

# PEGASUS NEWS

## Tech-infused sculpture exhibit at One Arts Plaza challenges traditional beliefs about art

by [Sarah Blaskovich](#) Wednesday, September 15, 2010

DALLAS — Resting inside [One Arts Plaza](#)'s lobby is a new sculpture exhibit that utilizes all sorts of colors and textures. It's art that you want to touch. And yet, some of the artists who created these 12 masterpieces never used their hands to create them.



Sculpture by Shawn Smith; inspired by a French horn; dimensions are 24" x 11" x 11"

The exhibit is called the [SculptCAD RAPID ARTISTS Project](#), a clunky name that means that a dozen Dallas-based artists teamed up with a manufacturing firm to create 3D art on a computer.

“How can you create art without touching it physically?” said Nancy Hairston, founder of [SculptCAD](#), at the Tuesday night gallery event. “We thought it would be great to gather some artists to see what they could do with this technology.”

The innovative concept behind this project made it a good fit for [TEDxSMU](#), a local ideas-sharing conference that's in its second year. The exhibit is co-produced by TEDxSMU and SculptCAD. SculptCAD's primary function is to make toys, medical products, and other synthetic materials in their Dallas office.

### Making 3D-printed art

Many of the art in this exhibit was created by scanning an object, like a French horn, which was the inspiration behind the Shawn Smith piece pictured above. Then, designers mold, design, and fine-tune the object with computer software. The designs are printed, strand by strand, in bronze, resin, or rubber on a 3D printer. Lasers burn the edges as each strand is printed, until it slowly creates a very real 3D sculpture. (See the video below for a great explanation.)



Sculpture by Heather Gorham; resin and finished in graphite; dimensions are 15" x 17" x 9"

The art is, then, "motherless." It's made of synthetic material, and some of the artists never brought human touch to shape the final product. For artist Heather Gorham, she questioned if she could feel connected to her artwork. "When you touch a traditional piece of sculpture ... you feel its character come out, you know its strengths and weaknesses. With [this software], would it be mine? Could I connect with it?"

Gorham likened the new technology to being a first-time parent: She wasn't sure she would recognize the final product or feel anything special toward it. But when her sculpture arrived and she took it out of the box, "I recognized it," she said. "I *did* learn to love this. ... This technology is just another tool for your toolbox."



Sculpture by Brad Ford Smith; dimensions are 10" X 13" X 9"

For abstract artist Brad Ford Smith, taking his piece of artwork out of the box *wasn't* enough. It looked exactly like it was supposed to – after all, a computer created it – but he felt the need to bake the artwork and cover it in lacquer and black velvet, among other artistic steps. "I needed to handle the sculpture before knowing it was mine," he said.

The exhibit is definitely worth your time. We got to peek over the shoulders of people toying with the software on computers set up during the opening exhibit, and the concept is fascinating, if a little confusing. The exhibit at One Arts Plaza will be open through October 16, the day of the TEDxSMU conference.