

sculpture

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Peter DeCamp Haines, Eric Sealine, Jocelyn Shu

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<https://sculpturemagazine.art/peter-decamp-haines-eric-sealine-jocelyn-shu/>



Jocelyn Shu, *Chapter 13*, 2019. Wire, cut text, and glue, 20 x 48 x 30 in. Photo: Courtesy the artist

Boston

[Boston Sculptors Gallery](#)

Boston Sculptors Gallery, the only sculpture collaborative in the country that maintains its own gallery space, is currently hosting three solo exhibitions ([on view](#) through November 5, 2023) to cap its fall season. Longtime members Peter DeCamp Haines and Eric Sealine are each showing in a large gallery of their own, while Jocelyn Shu has been chosen for a show in the experimental LaunchPad Gallery. All three sculptors blend consummate craftsmanship with imaginative inspiration. Though their works are visually very distinct, they also share a preference for open-ended questioning rather than definition.

Haines's "Archaic Echoes" is striking for its simultaneously minimalist and maximalist quality. All of these bronze works—from modestly sized objects installed on wall shelves to larger pieces on pedestals—are meticulously crafted and patinated by Haines, their varying shades of dark green, red-brown, and blue-green providing a unifying thread. *Neptune's Pet*, a unique casting, stands graceful and tall, with a forked tail. *Moon Over Mount Analogue* and *Window* demonstrate Haines's signature flow of form created by curved planes and delicate lines of definition, with open spaces that invite the eye.

The tour de force and core of the show is the 22-foot-long by six-foot-wide *Artifact Table*, which stretches nearly the length of the gallery. What at first seems overwhelming becomes less so, since the more than 1,000 displayed pieces are of an intimate scale, offering a glimpse into 45 years of personal art practice by a sculptor perhaps best known for public art. The artifacts, which range in size from one to 12 inches, are arranged along a central path that divides the table in half. *Portal*, a graceful red bronze like an entryway into a Japanese temple garden, defines the visual entrance. Each of the myriad forms arranged to either side of the central "allée" is highly individuated and delicately modeled by hand, enticing viewers to touch and hold—an invitation that Haines in fact extends.



Peter DeCamp Haines, *Artifact Table*, 2023. Bronze, wood, and canvas, 2.5 x 22 x 6 ft. Photo: B. Amore

Mandala, a circular group, defines the open center of the arrangement. Several similar compositions also stand out among the linearity. One, to the left of the entrance, inevitably brings up a Stonehenge reference, appearing monumental despite its diminutive size. Haines's artifacts are set on a surface of tautly stretched heavy canvas, which functions like white space on a page. Influenced by an interest in psychology and anthropology, he writes, "Metaphorically, I think of the collection as an 'Archaeology of the Subconscious'—universal archetypes that recall the archaic materiality of our ancestors." With *Artifact Table*, we enter a rich, associative realm, drawn in even deeper by the invitation to hold the pieces physically in hand and imagine.

Moving from an open, well-lit gallery into a dimmer, spotlit space emphasizes the transition to Sealine's "Still, Life," where each intricately detailed work (Sealine's "day job" is architectural model-making) opens the door to an entire world inspired by a life-changing experience. Sealine explains, "After a serious motorcycle crash, I'm very glad to be alive, and it shows in the work. Each piece is like a physical haiku—a concise poetic offering." *Thunderstorm in a Box*, with etched clouds, a modeled landscape, and a flowing waterfall, conjures being caught outside on a summer day when the weather suddenly turns. In the Plexiglas-framed *Skater*, the gold wire figure seems to fly over the water, surrounded by cliff-like formations. A frequent element in Sealine's work, water appears again in *Somebody's Home*, a poignant piece in which a flood rises midway up the windows—climate change brought into sharp focus. A light in an upstairs window offers a sign of hope.

Sealine's wry sense of humor comes to the fore in *Desk Piece*. A closely observed diorama of the artist's studio, it is like a personal diary, complete with sketches of sculptures featured in the show spilling off the desk, cans of brushes, pencils, models, a magnifying glass, and a ship's model—all carefully fit into an engaging compact sculpture. *Monsieur Hokusai*, a freestanding lyrical metaphor for the master's *Great Wave*, is composed entirely of mass-produced French Curves. Engaging with Sealine's works in this darkened space transforms ordinary reality. We embark on an amazing adventure, practically entering the sculptor's mind as he concocts his extraordinary "worlds within a world."



Eric Sealine, *Thunderstorm in a Box*, 2023. Basswood, plywood, Plexiglas, resin, and LED light, 17 x 13 x 5 in. Photo: Courtesy the artist

Shu's exhibition, "As I Came Home," focuses on works from her decade-long "81 Chapters" series, in which she dismantles and rearranges hand-cut text from translations of the *, sometimes adding personal and natural elements to create intricate, labor-intensive sculptures. In two *pieces, for instance, delicate laceworks of cut letters hang suspended in a corner and drape over a stone, conjuring a vivid sense of the flow of language as it spills out into the world. *, a filigree-like work made of an open tangle of colored wires with single letters suspended between, gives the sense of deconstructed language in flight. The wall-hung *incorporates thread, wire, dried leaves, and flowers in resin, along with cut text. Nature and mind are sensitively and powerfully intertwined. *, a combination of lichen, cut text, and wire, offers a gentle reminder of our interconnectedness.*****

Name, a foldout accordion book, which stretches to 80 inches, consists of Shu's name written in various styles of Chinese calligraphy, reflecting her experience of growing up between cultures in a multi-lingual family. As with Shu's other works, *Name* raises more questions than it answers, which seems to reflect her background as a researcher in cognitive and affective science. Her sculptures are like poetry in form.
