

**bca:** *In your working career as an artist, you have been dealing with the concept of the disintegration of manmade structures by the forces of nature over time and space. However, in your most recent works, The Tornado Series, you juxtapose the large cyclonic form with small boats and houses, which depicts the force of nature in an immediately destructive way. How do you compare the Tornado series with the other series in your body of work?*

**Ian:** I see the Tornado series of sculptures as a continuation of earlier work. The imagery may have a different look, and there is a new dynamic and active force which enters the work in the form of Air as a sculpture solid, but the work continues with the theme of the classical elements Earth and Water, which are part of the earlier work.

One difference in the Tornado series is the sense of an active confrontation between nature and the human presence and the possibility of an existential moment. The Tornado sculptures raise the question of destiny in the form of a time coincidence where there is a coming together of past, present and future. The sculptures consider the importance of time, location, being and event.

**bca:** *As part of the exhibit, preparatory drawings are included. Do you see your drawings as fine art in and of themselves, or are they just part of the process of working out your ideas? As a drawing instructor, what advice would you give students in preparing their own drawings for preparatory studies?*

**Ian:** The activity of drawing is an excellent visualization process whereby the artist can develop ideas in rapid succession. It is also a medium where the artist can quickly clarify ideas; integrate prior learning with new learning and play with proportion, scale and context as the drawing progression continues to unfold. For me being engaged in drawing is very clearly tied to the notion of it being a process and a vehicle for visual thinking and creating new imagery. In the making of the drawings, the artist is responding, interacting and making changes within the graphic event which is taking place on paper. In the end, drawings are process as well as product. In the process of drawing, I am also keenly aware of the aesthetics that are part of the drawing, and the technical structures which support the drawing.

As for advice to students with regard to doing preparatory studies for works in other mediums, there are clear advantages in being able to work up a multitude of images very quickly as thumb-nail sketches. The artist can then discard the mediocre ideas and focus on resolving the better ideas before proceeding to the finished work, possibly in another medium.

**bca:** *As a sculptor, you have worked mostly in bronze. Is there a particular reason why this remains your primary medium? What method do you prefer and why? Do you have a favourite patina and if so, why?*

**Ian:** The Visual Art Program at RDC has developed a strong reputation for the strength of its bronze-casting foundry. Bronze has always held a strong interest for me, and I explored the medium as a young BFA student. The 'lost wax' casting process and the 'ceramic shell casting process' in particular has been and remains an ongoing area of technical studio research.

In the end, bronze casting is just another sculpture medium. I have in the past made many sculptures that involved other materials including, fiberglass, plastics and machine metals. The decision to use bronze is a question of choice and how ideas marry to a medium and convey visual expression with a strong visual impact. In the case of the Tornado series, the balancing of large sculptural masses would be difficult in any other medium.

The patination of cast bronze sculpture always introduces some difficult colour choices, but is fundamentally about the relationship between colour and sculptural form. One of my favourite patinas is ferric nitrate, as it produces some beautiful variations of light brown colours, which are transparent. It can also be combined with cupric nitrate to produce a whole range of moss-greens and green-brown colour variations.

**bca:** *Were you always interested in the visual arts? Any mentors we should know about? Are there any major influences in your work or in your study of art that have made a significant impact on your work?*

**Ian:** One mentor who had an impact on me as a young artist was Nicolas Roukes, who himself is a great art-educator and passionate about the notion that artists should develop strong technical expertise in the handling of art materials and art processes. He has written a number of timeless books on art processes, synetics and creativity.

I have a strong interest in land forms and geomorphology, partly due to the fact that my father was a geologist. I also have a strong interest in engineering and technology. These interests are evident in some of the works.

**bca:** *Consider me as a person walking in off the street with not much knowledge of art – what would you want me to take away from looking at your exhibit?*

**Ian:** As an artist, I'm interested in the sharing of ideas, experience and personal view points. Hopefully, the viewer will come away with some understanding of personal intentions as well as recognizing relationships which have given shape to my work.

Hopefully, the drawings, as a development process for making art as well as drawings as individual finished works, will have value for the viewer.