

## Creative Techniques in Fiberglass Sculpture: My Journey

As a child, I loved different forms of art, including performing arts and sculpture. However, it was during my university years in Fine Art, when I met Sally Madge, an amazing artist and one of my lecturers, that my passion truly blossomed. Her in-depth knowledge of every material and technique left a lasting impression on me.

I began experimenting with materials to create large, [lightweight sculptures](#) suitable for theaters. Plaster, wire, and papier-mâché fascinated me, but fiberglass became my favorite. The idea of creating huge, light pieces for theater settings was incredibly appealing. Fiberglass is a tough material that can handle both high and low temperatures, making it popular among sculptors and theater artists.

In this project, I focused on the themes of lightness and heaviness, inspired by Milan Kundera's *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, a book that has deeply influenced me since I was young. Using fiberglass, my goal was to create a stable yet lightweight structure, experimenting with various techniques to balance strength and lightness, eliminating the need for floor securing.

I envisioned a tall, round structure standing approximately 200 cm high, designed to accommodate a small group of people in a compact, dim, and windowless space. To stabilize the round, lightweight object without visible supports and give it a natural appearance, I filled the lower third with gardening stones, providing stability and creating a space for people to enter and sit.

Visitors had a wonderful experience entering the space of this central artwork, sitting on the uneven stones, and listening to the echoes of their voices. A group of four people sat indoors and chanted various mantras for an hour. As a large-scale sculptor, I found it fascinating to see the public interact with big art installations and sculptures, as they become part of the artwork itself, which artists love to see.

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An additional component of this installation was a fiberglass piece with a more organic, circular shape, hanging on the wall across from the main structure. Transparency was ensured so that the newspaper clippings inside would be visible. Observers within the confined and dimly lit space could perceive the illumination radiating from this object. Although they couldn't read the newspaper snippets from that distance, these cutouts still evoked a sense of weight and heaviness.

The intention was to represent the simultaneous existence of lightness and heaviness in life by contrasting the outer structure with the inner weight. Adding a fiberglass fountain near the main artwork created a soothing sound, enhancing the overall sensory experience.

Creating this installation was a challenging process. Initially, using chicken wire and plaster to form a perfect circle seemed like a good idea, but they proved unsuitable for the desired size. Instead, a large plastic ball, typically used for water games, served as the mold.

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Working with resin presented its own difficulties due to its toxicity and the need for specific environmental conditions. To prevent the mold from collapsing, it was necessary to work quickly and efficiently outdoors, applying multiple layers of fiberglass to the large ball.

To speed up the process and avoid a potential collapse, I enlisted my brother's help, and we worked frantically for a few hours, laying the fiberglass and resin sheets as quickly as possible. In the end, this approach was worth the risk, but I wouldn't recommend taking such a gamble with fiberglass due to its high cost.

After the con

### **About the Author**

I am Nancy Castrogiovanni, an artist, author, and scriptwriter, with a rich foundation in both the visual and performing arts. My academic path includes a Master's in English Literature and a Bachelor's in Fine Art, where I explored the interplay of materials in sculpture and the expressive power of performance.

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