Cavener Online Workshop Outline- 2026

SESSION TWO: Sculpting on the Armature

9:00 **INTRODUCTION:** Designing articulated armatures from the study – *15mins*

1. **WORKSPACE** setup: sculpting at the height and position the final piece will be viewed from
2. Structuring armature as a **CHAIR**, not a skeleton
3. Designing **MOVABLE JOINTS** where gesture is needed
4. Engineering **INDEPENDENT SECTIONS** that will separate easily for hollowing, leaving the remaining solid portions standing.
5. Designing the armature to **STICK OUT** for ease in changing gesture and removing pipe for hollowing using colored electrical tape to mask sections & for easier removal/maintenance
6. Using the right **DIAMETER** of pipe for the scale of the piece; tapering as needed
7. Always **OVERBUILD**: The extra effort is better than a collapsed piece

9:15 **DEMONSTRATION**: Tiger study (medium study), block poster, & large-scale armature – *30 mins*

- Multiple studies, rough measurements, scaling up
- Medium study with clay, trial armature
- Scaling up medium study with block poster, upgraded/refined armature
- Designing building the platform/environment
- Preparing the clay

9:45 **PROCESS TALK**: Designing articulated, moving armatures – *30 mins*

- Examples of studies transformed into large scale armatures and the resulting finished works

10:15 **DEMONSTRATION**: Roughing in and adjusting the armature – *45 mins*

- Sculpting inside the lines: Developing early gestural expression
- Starting with the spine: Using large compact “coils” of clay, techniques
- Roughing it in: Rib cage, head block, hip section
- Manipulating the armature after the initial form has been massed in

11:00 **PROCESS TALK**: Hollowing and reassembling – *60mins*

- Massing in a piece on the armature: Quick overview & example, potential issues & adjustments
- Cutting the sculpture off the armature: Using sections, according to design, access to interior
- Hollowing: Clay science for wall strength; Thickness, clay type, scale, installation, and gesture
- Reassembly during hollowing: Seams and internal structure, using temporary armature
- Cutting for the Kiln: again
- Firing in sections: Minimize distortion, expansion/contraction, accessibility, changing gesture
- Loading the Kiln: Shrink slabs, placer slabs, void supports, & wiring holes
- Drying time