



Robert Booth, *Presence*

August 28 – October 31, 2026



Buffalo Arts Studio

Identifying Significance

Curatorial Essay by Robert Booth and Edward Y.J. Millar

Whether intentional or by chance, symbols surround us in our daily life. Every person, place, or thing has the potential to hold some hidden meaning for us. Seeing them may stir a memory, spark an emotion, or call us to act. Every day, we feel called to that allegorical impulse: to make sense of our world by piecing together fragmented signs into one cohesive narrative.

Robert Booth's latest exhibition *Presence* highlights this relationship between allegory and human existence, encouraging reflection on how we make and mark meaning. Each varied sculptural form and two dimensional work is packed full of recurring motifs, common symbols that stretch across the entire series in different pairings and configurations. Booth presents scenes that suggest the passage of time, consequence, and memory of something that has or will happen.

Pulling from a series of work entitled *Prompts*, the work in *Presence* are fragments inviting completion. The symbols and contexts he creates are not intended to hold supreme intrinsic meaning, but function as a sort of vocabulary. As a prompt for something more. As a set of ideas inviting the viewer to piece together each unique combination. To draw on personal memory and experience and tell him the story you see.

The gallery space mirrors Booth's own studio, transporting viewers into the everyday context in which he navigates through ideas, moments, and memories. He uses familiar imagery like houses, pencils, and tally marks to encourage reflection and contemplation on lived experiences. Each depiction suggests meaning beyond their functional use and towards the experiences, emotions, and aspirations we associate with them. What memory or feeling does a house spark in your mind? How about with a stick of dynamite, nestled in the doorway? With a ladder stretching out above the chimney?

From the passage of time to making sense of unexpected circumstances, Booth invites viewers into a moment of shared remembrance and visualization. He pieces together a collaborative space where artist and viewer together engage in dialogue, exchanging memories and meanings sparked by each set of symbols. Each sculpture and two-dimensional work is a bridge between the physical world and the intangible ideas we navigate within it. In *Presence*, Booth asks viewers not just to look, but to be present with him as we try to make sense of our lived experiences.



Above: Robert Booth, *Place of Tabulated Memory*, 2025, wood, wire, paper, and mixed media

Front Page: Robert Booth *Presence* installation image

Facing Page: Robert Booth, *Marking Time in Place*, 2023 wood, steel, and mixed media



Artist Statement

I am attracted to the physical and aesthetic possibilities inherent in many materials. Never subservient to one technique, I have explored and exploited methods and mediums with an eye for discovery and expediency.

Although my sculptural intentions have changed over the years, my interest in how process shapes and informs the work has remained constant. I have never really thought of any one piece as being “about” something, but rather a “result” of experiences, observations, and information.

I have always been interested in allegory, but rather than trying to tell complete stories with a singular embedded meaning, I prefer to build fragments that invite completion. My hope is that they offer enough of the right kind of space for the viewer, you, to enter.

I consider the work in this exhibition to be visual “prompts” — cues that ask viewers to continue the story within and beyond the frame. Each piece functions as an invitation rather than a conclusion. Image and context become starting points, encouraging connections that may be shaped as much by the viewer’s insights and experience as by my own.

Some of the works here grew from lived experience, others from imagined circumstances, but all are rooted in the uncertainty of living: the unpredictable shifts between calm and disruption, presence and absence, certainty and doubt. Together they acknowledge that every moment, whether extraordinary or mundane, is eventually folded into the narrative of who we are and what is.

My process is intuitive. Images, objects, and symbols are fabricated, manipulated, and rearranged until relationships emerge that I may not have predicted at the outset. Understanding and meaning develops through the conversation between these elements, and through the stories viewers construct.

Although sculpture has always been my primary focus, I enjoy the immediacy of results inherent in my approach to drawing. The development of both imagery and content allowed for within this format provides me with a spontaneity of expressive opportunities that complements the more calculated nature of sculpture while expanding the range of my visual language.



Robert Booth, 2026

Artist Bio

Robert Booth is a Western New York sculptor and educator. He received his BFA in sculpture from the Massachusetts College of Art in 1976 and his MFA from Syracuse University in 1978. Booth has presented his work in more than 100 solo and group exhibitions over the past thirty years, including at the Burchfield Penney in 1995 and

2015. A retired Distinguished Teaching Professor at the State University of New York, Fredonia, he was in charge of the sculpture curriculum there for over 40 years. Booth has served on the Board of Directors for the Mid-America College Art Association and is a former president of the SUNY Council of Art Department Chairs.

Major support provided by: The Cameron and Jane Baird Foundation, Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo, DownRoot Fund, part of the Crossroads Community Fund, Erie County Cultural Funds, M&T Bank, National Endowment for the Arts, and through the New York State Council for the Arts with the support of Governor Kathy Hochul and the New York State Legislature. Additional exhibition support provided by Marketing Tech, TriMain Center and individual donors.



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Buffalo Arts Studio

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