

# *SeaChange*

*notes on a 2016 exhibition of sculpture*



*Sally S. Fine*

# SeaChange

notes on an exhibition of sculpture by **Sally S. Fine**

This 2016 exhibition of sculpture focuses attention on sea life that is affected by climate change, pollution and ocean acidification. Considerable strides have been made in preserving land-based life, but alarm bells about aquatic life are just beginning to be heard. Our planet is two thirds water and efforts are needed to conserve the unseen life of the underwater world. Growing awareness of this complex ecosystem will hopefully spur restorative action before it is too late. The two sculptures on these pages incorporate an aquarium—not as a safe haven free of predators—but as a coffin symbolizing their demise.



*The Last Seahorse*, 10.5"x16"x 8.25", cast glass, aquarium, stone, wood, sea fan

My inspiration comes from many sources: historical, fictional, and scientific. Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* tells a fearsome tale of man against beast. *Moby Dick* may have bested Capt. Ahab, but man has prevailed in the larger contest. Many whale species are nearing extinction. Melville's moral reckoning of good versus evil is rooted in New England Christian beliefs. Hence, the three masts rooted in this whale allude to the three crucifixions and one resurrection...the whale.



*Moby Dick*, 16.5"x20"x10.5", carved wood, aquarium, stone

# *A World of Wonder*

In contrast to Melville's *Moby Dick* of 1851, Jules Verne's *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*, published in 1870, presented a new perspective on life under the oceans. Rather than Melville's sea full of monsters, Verne's tale was set in an ocean containing wondrous creatures.



*Squid at Porthole*, 8"x22"x5", carved wood, glass, metal

Verne presented man's underwater investigation and foreshadowed the later evolution of these explorations. Verne's story included fearsome encounters with eerie life forms that were not familiar to the reader. The creatures on these two pages show a squid and an eel passing through ship portholes.



*Eel at Porthole*, 8"x17"x3", carved wood, glass, metal

Scuba diving amongst wrecks is akin to underwater archaeology. I dove with a small group to the wreck of the RMS Rhone off Salt Island in the British Virgin Islands. There is one place that our dive master took us where we all, in turn, rubbed a porthole. This brass porthole was the only location on the Rhone that was not encrusted with sealife and corals. It was the escape hatch for the only survivor of the wreck in 1867, an Italian crewman. Passing divers keep the touchstone polished with their memorial touch.

# Wrecks



Wreck of the Essex, 12"x8"x7", ship model, resin, ceramic, paint

Shipwrecks are both horrifying and fascinating. The oceans have claimed many ships and countless souls have perished. Wrecks are a testament to the human drive to explore and exploit the sea. Often, the story of a shipwreck portrays an angry sea. The ship and sea in this wreck have coalesced into one object: part ship, part sea, part fish.

A shipwreck may be the result of human folly. In particular, wars have dispatched many ships to the bottom of the sea. Some benefit of this tragedy is that a wreck becomes a reef and thus host to coral, fish, and microorganisms in symbiosis.



Wreck of the Great Republic, 18"x15"x9", ship model, resin, metal, paint

## *Ariel's Song The Tempest*

Full fathom five thy father lies  
Of his bones are coral made  
Those are pearls that were his eyes  
Nothing of him that doth fade  
But doth suffer a sea-change  
Into something rich and strange.  
- Shakespeare

## *Symbiotic Relationships*

It is not uncommon to hear of dolphins coming to the rescue of swimmers in dangerous proximity to sharks. This sculpture is of a hybrid dolphin with human arms, swim fins, and scuba tanks. I snorkeled with dolphins in Hawaii and was mesmerized by their fluid social behavior. Recently, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration issued guidelines restricting this activity. These gentle mammals need protection from the presence of humans. By saving the dolphins we may save our own species.



*Savior Dolphin*, 6"x9.5"x3", carved wood, metal, glass

## *Predators and Prey*

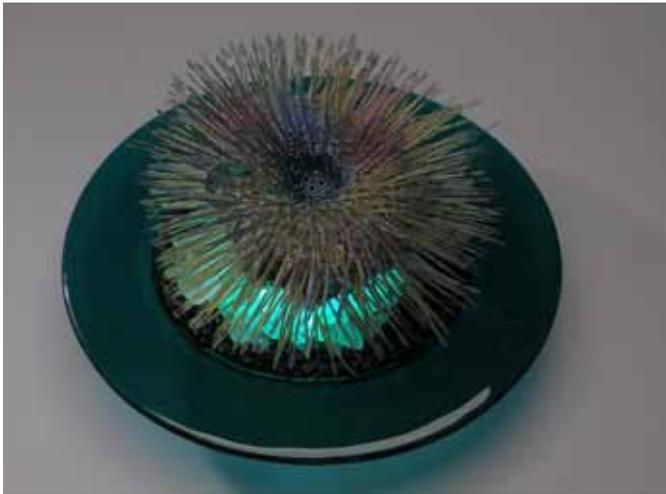
The balance between predator and prey is important in all ecosystems. This sculpture depicts one such pairing of the sea otter, whose prey are sea urchins. Sea urchins have been called the lawnmower of the sea, helping to protect coral from algae and seagrasses that are the prey of sea urchins. In the Northern Pacific where the pacific sea otter is in decline, sea urchins are now unchecked resulting in too few algae and therefore not enough nutrients for other members of the reef ecosystem.



*Otter with Urchins*, 16"x13"x5" (including stand), glass, metal

# Sea Urchins

Within the intricate ecosystem of a reef, algae compete with corals for sunlight, nutrients, and space. Species of sea urchins in southern California have become fragile, which has led to a proliferation of algae to the detriment of the coral reefs. Scientists have recently implanted genes from the hardy North Pacific urchins into developing larvae of southern California urchins in hopes of enabling them to create a thicker shell.



*Urchin on Ice,*  
5"x12"x12"  
plastic picks, metal,  
glass, stone, paint

In addition to their important role in reef ecosystems, sea urchins are beautiful creatures. Aspects of this beauty are depicted in these two sculptures that employ differing materials.



*Flat Urchin,*  
10.5"x4"x4" (including stand),  
glass, metal

# Sally S. Fine

## Education

Boston University, Boston, MA: MFA, Ceramics

Boston University, Boston, MA: Program in Artisanry, Certificate of Mastery

Ohio University, Athens, Ohio: BFA, Graphic Design

## Solo Exhibitions

2014 Boston Sculptors Gallery, Boston, MA. *Catch and Release*

2012 Boston Sculptors Gallery, Boston, MA. *Constellations*

2010 Boston Sculptors Gallery, Boston, MA. *Coordinates*

2009 Galerie Aqui Siam Ben, Vallauris, France. *Artists in Residence*

2008 Altos de Chavon, La Romana, Dominican Republic. *Artists in Residence*

2000 Boston Sculptors at Chapel Gallery, W. Newton, MA. *A Nature of Women*

## Selected Group Exhibitions

2015 DeCordova Museum, Lincoln, MA.

*The Sculptor's Eye: Prints, Drawings from the collection*

2013 Christian Science Plaza, Boston, MA Boston Sculptors, *Convergence*

2012 Heritage Museum, Sandwich, MA. *Gates*

University Gallery, UMass Lowell, *Boston Sculptors Celebrates 20th Anniv.*

2011 Museum of Art, University of New Hampshire, NH. *Boston Sculptors*

2007 Somerville Museum, Somerville, MA. *Mosaics*

2006 Mt. Ida College, Newton, MA. *Faculty Exhibition*

2005 Higgins Gallery, Cape Cod Comm. College, Barnstable, MA. *Body of Work*

2003 Fuller Museum, Brockton, MA. *Craft Transformed*

2001 DeCordova Museum & Sculpture Park, Lincoln, MA:

*Terrors and Wonders: monsters in contemporary art*

2000 Viridian Gallery, NYC. *THEN: 30 Year Anniversary*

Federal Reserve Bank Gallery, Boston, MA, *Spectrum*

## Selected Collections: Public and Private

A.I.R. Vallauris, France; Altos de Chavon, La Romana, Dominican Republic;

Joyce Cohen, Cambridge, MA; Edward S. Cooke, Jr., Curator of American

Decorative Arts, purchased by the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA as a gift;

Cutter Information Corporation, Arlington, MA; Danforth Museum, Framingham, MA;

DeCordova Museum and Dana Sculpture Park, Lincoln, MA; Federal Reserve Bank

of Boston (print collection), Boston, MA; Hamilton College, Hamilton, NY;

Dr. & Mrs. Rudolpho Llinas, Falmouth, MA, NYC; Dr. & Mrs. Michael Mendelsohn,

Brookline, MA; Barbara Norfleet, Cambridge, MA; Nancy Osgood, Norwalk, VT;

New England Biolabs, Beverly, MA; Rose Art Museum (print collection), Brandeis Univ.,

Waltham, MA; Sandoz Pharmaceutical Corp., Headache Collection, Princeton, NJ

# Food for thought

"For good reason, ocean acidification is often called "climate change's evil twin." The overload of carbon dioxide (CO2) in our oceans is literally causing a sea change, threatening fragile, finite marine life and, in turn, food security, livelihoods and local to global economies." - <http://www.noaa.gov/ocean-acidification-high-co2-world-dangerous-waters-ahead>



"Reefs are incubators that provide food and shelter to a quarter of the ocean's species, protect coastal communities against the vagaries of extreme weather, and provide billions of dollars in revenue from fishing and tourism." - The New York Times, 9/28/16

*Spawning Coral*, 5"x2.25"x2.25", cast glass  
*Coral Sphere*, 3.5"x3"x3", cast glass

## **"Marine protected areas: Smart investments in ocean health.**

Human lives depend on marine ecosystems that are healthy, resilient and productive. Marine protected areas (MPAs) are an essential tool in the recovery and protection of our ocean and the vital services it provides" - [http://ocean.panda.org/media/WWF\\_Marine\\_Protected\\_Areas\\_LR\\_SP.pdf](http://ocean.panda.org/media/WWF_Marine_Protected_Areas_LR_SP.pdf)

"Most of the ocean is unexplored— about 95 percent of this underwater realm is unseen by human eyes." - <http://oceanservice.noaa.gov/facts/exploration.html>



*Nudibranch*, 5"x9"x7", wood, metal