

Iron: Is it Holding You Back? or Is the Medium the Message?

PANELISTS:

Heater Pesanti - Curator at The Albright-Knox Gallery, Buffalo, NY; M.A., New York University; M.S., University of Oxford; B.A., University of Pennsylvania

Gerald Mead - Collector, Independent Curator, Writer, Educator, Buffalo, NY; M.F.A., State University of New York at Buffalo; B.A., B.S., State University of New York College at Buffalo

Virginia Steel - Curator of Exhibitions at Grounds for Sculpture, Hamilton, NJ; M.A., University of Massachusetts; B.A., University of Hartford

MODERATOR:

Michael Dominick - 20 year cast iron artist, New York City; M.F.A., Hunter College of the City University of New York, B.F.A., State University of New York College at Buffalo

An inquiry into why cast iron is used as an art medium and the mania that surrounds it. An important thread in this discussion will consider the possibility that this choice may be hindering your artistic career, and if so, how can this be rectified.

Many of us are drawn to cast iron as a medium not only for its aesthetics, but also for the process that is both highly demanding and richly rewarding. The imagery of furnace afire certainly garnishes attention, but at what level? Do galleries, curators and critics take any interest in your desire to work with the elemental core of the planet Earth, the material that made America the industrial giant it was or the sweat and blood you exude when running a cupola furnace? One cannot ignore the fact that we are engaging in a process that is centuries old at a time when new technologies are the norm. So we need to ask ourselves, what's more important, the medium or the message? Or has our obsession with the medium become the message.

On social networking websites there are postings with images of fire and sparks, hot metal being poured and statistics as to how much iron passed through the tap hole, but rarely are there images of the art that was made. Performance, generally considered a fresh addition to the genre, in reality may be serving to lessen or even eliminate the desire to make interesting art objects. How many more things can we set on fire with molten iron anyhow?

This panel aims to uncover the real reasons, good or bad, that we use to justify our medium of choice.