

Open resource

For artists, educators, undergraduates and postgraduates to 'behave stupidly with reason'.

A collection of prompts designed to inspire different ways of working in response to **Artist Boss**.

Behave stupidly with reason

Deliberately open, this resource is designed to act as a collection of prompts to inspire different ways of working and developing ideas. It is asking you to interpret instructions or actions just as studio assistants are required to do.

The title of this resource is from a session run by Anthony Caro for architects ¹ to challenge ways of thinking and making. All of the statements in this collection can be used as teaching activities or as prompts in the studio.

You are invited to dip in and out of the activities before, during and after your visit, developing and adapting them to suit your particular interests. The activities are intended to recognise and allow space for your own interests, expertise and knowledge, inviting you to explore and interpret the work in the exhibitions in diverse ways.

¹Anthony Caro: Edited lecture delivered at the Tate Gallery, March 1991, revised June 2001

'When I taught sculpture to architects, I asked them to behave stupidly with reason – to visualise what they were doing in a physical way. How seldom can the architectural student fully grasp the space of a room from a drawing? I suggested they make hollow shapes in plaster and fibreglass. They get their heads inside and turn around; the internal space naturally relates to the external configuration. As the work proceeds, walls change character, soon there is interpenetration of inside and outside.'

Anthony Caro ²

'We would improvise sculptures from studio bric-a-brac, or another time we had to split up into pairs and enact a mime that represented the feelings about a two-figure composition from a Matisse painting.'

Peter Hide ³

'Rules exist to be broken, particularly artistic ones... The beginning of the sixties we were trying to find ways to make art with clarity and economy, to establish our grammar. Now we can write fuller sentences.'

Anthony Caro ⁴

'To not believe in any artwork unless you have tried it out in real material stuff, in actual space and time. The importance of really looking and seeing it clearly to know how it works in reality...'

William Fausset ⁵

'I think, at least in the early days, I got more food from the painters because they were doing wacky things and I wondered "How would that be if we did that in sculpture. Is there an equivalent of that?"'

Anthony Caro ⁶

² ibid

³ Peter Hide abstractcritical.com/note/Anthony-caro-1924-2013

⁴ Tim Marlow, 'Anthony Caro: Man of Steel', *Cambridge Alumni Magazine*, Cambridge, Lent term, 199
www.anthonycaro.org/Interview-moS.htm .

⁵ William Fausset in *Artist Boss*, eds. Jenny Dunseath and Mark Wilsher (2016) p. 147.

⁶ Anthony Caro interview with Tim Marlow webofstories.com

'The stick project – seeing how you could make something larger than you... It brings people down to base level: the activity is the grunder and makes people relax and chill out. It allows them to understand that there is no such thing as a mistake or a single way of doing things. Mistake is such a dreadful, moralistic word. There is no such thing as a mistake in art – what we do is not about mistakes. It's a moral term that has no place.'

John Gibbons ⁷

'Generosity and sharing provide an alternative to contemporary individualism and the traditional role of the romantic artist as a solitary genius.'

Maria Lind ⁸

'At St Martin's [I set] subjects like, go out into Soho and pick up some materials that you've never seen used in sculpture before, and come back and we will make a sculpture of them. They'd raid all the junk, the rubbish that had been thrown out by restaurants and so on – straw, sacking, and all the sort of things that [could be] used in an African or Oceanic head. Or I'd say make a sculpture that is really like a scream. Or I'd say make a sculpture of Charing Cross Road. It's got to feel like it, it's got to look like the Charing Cross Road feels.'

Anthony Caro ⁹

'Simple strategies like, "Roll the dice, whatever number came up; you might cut the piece of metal or sculpture that number of times. Then with the next roll, if say a two came up, you would connect two pieces together, and so forth. A four: chop it in quarters. Make six out of four or whatever.'"

Jon Isherwood ¹⁰

"'Where's my crib?" he would ask and look for inspiration to Rubens, Duccio, Picasso, Matisse, contemporaries. Art books, snapshots and magazines lay open around the studio.'

Willard Boepple ¹¹

⁷ John Gibbons in *Artist Boss*, eds. Jenny Dunseath and Mark Wilsher (2016) p. 54-55.

⁸ Maria Lind, 'Complications: On Collaboration, Agency and Contemporary Art', in *Public: New Communities*, 39 (2009) p. 66.

⁹ Ian Barker *Anthony Caro: Quest for the New Sculpture*. London, Lund Humphries, 2004, p. 94.

¹⁰ Jon Isherwood in *Artist Boss*, eds. Jenny Dunseath and Mark Wilsher (2016) p. 74.

¹¹ Willard Boepple in *Artist Boss*, eds. Jenny Dunseath and Mark Wilsher (2016) p. 42.

'I would make a sculpture of, say, a man taking his shirt off. Your head is not very important so it seems to shrink; so the head in my sculpture would be small, like a nut.'

Anthony Caro ¹²

'As time has moved on, I have become comfortable being ever-more-distant from "making" art.'

Michael Petry ¹³

'How about making a sculpture out of feathers? Can we make it out of a balloon? Ooh, would it nice out of cushions? ...What can you do with it? Can you make it out of anything? What are the rules? Are there any rules at all?'

Anthony Caro ¹⁴

'I think that the practical skills of making, and knowing how to make things, are very important... Mind you, Tony always said, "Don't make it too well, you'll take the art out of it!"'

Patrick Cunningham ¹⁵

'Openness: always wanting to hear people's opinion of his work so he could filter out the good stuff. His interest in discovery as opposed to sustaining an ideal vision. His willingness to trust his initial gesture and let it sit for a while before making qualitative judgements.'

Shaun Cassidy ¹⁶

'Knowledge requires language, and people construct knowledge out of the language available to them in their community.'

Professor K Patricia Cross ¹⁷

¹² Ian Barker *Anthony Caro: Quest for the New Sculpture*. London, Lund Humphries, 2004, p. 69.

¹³ Michael Petry Making a show of yourself. in *Artist Boss* Bath, Wunderkammer Press, 2016.

¹⁴ Ian Barker *Anthony Caro: Quest for the New Sculpture*. London, Lund Humphries, 2004, p. 94.

¹⁵ Patrick Cunningham in *Artist Boss*, eds. Jenny Dunseath and Mark Wilsher (2016) p. 169.

¹⁶ Shaun Cassidy in *Artist Boss*, eds. Jenny Dunseath and Mark Wilsher (2016) p. 87.

¹⁷ Professor K Patricia Cross Why learning communities? Why now? Excerpt in *About Campus*, 3:3, (July- August 1998) p. 4-11.

'To see the possible values in this raw stuff, that it can be incorporated into a sculpture at any point. Also the importance of having a lot of this material stuff just around you to draw upon when needed.'

William Fausset ¹⁸

'Trying to describe what it's like to be inside a human body.'

Anthony Caro ¹⁹

'I have a particular fascination with his methods of making and their relationship with drawing. For me, the placement of each piece of metal was like making a mark. By joining, extending, altering and editing these marks, he was able to create a sculpture within the space of the studio.'

Jonathan Gildersleeves ²⁰

'He taught me how to stand back and really look at sculpture. He instilled in me the appreciation of both controlled detail and carefree spontaneity. When to walk away and say "that's finished" (not always as easy as it sounds) and when to roll one's sleeves up and persevere with something that seemingly can't be resolved.'

Tim Peacock ²¹

'We are all engaged on an adventure, to push sculpture where it has never been. We are explorers, equals.'

Anthony Caro ²²

¹⁸ William Fausset in *Artist Boss*, eds. Jenny Dunseath and Mark Wilsher (2016) p. 147.

¹⁹ Tim Marlow 'Anthony Caro: Man of Steel', *Cambridge Alumni Magazine*, Lent Term 1997.

²⁰ Jonathan Gildersleeves in *Artist Boss*, eds. Jenny Dunseath and Mark Wilsher (2016) p. 141.

²¹ Tim Peacock in *Artist Boss*, eds. Jenny Dunseath and Mark Wilsher (2016) p. 127.

²² Paul Moorhouse *Anthony Caro*, London, Abrams, 2005, p. 2.