

OF DAY JOBS AND DAILY LIFE NOTHING SPARED FOR ART

by John Ewing

It's an old story. As budding young artists dream of their future careers, they often bemoan the need for commercial work or unrelated employment to tide them over. Yet that day job—making molds, dressing windows, or drawing shoes—may presage the creative breakthroughs to come. Sometimes, those earlier activities even endure as subjects or techniques in an established artist practice. For proof, consider the careers of Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein, Alina Szapocznikow, Daniel Edwards, Bruno Lucchesi, and Scott Myers. None of these artists would be who they came to be without their early, formative experiences of life and work. In large part, what they did before they “arrived” as fine artists determined how they got there.

Andy Warhol

Born Andrej Varhola in 1928 in Pittsburgh, the man who would become Pop Art's leading figure rose from humble beginnings. A son of working-class Slovak immigrants, Andy Warhol was a sickly child, but he liked to draw and paste cutouts, an activity that his artistic mother encouraged. He attended design school, then moved to New York in 1949 where he quickly established himself as an illustrator for the fashion retailers I. Miller and Tiffany & Co., and for magazines like *Glamour*, *Vogue*, and *Harper's Bazaar*. In this early commercial work, Warhol mastered the low-tech printing method known as “blotted line,” most memorably used in his drawings of elegant ladies' footwear.





Opposite: Shoe by Andy Warhol (1950s), painted wood, 4-1/3 inches high.

On this page: Head with Red Shadow by Roy Lichtenstein (1964), glazed ceramic, 15 inches high.

Given this high-fashion start, it's intriguing that ordinary soup cans and boxes of Brillo came to be the icons most associated with Warhol. No American artist was more responsive to the broader trends and technologies of his age. From household products to screen printing to movie stars, Warhol's art would reflect the postwar boom spurred by mass production, consumption, and advertising. If the artist Andy Warhol had not existed, he would have had to be invented.

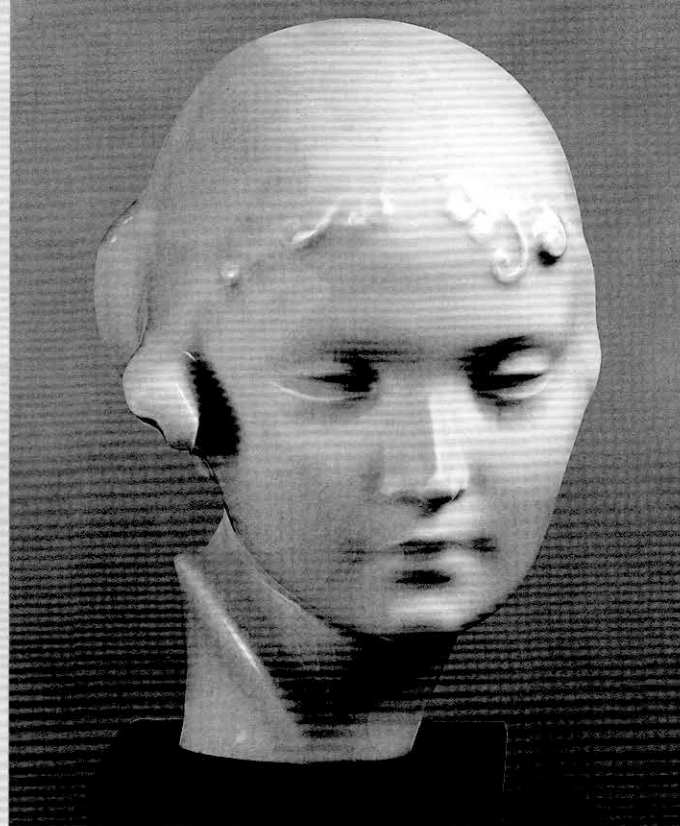
Yet his arrival was not a given. It occurred when Warhol shifted from participating directly in the economy as a cultural worker (commercial illustrator) to become a detached, some would say cryptic, mirror held up to the culture; in other words, he assumed the more rarified role of a fine artist. That historic turn came on a single evening in July 1962, at the Ferus Gallery in Los Angeles, when Warhol unveiled 32 silkscreened paintings of Campbell's soup cans: his first solo exhibition.

Roy Lichtenstein

If Warhol embodied the spirit of postwar commercialism, Roy Lichtenstein embraced the very look of 1950s/60s pop culture, right down to the dot—the Ben-Day dot, to be exact. In paintings and sculpture, Lichtenstein mimicked this printing technique that uses rows of dots to shade images in newspapers and comic strips. Appropriating this commercial trope for fine-art purposes immediately distinguished Lichtenstein, whose art would forever be linked to comic strips.

Raised in an affluent New York family, Lichtenstein got his first glimpse of a successful art career as a teenager, studying at the Art Student's League under celebrated painter/illustrator/cartoonist Reginald Marsh. He studied art at Ohio State; during and after World War II, he worked in the military as an artist and draftsman. These skills came in handy after he earned his MFA on the G.I. Bill, when Lichtenstein alternated between teaching college courses in commercial art and working in retail window display and industrial design.

His early attempts at fine art in the prevailing Abstract Expressionist style were unsuccessful until Lichtenstein seized on comics and Ben-Day dots as fertile new pictorial ground for painting. *Whaam!*—his career took off. He would expand this tongue-in-cheek treatment beyond cartoons to images of banal home interiors, Pop reinterpretations of modern art masterpieces, and hard-edged depictions of brushstrokes that later evolved into objects and large-scale sculptures. Like Warhol, Lichtenstein was also given a one-man show in 1962, at Leo Castelli Gallery in New York—but unlike the soup cans, his DC Comics-inspired works sold out.



Paul Jennewein

Paul Jennewein (1890-1978) became interested in ceramic sculpture when he worked on the designs of the pediment and architectural ornamentation for the Philadelphia Museum of Art from 1926 to 1933. His use of polychromy and glazes on terra cotta sculpture and ornamentation represented a revival of vivid color in architecture—the first time in more than 2,000 years. Although the Greeks had painted their terra cotta ornamentation, their pigments faded over time; Jennewein used ceramic glazes so that the colors would be preserved.

Jennewein quickly realized that he had to rethink his customary approach because his finished sculptures had to be designed so that the polychromy would be uniform. He also learned that color in sculpture demands a flat surface; the de-





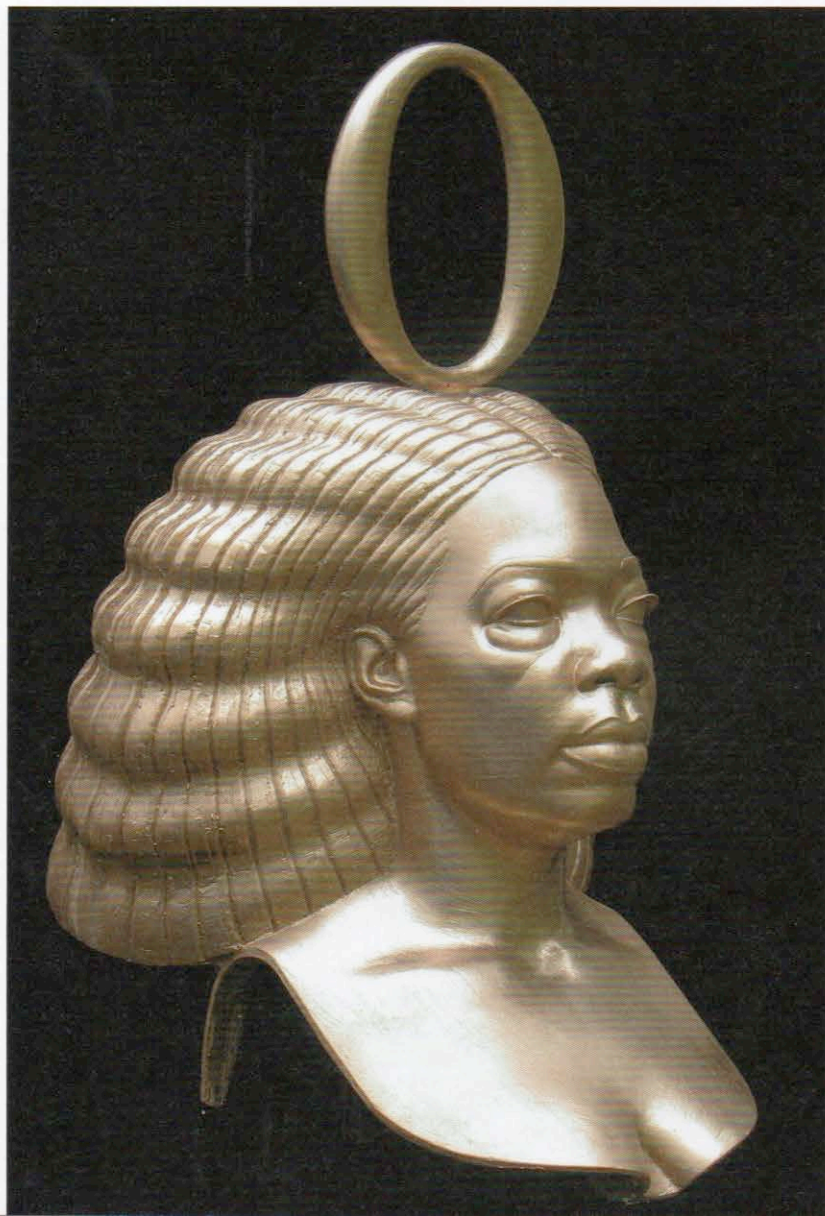
tail that would ordinarily be modeled would now be provided by color. And, he had to create vertical planes in order to eliminate shadows so that the color would not be altered by dark shadows. Fortunately, he had access to Leon Victor Solon, one of the foremost experts in ancient polychromy, and Charles L. Borie (of Zantzing, Borie, and Medary), a sympathetic architect who appreciated and understood the museum project's challenges. His collaboration with Solon and Borie proved to be most successful and Jennewein won the Medal of Honor from the Architectural League of New York in 1927.

Paul Jennewein found that he liked working in porcelain and used white-glazed porcelain as a medium for sculpture that was shown along with the work of recognized ceramic masters such as Waylande Gregory, Viktor Schreckengost, and R. Guy Cowan at the Whitney Museum of American Art in 1937. "Contemporary American Ceramics," organized by the Syracuse Museum of Fine Arts, included Jennewein's *Fire*, a draped female figure, and *The Victor* and *Marietta*, a pair of male and female heads. Throughout the rest of his life, Paul Jennewein

continued quietly to make sculptures in porcelain, mostly small figures, busts, and heads. From 1974 to 1977, he designed figures for Cybis Porcelain of Trenton, NJ, the oldest existing art porcelain studio in America and one of the foremost creators of fine art porcelain. His designs for Cybis, which used both white and multi-colored glazes, encompassed themes of motherhood, opera, literature, religion, and American history.

— Robin Salmon
 VP of Art and Historical Collections/Curator of Sculpture
 Patron member of the National Sculpture Society

Opposite page, top: Marietta by C. Paul Jennewein, glazed porcelain (1935), collection of Brookgreen Gardens, Pawleys Island, SC; *bottom:* Nativity, original design by C. Paul Jennewein for Cybis Porcelain (1975), Brookgreen Gardens Archives, Pawleys Island, SC. *On this page:* Baby Bust (Mimi), original design by C. Paul Jennewein for Cybis Porcelain (1971), Brookgreen Gardens Archives, Pawleys Island, SC.



Alina Szapocznikow

A survivor of the Holocaust, Polish sculptor Alina Szapocznikow transformed the horrors of her adolescence into a deeply personal and insightful artistic practice. Both of her parents were medical doctors, and Alina herself worked as a nurse as a teenager imprisoned in the Jewish ghettos of Pabianice and Łód. Her formative early experiences of medicine as a profession and “healing art,” however, were overshadowed by the cruelty and suffering perpetrated under the Nazis. Her father died of tuberculosis in Łód, and Alina and her mother were sent to the concentration camps of Auschwitz, Bergen-Belsen, and Theresienstadt.

After the war, Szapocznikow studied sculpture in Prague and in Paris at the *École nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts*. She took up the body as the most visible and relatable of subjects, and as a canvas for life’s memories and scars. In her large-scale sculptures and smaller objects, she got as close to the body as one can without losing a sense of humor, often taking molds of her own form to comment amusingly on popular culture and gender. In the process, she pioneered innovative art techniques and materials for sculpture, such as polyurethane and polyester resin.

Her use of isolated anatomical details—lips, limbs, abdomen—can suggest the work of surrealists like Magritte and Dalí. But Szapocznikow’s approach was incisive, not dreamy. Her corporeal quotations are intensely focused by a vivid sense of memory, not unconscious wanderings. In her forties, as her own body succumbed to the ravages of tuberculosis and cancer, her work began to refer to breasts and tumors, echoing this physical consumption part by part.

Well-known in her native Poland, Szapocznikow first gained international attention with a solo exhibition in the Polish Pavilion at the 1962 Venice Biennale. In 2012, nearly 40 years after her death, the Museum of Modern Art mounted a full-scale survey of her sculptures, drawings, and related works. As *Paris Review* writer Yevgeniya Traps summed up succinctly, “[Alina Szapocznikow] took history and disease and made them art.”

Top left photo: © 2013 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris; The Alina Szapocznikow Archive/Piotr Stanislawski/National Museum in Kraków. Photo courtesy the Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw. © The Estate of Alina Szapocznikow/Piotr Stanislawski. Bottom left photo: Courtesy of Cory Allen Contemporary Art. Right photo: Courtesy of the artist.

Daniel Edwards

By all accounts, Daniel Edwards has achieved the pinnacle of a fine-art career. His sculptures of luminaries like Fidel Castro, Britney Spears, Prince Harry, Angelina Jolie, and Hillary Clinton put celebrity culture, literally, on a pedestal. Created life-size in clay, cast resin, and other materials, Edwards's sculptures are announced with lavish press releases and given high-profile unveilings in topically related locales.

These artworks embody in figurative form what their celebrity subjects represent culturally. Some works serve as cautionary tales, like the aptly titled *Paris Hilton Autopsy*. There's also a work inspired by the severed head of baseball legend Ted Williams. Yet, while faithfully realistic, these sculptures are not portraits. Rather, they depict collective attitudes and dreams. Several works inspired by Oprah Winfrey,

Daniel Edwards ~ Continued on page 14



Opposite page, top: Madonna of Kruzlowa [Motherhood] by Alina Szapocznikow (1969), colored polyester resin, photographs, gauze, 16-9/16 inches high. Société de l'Apostolat Catholique (Pères Pallotins).

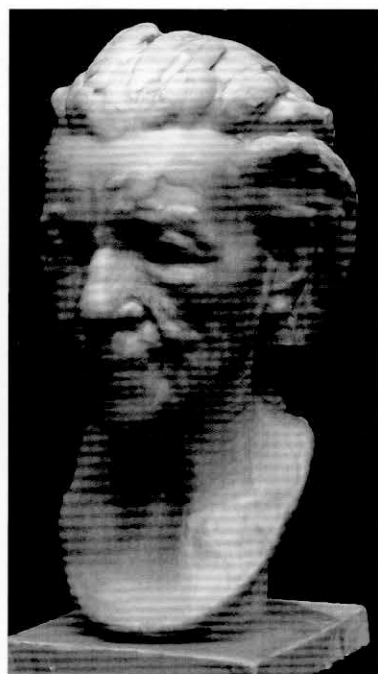
Opposite page, bottom: Oprah Burial Mask by Daniel Edwards (2008), polyester resin, over life-size.

On this page: Madonna with Baby and saints by Bruno Lucchesi (1952), ceramic, 18 inches high. Created for Patarino Ceramic Factory in Florence, Italy, who mass-produced them for years.

for example, suggest the godlike dimensions of a Venus of Willendorf or an Egyptian pharaoh.

On Edwards's gallery website, one may purchase images of the golden *Oprah Burial Mask* emblazoned on T-shirts, coffee mugs, and trucker hats. That, alone, gives a hint of where the artist is coming from. Raised in the small town of La Porte, Indiana, Edwards grew up as far from celebrity culture as possible. However, even La Porte has had its brushes with fame—the sculptor Isamu Noguchi (né Gilmour) graduated from high school there. And the county historical society features a display on Belle “Lady Bluebeard” Gunness, the homegrown celebrity serial killer; it was one of Edwards's favorite childhood destinations.

These and other tales are recounted in *The Several Severed Heads of Daniel Edwards*. In this short film, the artist describes his discovery of classic horror comic books in a local shop, a profound early inspiration that would lead to Edwards's first sculpting job making molds at Death Studios, a Halloween mask manufacturer. “That's a kind of taboo thing to say, because pop culture is low culture,” Edwards confesses. “It would be a lot more prestigious to say that I've always been influenced by Rodin.”



On this page, bottom (left to right): BB King by Daniel Edwards from life sessions (2000 -2003, wax over plaster cast from 2012), 15 inches high; Louise Bourgeois by Daniel Edwards from life sessions (1998-2003, wax over plaster cast 2003), 15 inches high.



Bruno Lucchesi

National Sculpture Society member Bruno Lucchesi has had a distinguished career that perfectly marries the commercial and fine art spheres. In the early 1950s, while a student at the Art Institute of Lucca in Italy, Lucchesi was approached by the Pattarino Ceramics Company to create clay-modeled sculptures for commercial market products. He moved to Florence and worked at Pattarino for five years, making elaborate ceramics with subjects ranging from the whimsical to the religious—masks, pirates, Roman gods, the Holy Family, and all the saints of the calendar. During that busy time, he moonlighted at the University of Florence, teaching courses on sculptural ornament for architecture, while also completing a number of life-size public sculpture commissions for the City of Florence.

On moving to the United States in 1958, Lucchesi took a job with Design Techniques in Pennsylvania, decorating vases and architectural elements. Later, he worked with the Grenaker Company, modeling mannequins at its manufacturing facility in the Bronx. His stateside fine art career was quickly established with his first solo exhibition in 1961 at Forum Gallery in New York. Lucchesi was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1962. During his long and lauded career, he has taught at numerous institutions, published four books on sculpture, and currently teaches at the National Academy of Design in New York.

On this page, top (left to right): Madonna by Bruno Lucchesi (1952), ceramic, 28 inches high; Pirate by Bruno Lucchesi (1954), ceramic, 14 inches high. Both created for Pattarino Ceramic Factory in Florence, Italy, who mass-produced them for years.

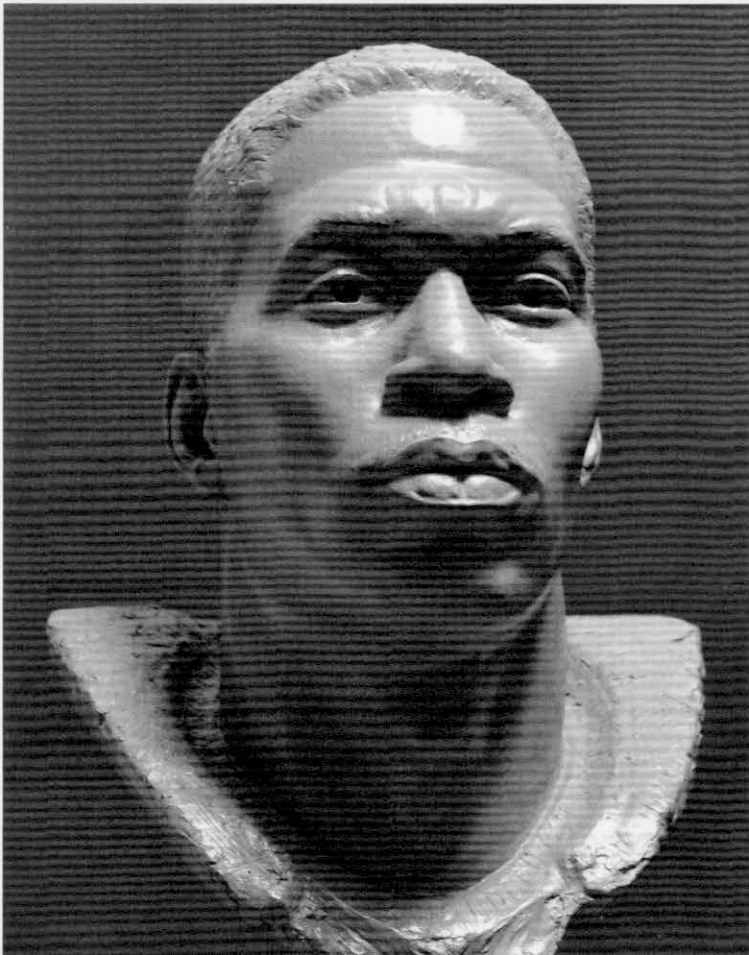
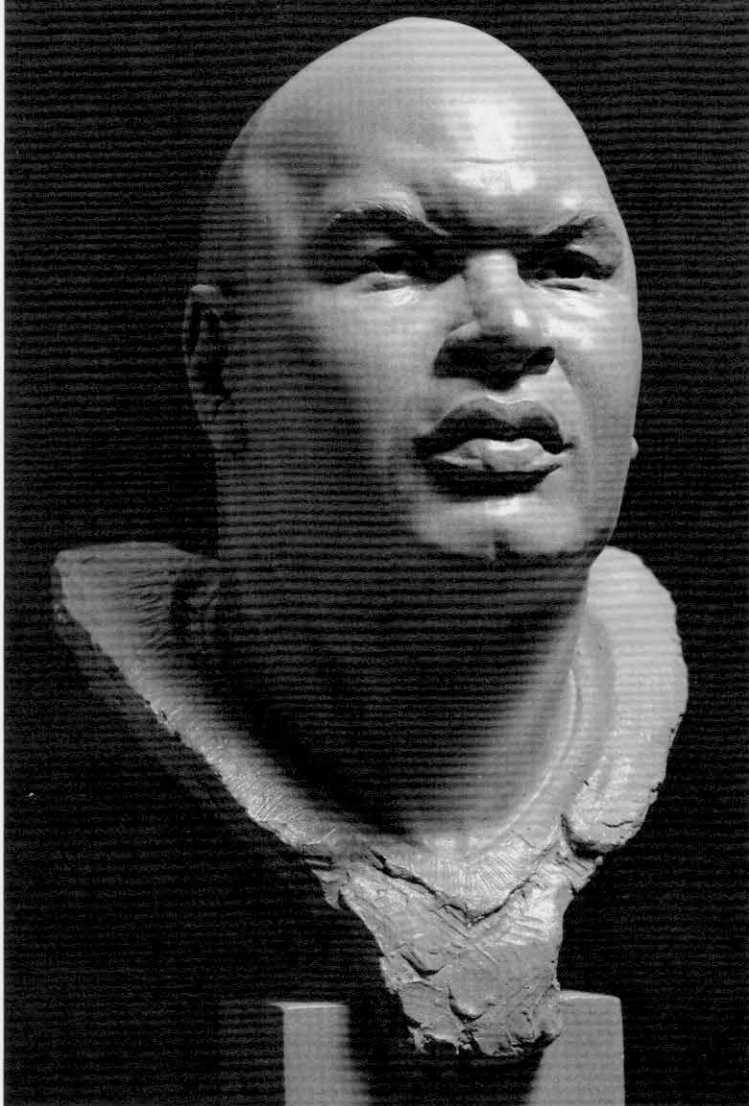



Photo: Courtesy of the artists.

Scott Myers

Scott Myers, a native of Fort Worth, Texas, has developed a truly artful intersection for his professional and creative lives. As a graduate of Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine, Dr. Myers specializes in the care and training of horses, a staple feature of rural Texas. As an artist, he translates this knowledge and sensitivity into bronze sculptures and paintings of horses, cowboys, and Western scenes.

Myers grew up attending rodeos and working on ranches in Texas and Montana, settings that sparked his love for the beauty, physiology, and power of livestock. He gained experience of this firsthand in calf-roping competitions at rodeos across the Southwest. Alongside these activities, Myers was always drawing, and he sold his first artworks—sketches of horses—while still a high school student. Next, he was creating and selling portraits of champion riders in the Professional Rodeo Cowboy's Association, and his art was featured in *Western Horseman* magazine.

Myers's interest in becoming a sculptor did not fully emerge until he traveled to Italy; in particular, to the Tuscan town of Pietrasanta, the famed source of marble for artists such as Michelangelo. Here, Myers learned to cast bronze at the local Fonderia d'Arte Massimo Del Chiaro, and he now has a work in the collection of the Museo dei Bozzetti there. A member of the National Sculpture Society, Myers has also gained attention for creating busts of inductees into the Pro Football Hall of Fame, like Rickey Jackson, former linebacker for the New Orleans Saints and San Francisco 49ers (Hall of Fame Class of 2010). But horses remain his first love, creatively and professionally. As Myers notes, "My life is neither art nor veterinary medicine. It is both." 

John Ewing is a freelance writer and editor based in New York City. He has written for *Modern Painters*, *ArtNexus*, and *Tema Celeste*, among other publications.

On this page: Rickey Jackson and Bob Hayes by Scott Myers, bronze, over life-size; New Orleans Saints and San Francisco 49ers, Pro Football Hall of Fame Class of 2010 Canton, Ohio.