

Sculpture Courses in Southern Burgundy 1

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1 The Location

When I arrived there in 1993, 'Sizain' was a small homestead at the base of Mont St. Cyr, amidst 5 ha of woodland and meadows. The house was built with granite quarry stone in the Haut-Charollais style and over the past 150 years underwent several extensions and modifications.

The cultivation of the land stopped in the early 70s and the property wasn't occupied since 1955. A few neighbours recalled having seen "the hazels already growing out of the fireplace".

The property has been thoroughly refurbished to modern standards and offers a contemplative tranquillity in an overall impressive scenery. The surrounding offers a variety of walking tours, a bathing lake just 5km away and the Romanesque Burgundy at its best - in the form of the Bois St. Marie church, Cluny (30km) and La Clayette (14km), where you can do your shopping and attend various cultural events. The vineyards of the Maconais and Beaujolais can be visited on a day trip.

2 The Course

The first two days are spent with general preparation and familiarising yourself with the medium of sculpture:

- Getting to know the other participants
- Identifying individual perspectives and goals
- Outlining the projects
- Setting up the workplace
- Tools and materials
- Getting to know the area
- General information.

All necessary tools as well as one stone per participant will be provided.

Furthermore, a small reference library on the subject and a computer with internet connection and digital image editing are available.

Participants have to bring their own working clothes, especially sturdy shoes, safety goggles, gloves and breathing masks (from the building centre), as well as sketchbooks and pencils. Most of the equipment can be purchased locally.

From then on, we will approach the 'intractable' material with the concentrated energy of the chisel spike, which might seem a long process for

a beginner.

With a high level of concentration, first results can be already achieved within a week, even though - after such a short time - these may still just reflect themselves rather than showing various dimensions.

For beginners, I suggest an initial period of at least 3 weeks.

The particular intensity and slowness of stone carving demands an adaptation in one's own rhythm which can only be achieved with time.

The first week's full of new impressions and experiences and will pass in the twinkling of an eye.

In the second week, you will apply and repeat what you have learnt and may experience exhaustion and possibly the feeling of stress about not finishing on time.

Unless you are only there for a two-week course, in the third week, you will be able to combine your newly gathered knowledge into a complete experience.

At a later stage, you will be able to build upon these experiences: both in a practical way - certain operations will have become a routine - and also in a theoretic way, as the obtained differentiations may lead to new perspectives in relation to of the handling of two dimensional media and art forms.

I once ran a two-week workshop in Dijon attended by art students who were literally burning for action. The key experience for them was the forging their own tools at the beginning of the course which almost took them a whole week. During the second week, they repeated the same gestures with the hammer, only the object had changed. Their creative ambition, now stripped off the initial zest for action, had changed likewise.

For the "whole-year-round art producers" this was a remarkable experience and for some a successful one,too.

If required, the foundations of forging can also be learned during the course.

It will be up to you to decide what to bring along in terms of time, energy, ideas and - last bit not least - money.

It is possible and reasonable to take a one-week taster course if you do not expect 'superb' results.

You can extend your course duration when already on location, provided that there are still places available. The fees will be the same as when you book in advance.

Bookings will be accepted between 15th of may and 15th of october, for courses starting at any weekend.

Once an [accommodation](#) has been organised and all advance payments have been received, the course will take place. There will be a maximum of 5 to 7 participants at the course location at a time.

[> further informations](#)