

# cynthia byrnes contemporary art

## Will Clift Artist Statement

My work is about the interaction of sculptural form with gravity and balance. In recent years *balance* itself has become my medium, as much as metal or wood. I see it as an exploration of competing forces — the tension between motion and stillness, between order and chaos. In my current work I draw on the tensions between these opposites to evoke simultaneous harmony and uncertainty in the viewer, to make tangible the ephemeral moment between being grounded and achieving flight, and to suggest the vulnerability of our own bodies.

The structure of my work consists of intersecting parts that stand or suspend together in exact equilibrium, balanced on a small foot or point of suspension. No part is extraneous or redundant, no means of attachment is needed. The forms are precarious, but also able to withstand the forces around them, at times seemingly against all odds.

Much of my work for the last decade has involved learning to tap into our bodies' innate understanding of gravity and balance, their inherent ability to find equilibrium in the midst of motion. Richard Serra's twisting steel sculptures connect with this same understanding by dwarfing us with their imposing mass, while Alexander Calder's mobiles use lightness and whimsy towards a similar end. My work is influenced by both, and exists at their intersection, using the interplay between weight and weightlessness to create forms with a sense of movement and life — gesture within a static form.

The shapes in my sculptures come from the world around me. I begin each by sketching on paper, gradually refining it. The drawn quality persists in the finished piece, a sense of its two-dimensional roots. By the time that I am ready to fabricate the final work, the form's original inspiration has become irrelevant to me, and may or may not be recognizable. The balance within each work comes entirely from intuition as I draw the form, as opposed to trial-and-error or calculations.

I am currently focused on expanding my exploration of form, gravity and balance in two ways. First, I am looking to high-tech industries such as aerospace for materials to allow me to create more gestural forms, at monumental scales, with higher strength and resilience. Carbon fiber, high-density heat-formable polyurethane, and thermal-sprayed liquid metal are examples of materials that I have adopted in the past months. Secondly, I am exploring the integration of time into my work by blurring the boundaries between the media of sculpture, music and dance. Sculptural form, musical tune and harmony, and dance choreography have much in common, and I aim to explore these relationships to deepen the vocabulary with which my work connects with people.