

Cronin discusses her works

By Maria Bryant
For the Collegian



Patricia Cronin speaks at "All Is Not Lost," the third and final installment in the Queer Visual Culture series, Thursday afternoon in 112 Borland. Cronin discussed her most recent projects and also her famous piece addressing gay marriage, a three-ton marble statue called A Memorial to Marriage. Tyler Sizemore/Collegian

When artist Patricia Cronin came to Penn State yesterday to give her latest presentation, "All is Not Lost," she didn't know that students were celebrating Pride Week.

"I think it's great," she said, referencing the week devoted to celebrating the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Ally community. "People need to be vocal about being gay."

Her presentation was the third and final installment of the Queer Visual Culture series.

About 30 people, mostly students, attended her lecture where she spoke about her two latest artistic works — Memorial to Marriage, a three-ton marble mortuary statue, and "Harriet Hosmer, Lost and Found," a book she created to commemorate Hosmer, one of the first successful female sculptor in America.

Her statue Memorial to Marriage came to fruition through a grant she received from Grand Arts, a Kansas City based foundation, she said. For this project, she was required to use a medium she had never used before and she traveled to Italy to choose her marble directly from the quarry, she said.

From there, she made small casts of what would be her ultimate image — a depiction of her and her now legal life partner, she said.

When Cronin was creating this piece, she said she had no idea that within 10 years, the marriage law in her home state of New York would change to legalize gay marriage.

She explained that she and her partner had all the legal paperwork they could have together as couple, but the paperwork only consisted of health care statements and their wills.

"It's not about celebrating our life together, but about our death," she said during her lecture about the sculpture.

Her piece was unveiled at Woodlawn Cemetery in the Bronx, N.Y., she said

Cronin and her life partner Deborah Kass said they were "in line the first day" gay marriage was legalized in New York. Cronin explained that she and Kass did this to add to the numbers that would be there. Cronin said the couple in front of them in line had been together for 47 years.

"Harriet Hosmer, Lost and Found" consists of watercolor paintings "to represent the luminosity of marble" of Hosmer's works and handwritten notes.

Within the book are "ghost" watercolors to represent pieces of Hosmer's work that have gone missing over time, she said.

Tiffine Malamphy (junior-psychology) came to Cronin's presentation because one of her professors told her she would find it intriguing.

"Her approach to art was very interesting," Malamphy said.

Nicholas Shaff (junior-psychology) came to the lecture with Malamphy.

Shaff said he thought the lecture was appropriate for Pride Week.

"I don't usually go to art type things, but this was a good week to have this lecture," he said.