

ABSTRACT

Mounting Isamu Noguchi's One Ton Sculpture, *The Seeker Sought*

Presenter:

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Mountmakers must make displays that are at once aesthetically pleasing and safe for the art. If at all possible we attempt to make our mounts invisible, or at least unobtrusive.

In previous talks I've described ways that many mount makers use to make their mounts "invisible" with techniques such as end painting, and even stage magic like trickery. While this in itself may seem somewhat controversial for many reasons, the problems with these techniques becomes amplified when exhibiting modern and contemporary art; times this problem by the factors of extreme weight and precariousness and we have ourselves a cluster of conundrums.

Our recent exhibition of work by Isamu Noguchi "Changing and Unchanging Things" proved both exciting and challenging. Noguchi integrated his sculpture with the stands that they sat on, very similar to his mentor Constantin Brancusi. *The Seeker Sought* was one such case. The sculpture itself was a 1 ton basalt stone which sat on a pine stand hewn from the remnants of a raised temple. There were no mounts, pins or brackets associated with the more than 50 year old sculpture. The challenge was to seismically retrofit the display while maintaining the visual integrity of this masterful work.

BIO



Trained as a sculptor, painter and lab technician, Vincent Avalos graduated from the Art Institute of Boston in 1984 with awards in excellence in sculpture. Vincent worked several years in the construction trades doing carpentry and masonry. In 1986 he worked for sculptor John Okulick as a technical assistant. In 1987 Vincent was hired by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art as a preparator. Vincent soon advanced to senior preparator, packer/courier and mountmaker, working on several traveling exhibitions and many permanent collection projects.

After the Loma Prieta earthquake, in 1990 Vincent was hired by the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco as museum mountmaker to facilitate the implementation of a comprehensive earthquake mitigation program. In 1992 Vincent was a member of the seismic advisory committee, which was the museum staff oversight group of the seismic upgrading study for the future sight of the Asian Art Museum. The study was conducted by the engineering firm of Rutherford & Chekene.

In the 1990s Vincent worked on the mounting and installation of the Chinese and southeast Asian galleries as well as all major temporary exhibitions including "The Golden Age of Chinese Archeology" and "Xian Warriors". From 2001 to 2003 he trained and led a team of mountmakers to remount and install the entire collection for the move to the new building in the Civic Center.

Since the opening of the new museum at the Civic Center, Vincent has worked on major temporary exhibitions such as "The Lost Cities of Siam," "Courtly Arts of China's Ming Dynasty," "Hidden Treasures of Afghanistan," "China's Terracotta warriors" and more recently "Roads of Arabia" where we mounted several colossal sculptures. Vincent has traveled to China, Japan and Thailand as well as to many cities in the U.S. to courier, mount art, and preplan mountmaking for the Museum's major exhibitions.

Vincent has just completed the process of redoing all the galleries of the Asian Art Museum with a team of preparators and mountmakers. This included seismic upgrades of many of the displays.

Vincent has also exhibited locally as a sculptor, painter, installation artist and videographer.