In spring of 2011 I received a Faculty Development Grant. My request for funds for this grant application was to visit the Rodin Museum in Paris and Meudon, France. These two locations contain Rodin's original plaster sculptures, sketches, studies, maquette’s and archives. Rodin’s inspiration for my newer body of work is conceptual and technical. This grant allowed me to view first hand Rodin’s extensive and vast knowledge of plaster and the conceptual underpinnings of his bold approach that reveal the inner psychology of the human figure. The grant request was for a total of four viewing days (not including travel days) two days for each museum.

Plaster was the medium for a new body of work in a solo exhibition at the Rosamund Felsen Gallery in Santa Monica in February 2011. That exhibition examined abstract form with oblique references to the human figure. In the beginning the technical challenges of displacing mass that extends, wraps, and intersects in very dynamic ways was based mostly on intuition. Some solutions worked better than others. Increasingly this new material required me to develop a new and different type of skill sets to successfully construct dynamic internal structure to support the mass and density of plaster. To view Rodin’s work in person has extended and enhanced my initial understanding and knowledge of the structural requirements for dynamic and expressive displacements of mass. My practice and research can be shared with students on a daily basis. Stressing the importance of understanding the particular qualities that each material possesses. This fundamental thought will allow students to let materials serve their personal vision and be more secure in their inventive and creative approaches to form building.

Another personal discovery from my research was my lack of understanding of how Rodin was constantly changing and reworking his sculptures.

His method of tearing apart and attaching forms from other projects onto new works in progress was for me a personal revelation. The Museums displayed many variations of a single work. The process towards his final outcome is amazingly revealed. This ability to rework, and visually resolve ideas within art and design is a cornerstone in our Form and Space curriculum. We have integrated the concept of a Pre Crit into all facets of our curriculum in Form and Space.
students to Rodin’s working methodologies will succinctly reinforce these curricular goals.
Rodin, Plaster Portrait of Victor Hugo. (back view)
Installation view. Rodin Museum in Meudon, France
skeletal structure supporting plaster version of sculpture.
Foreground. Various plaster versions of Monument to Balzac.
Rodin Museum in Meudon, France.

Various plaster works at the Rodin Museum in Meudon, France