added to the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs) database and shared with the New York City Police Department.

The forensic sculpture method normally comes into play once traditional methods like DNA testing and fingerprinting are not available. For many of the skeletal and decayed bodies that remain unidentified victims, this is the final hope.

“To be part of something as profound as using art to potentially trigger new leads in cold cases, to provide some relief or answers some longstanding questions for the families of victims left behind, is extraordinary,” Volk continued. “It’s our hope that as many people stop in to the Academy to see the reconstructions and help spread the word about them. A success story is well within the range of possibility here and how incredible would that be?”

Priscilla Frank



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 CBS EVENING NEWS w/SCOTT PELLEY



Art students pitch in to help medical examiner identify remains

By Elaine Quijano

Students here at the New York Academy of Art are helping the city's medical examiner's office work through its backlog of 1,200 sets of unidentified remains.

"This is the final ... effort to do it. This is after we have exhausted DNA and other methods. This is simply to trigger someone's memory," said Dr. Bradley Adams, the medical examiner's forensic anthropologist.



Adams scans and copies actual skulls and gives the 3D-printed replicas to students. Crime scene evidence can help determine victims' sex, race and hair color, but little else, so the skulls dictate the details: the size of their eyes, the structures of their cheeks and nose.

Zoe Suesen-Taylor created one of the 11 sculptures. Asked if she felt any pressure working on this, she said "there was an enormous amount of pressure, responsibility. It was a daunting task."

John Volk is the academy's director of continuing education. He says forensic sculpting is more science than art. He told the art students to check their creative license at the door.

"The were told they could not be creative at all in this project. ... It was difficult for them."



The images are now in a national database and the sculptures are on public display. Forensic facial reconstruction has proven to be successful. It helped identify 14-year-old Tara Exposito, whose remains were left unidentified for more than a year until a sculpture was created.

"My biggest hope is that we have - is that we give someone their identity back, a name to go with the face now and bring closure to victims' families. That's a big thing."

Victims finally brought out of the shadows, for everyone to see.



FORENSIC SCULPTURE WORKSHOP

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THE TIMES

Sculptors give missing persons new life

Will Pavia



It is not an exhibition for the faint-hearted. In a new show at the New York Academy of Art, the heads of 12 dead people will be mounted on plinths in a gallery facing the street.

These are not just anyone's heads. They were sculpted from the skulls of men, women and one child whose remains have never been identified. Discovered in parks and woods or beside train tracks, they have been brought to life in clay as part of a partnership between the academy and the New York Medical Examiner's Office, which is seeking to identify several hundred sets



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