



John Paul Jones, *Self-Portrait*, 1950, etching, 19" x 12.5"

## SCULPTURE: POETRY IN DIMENSIONALITY

### JOHN PAUL JONES AND GERARD BASIL STRIPLING

For John Paul Jones (1924-1999), the abstract sculpture he created in his later years was a distillation of his work as a printmaker, painter and sculptor. For Gerard Basil Stripling, who currently creates public and private commissions and personal forms, sculpture is a social commentary, a conversation. Both men value integrity, which is evident in the purity of their work. Jones's work is currently on exhibit at the Laguna Art Museum, while Stripling's art is being shown at the JoAnne Artman Gallery.

#### JOHN PAUL JONES

Reviewing his immense and important artistic production, it is clear that Jones's art is treasured, with works in over 50 public art collections and museums. The current exhibition at the Laguna Art Museum reveals Jones's superior artistic legacy of timeless beauty, superior skill and profound thought.

Originally known for his masterful printmaking (he started the print departments at UCLA and then at UCI), Jones was also a fine painter and sculptor. Born

BY ROBERTA CARASSO

and trained in Iowa, Jones began with a geometric/abstract focus. Soon his art became figurative, revealing a European aesthetic and a romantic sensibility. But key to understanding the artist is knowing that he was never driven by art trends. Rather, he carved out his own path and gave his students – who are legion and adored him – the best that a master teacher could endow.

In 1978, Jones made a radical change, from figurative work to geometry and abstraction, particularly in sculpture. This transformation meant that he had to invent new processes, reject much of the familiar, pursue new avenues of artistic thought, and open himself up to discover unexplored aspects of himself. It was an existential decision to find out who he was and what he was capable of creating and, in the end, to excavate an art he had within himself that had not emerged. When moving from Laguna Beach to Oregon and building his new home, Jones sculpted with materials on hand, and because Oregon is known for its lush greenery, many sculptures are meant to be outdoors. Into these original sculptures Jones poured his sense of symmetry, rhythm, geometry, and an exquisite sense of poetry in dimensionality.

#### GERARD BASIL STRIPLING

Entitled *Preservation*, Gerard Basil Stripling's exhibit on display at the JoAnn Artman Gallery consists of sculptures that recall objects from Stripling's youth, mixed media works based on the theme of freedom and fighting for it. The metaphor of wrapping forms represents our most precious ideals, beliefs and opportunities, which, according to the artist, we must preserve.

*Inception* is a one-of-a-kind bronze tricycle, wrapped in canvas and cast in bronze. It is wrapped like an artifact to protect it from any disfigurement, enabling future generations to see evidence of a childhood that once was. Stripling explains that the sculpted toy "represents the importance for us as adults to fight for the freedoms and experiences that we enjoyed in our childhood." Stripling, who sees the importance of living his principles, believes that "if we don't leave this country in a better state for our children, all we will have to show them are memories." The symbolic tricycle becomes a memory of independence, never to bring joy to some delighted child. Stripling is on the Board of Directors at Laguna College of Art and Design and has created many important sculptural works prominently displayed in Orange County.



Gerard Basil Stripling, *Repose*, 2009, bronze, 204" x 264" x 20"

## GET SCULPTED

■ **JOHN PAUL JONES** :: Through January 23 at Laguna Art Museum, 307 Cliff Dr., Laguna Beach  
949.494.8971 :: [lagunaartmuseum.org](http://lagunaartmuseum.org)

■ **GERARD BASIL STRIPLING** :: On display throughout January at JoAnne Artman Gallery, 326 N. Coast Hwy., Laguna Beach  
949.510.5481 :: [joanneartmangallery.com](http://joanneartmangallery.com)