

# M

*Insulation foam, graphite, steel chain*

Wyatt Andree, 2012

M is the piece. M is mass and metal. M is the big “M” in Newton’s law of gravitation. You are the little “m” and are drawn towards M by its mass. A large, metallic shining mass held aloft by tight steel chains stretched from the burden of the slab. This is my vision. I sought to recreate it using the ideas of minimalism prevalent in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. I wanted the simplicity of the piece contribute to its gravity. I finished the body to make it look like a slab of iron ready for the crucible. In the way Richard Serra was inspired to create large metal pieces from his years working steel mills, I am inspired by my experience casting metals. I want my work to make the viewer feel small in relation to the piece in the same way I feel small near Serra’s work.



**One Ton Prop (House of Cards). Richard Serra 1969 (refabricated 1986).**

M is incomplete and leaves you curious. At first glance, M is large and powerful but really it is insubstantial. The piece unstable yet very light similar to work done by the masters of illusion, Alexi Antoniadis and Nico Stone.



**Social Climber. Antoniadis and Stone 2011.**

Antoniadis and Stone's work was introduced to me early on in my work by my mentor Andrew Mowbray when I was exploring the idea of making my piece look massive. I was skeptical I could do it well, but after seeing their work at the DeCordova Sculpture Garden, I was driven to emulate it. I want to see what happens when the mass and precariousness evaporate. Does the piece lose power with mass or is the power mainly carried by the size? The metallic sheen was meant to contribute to the illusion, but do the darks and lights contribute to the piece's energy on their own?

As I worked on the piece, I did feel that once the foam was painted black, it took on a new energy. I felt it become stronger. While I was planning my work, I believed that knowing the truth behind the piece would destroy the illusion, but now I am not so sure. The slab, though harmless and light, is still intimidating. The mass is gone and the power is diminished, but the piece is not a hollow shell or an empty threat. The human brain is a strange thing. Although we can be told something is fact, if our senses tell us otherwise doubt can form. The best way to make someone believe false information is to have them discover the false information on their own; in my piece, the viewer sees and feels the piece's gravity on their own so when they find out the truth, it is hard to shake that original feeling. In this way, the illusion can never fully be broken.