HEROIC HEADS IN SCULPTURE

A Thesis Presented for the
Degree of Master of Arts

By

WARREN V. CASEY, B.SC. IN ED.

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
1947

Approved by:

[Signature]
P R E F A C E

This thesis presents through twelve photographs, the work of the sculptor during the year 1946 and 1947. As the photography was considered an integral part of the work, the photographs were made by the author. The experience represented by these nine sculptures is briefly verbalized and presented as a conclusion.
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Plate One .............................. STONE HORSE
Bedford Limestone
Height 16½ inches

Plate Two .............................. LLAMAS
Ceramic Sculpture
Height 19½ inches

Plate Three ............................. MOSES
Plaster of Paris
Height, 22 inches

Plate Four .............................. MOSES
Plasticum

Plate Five .............................. WOMAN
Plaster of Paris
Height, 22½ inches

Plate Six .............................. ATHLETE
Plaster of Paris
Height, 16 inches

Plate Seven ............................. HEAD OF ST. JOHN
Plaster of Paris
Height, 19 inches

Plate Eight ............................. HEAD OF ST. JOHN

Plate Nine .............................. DELCRES
Pressed Red Stoneware clay
Height, 20 inches

Plate Ten ............................... MASK
Beaten Lead
Height, 16 inches

Plate Eleven ............................. HEAD
Light Walnut
Height, 18 inches

Plate Twelve .............................. HEAD
Light Walnut
INTRODUCTION

Sculpture involves the expression of an idea or emotional feeling in a permanent material. The sculptor expresses with planes, form and light, by carving, modeling, or in some other way changing the outer surface of a mass to have meaning.

Although there are many methods of producing sculpture, they may be summed up in two general classes, direct carving and modeling. The modeler begins with an idea and builds his sculpture with clay. It is largely a process of adding material until the desired forms are expressed. The clay is soft and pliable in the hand and presents few limitations to the sculptor. In direct carving, the sculptor begins with a mass, usually stone or wood, and visualizes a form, or forms, to fit within the boundaries of this shape. Naturally, the size of the carving will be limited by the size of the block. Other limitations are forced upon the sculptor by the texture, grain, and cleavage of the material. The result will also be influenced by the hardness or strength of the material. These limitations need not restrict the artistic quality of the work, instead they may be used to discipline the artist to do a better thing.
From sculpture, we experience aesthetic pleasure through our sense of touch as well as our sense of vision. Smooth planes and polished surfaces create within us an innate desire to feel or touch. We silently resent the "Do Not Touch" signs so often seen on handsome sculptures in our galleries. It is significant that a blind man can experience pleasure in art through sculpture.

The sculptor is constantly concerned with the effect of light on his work. He needs an occasional change of lighting during the carving process, to insure the effectiveness of the work in any light. This can be done by turning the work on a revolving stand or by occasionally shifting the light source.

Many advantages are realized by working out of doors. Sunlight is our greatest light and it offers the carver a constant change in angle as the earth rotates. The fresh open air overcomes, to a great extent, the unpleasant stone dust of indoor carving. The elements will not harm but enhance the surface of sculpture. We associate stone with the out of doors. There is an atmospheric quality that adds to the effectiveness of sculpture when it is bathed in sunlight or moonlight. A change takes place in the scale expressed by sculpture when it is moved from the studio out into the open. This enlarges the space encasing
the sculpture from the small boundaries of the studio walls to
the vastness of the out of doors. Consequently, we seemingly
reduce the scale of the work. A heroic sized head in the open
will seem nearer life size, indoors the same piece will lose
none of its meaning.

With the exception of the wood carving and the small ceramic
piece, this work has been designed as out door sculpture.
For this reason, and a belief that as good sculpture is
increased in size its effectiveness is increased, I have held
to a large scale in executing the seven heads presented in
this thesis.
CONCLUSION

In modeling, the sculptor can control the growth of a form by using small pellets of clay to build up a shape. Plate four illustrates this method, showing the head of Moses with the forms built up, just before the surface planes have been defined. This is an excellent method for the modeler, but unless he constantly drives himself, there is a danger of falling into a methodical approach that destroys any emotional quality in the sculpture. In Plates three, five and six, it is obvious that the forms are well constructed but the sculpture is lacking in expressive feeling.

The head of St. John, Plate seven, shows the first tendencies of digressing from the realistic treatment. In constructing this head, red water clay was used. The sculptor was primarily concerned with expressing spiritual content rather than thinking constantly of proper construction. As a result, it expresses more emotional feeling than the previous heads.

The portrait head, Deoress, Plate nine, was the first attempt to execute a heroic sized portrait. It was an experiment and the values gained were in understanding. The sculptor feels, in occasionally working from the model, there is less chance of the work becoming typed. This head is pressed in stoneware clay and
will be slightly over life size after firing.

The lead mask shown in Plate ten offered a new experience in sculpture. It is neither carving nor modeling. The artist begins with a permanent material and ends with the same, without adding to, or taking from the original material. It is a process of hammering and beating the soft lead over a sand bag. The artist works from both sides of the metal to achieve the forms desired.

The last head represented is a direct carving in light walnut. The student began with a triangular prism shaped shaft of wood split from a log. In the beginning, the shape seemed to offer a difficult problem. A brief sketch of the block was first thrown up in clay, and the head carved in the clay. The hand, carved under the head, was used to overcome the emptiness under the chin, and at the same time add a note of interest and serve as a support or base for the expressive weight of the piece. The large rounded form of the forehead was used to produce an oval pattern in the straight pronounced grain. This is repeated in several small notes on the lips, and the knuckles of the hand. A slight curve in the overall block was held to, and used to add a flowing quality to the hair, and at the same time suggest a tree-like feeling in the wood, which would be lost in a perfectly
symmetrical head such as the first three in this thesis.

The surface planes are smoothly finished. The forms have been clearly defined, yet not sharply detailed. A washed, pebble effect has been expressed with a few sharp accents sparingly used, otherwise, allowing the forms to flow into each other joining into one contained form.

In summing up the experiences represented by this exhibition of sculpture, it is recognized that the sculptor has not reached a stopping point and the real value of the total experience cannot be measured by the results achieved in the materials of sculpture. The ongoing value of the work will be evidenced in the future production of the artist.