

Get the Message: Words and Images

I resonate with the sentiments expressed in Theodore Roethke's poem "Prayer Before Study". He laments how self-absorption renders inaccessible, openness to life changes and to others and comically describes his earnest self-involvement as,

"A fool can play at being solemn
Revolving on his spinal column."

In the poem's last lines, Roethke beseeches,

"Deliver me, O Lord, from all
Activity centripetal."

In my personal life, my tendency is to dig my heels to brace against change. Hunkering down is another form of centripetal activity. Yet I value the ability to embrace uncertainty and to be vulnerable. I seek this receptivity as one of the key emotions in my artwork.

For me, deliverance from actions centripetal is explored through somatic movement, how emotions affect the body. Key to emotional health is the ability to seek a dynamic equilibrium, to rebalance with ease in the way a skateboarder relaxes and shifts weight to stay on her board. In my sculptures, I resist a static, stable form, such as a seated figure. My inclination is to tilt it, flip it side-ways or up-side-down, allowing movement to convey feeling and expression.

Diana Greenleaf
November 2020