

A WORKING MARBLE SCULPTURE STUDIO IN VERMONT

BY FRED X BROWNSTEIN, FNSS

Photos courtesy of Fred X Brownstein

My studio is modeled on a typical Italian *laboratorio* especially equipped for marble sculpture. The main features are a dozen 50" x 43" clerestory windows, a 10' x 10' front door, and a 24-foot-high gantry crane that spans the interior workspace. Thick hickory boards cover the floor to make it easy to use a pallet jack for moving heavy stone and to protect a dropped tool from damage. The workspace is within a 30' x 30' building, and includes an adjacent storage area for plaster models and inventory of marble blocks.

I work alone, so the studio is designed to be self-sufficient. The open space allows everything to be moved

around to accommodate drawing, clay modeling, mold making, and of course marble carving. As much as possible, I draw and model clay directly from life. There is a small dressing area for the models who pose for me and the studio is well heated.

Big front doors allow me to drive a truck into the studio under the crane to bring in material and load finished sculpture for delivery. A 9' x 6' sliding door opening into the storage area makes it easy to move marble and plaster models into the workspace. Having the crane indoors permits me to work throughout the winter season in Vermont.



Front view of the studio.



Above: Truck inside the studio. Below: Interior view North side.





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Door to storage area with marble blocks.

Clay is kept in large plastic containers beneath a 16-foot-long worktable along the north wall, which I keep clear for impromptu projects. Marble carving makes a big mess of dust and chips, so I keep the workspace open and uncluttered because I am usually working on another sculpture in clay or drawing during the months it takes to complete a marble sculpture.

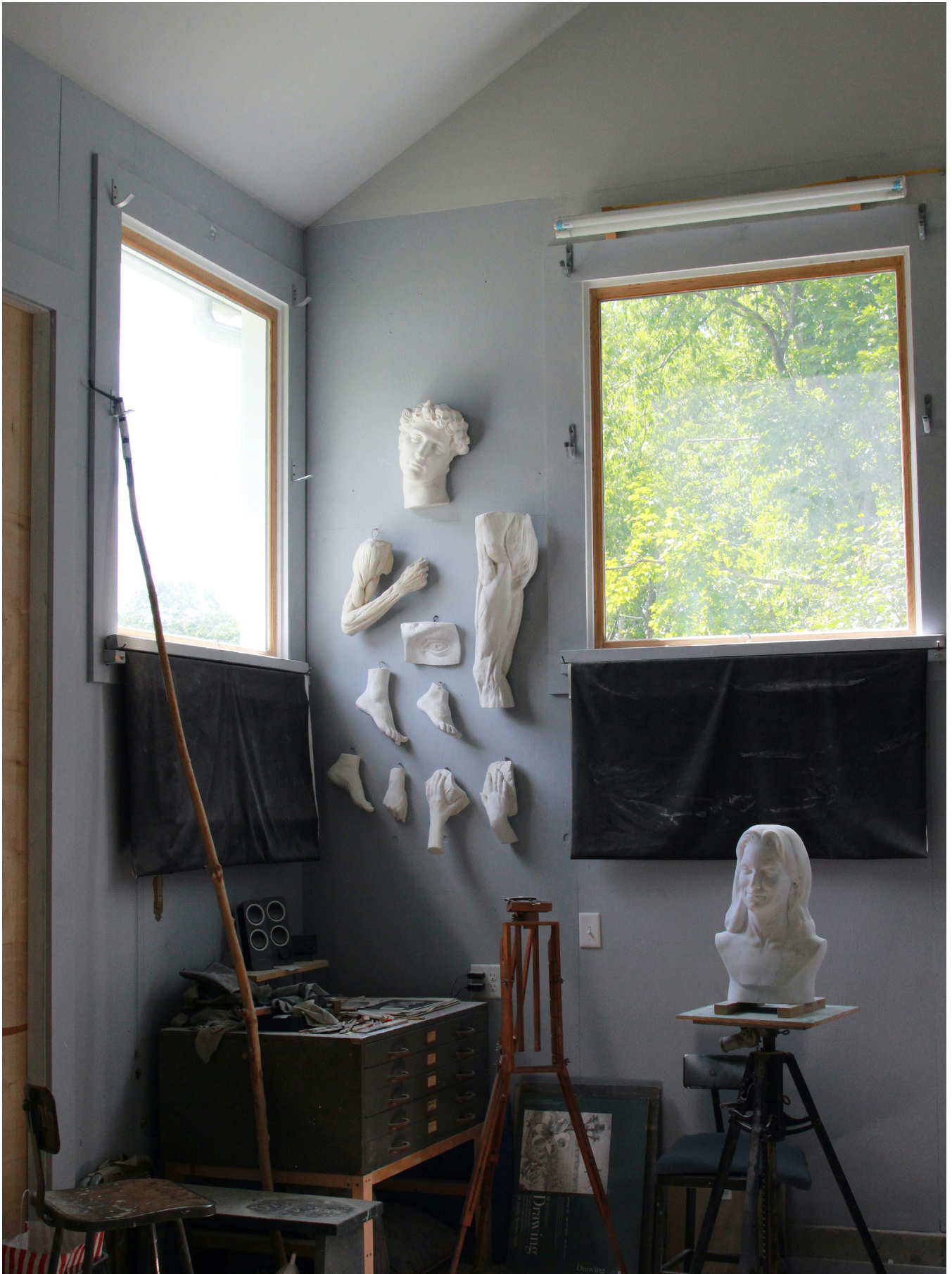
Among the most useful features are blackout shades that can be raised to cover the windows and control the light. Balanced fluorescent fixtures are installed above the windows for working when there is not enough natural light. It is best to make sculpture in varying light conditions and change the light often when working with a live model.

I should mention that this is a new studio, built in 2018. It is my eleventh since graduation from the old San Francisco Art Institute in 1970 and I don't plan to move again. Like most sculptors, I began with a more modest arrangement and I am seriously grateful to be here now.

Inspiration can occur anywhere at any time, but an idea is only as good as its execution. One's studio is the place where the actual artwork is created. Therefore, the studio acquires a certain sanctity. It is the place where the artist is up against their limits and makes a step forward. Laboring alone, the sculptor becomes one with the work. Art is born from the very individual and personal connection where ideas take actual form in clay and marble. ●



Plaster models in storage area.



Southwest corner.