

A Brief Look At The History Of Sculpture

Throughout the history of civilization man has often made monuments in many varied forms symbolic of the cultures they live in. These monuments are usually represented through arts of architecture, landscaping, painting, and sculpture. These diverse forms of art have their own unique qualities, all of which can be accented with sculpture in some way. As sculpture usually relates closely to the other arts in expression and style, it still relies on all of the social aspects of the society in which it resides for its meaning and purpose.

The three-dimensional and long-lasting qualities contribute to the wide use of sculpture as a cultural expression of the beliefs and ideals of man. Mostly these beliefs are displayed in varied forms such as designs or decorative additions like religious symbols of idols or gods, civic leaders, beings of myth or legend and other figures historically or socially significant to the society in which these creations are found. These images are often fashioned as aesthetic carvings or figures adorning buildings, fountains, jewelry, memorials, housewares, and countless other items both public and private.

Among the many functions of the art, sculptures in their many forms serve as artifacts of the societies they were formed in. These artifacts do a great deal to tell us of the culture of the people--what their government was like, the aspects of daily life, and the religious beliefs of the people.

There exist three categories that define most any sculpture: relief's, linear, and full-round, which are classified by their appearance. These categories each have different limitations: full-round can be viewed from any angle, relief's are one sided sculptures projecting from a surface, whereas linear deals with materials such as pipe or wires, or other numerous other objects, resulting in a two-dimensional appearance.

Sculptors often add texture to their work through the use of different materials that can be pounded, molded, carved, or shaped into a three-dimensional form. However, the material typically used by a culture depends upon what is readily available geographically, such as the wooden idols in Africa, or the marble statues in Rome. Though any material can be used (depending on the desired result), the prevailing mediums have been stone, clay, bronze, and wood. Unfortunately most historical artifacts made out of less durable materials have not withstood the test of time.

Although the basic concepts of sculpture have stayed the same, the methods of creation have progressed through the years with the development of man. Where man once created more simplistic sculptures with the materials close at hand, in the twentieth-century, with the incredible technology available nearly, anything is possible. Where at one time it took hundreds of hours to carve and chisel stone to individually create every statue one at a time, through the development of casting and other advanced methods it is possible to create many sculptures from one original work. These fantastic processes of duplication make it possible for people all over the world to appreciate the beauty of one single piece of work through its reproductions.

After observing the sculptures around campus I found my favorite to be the four figures in the waterfall courtyard by James Avati. I preferred these figures to the rest of those I had to choose from because of the message they presented to me. In these four figures I found

meaning more directly related to my own course of life. The response was reflection on that of my personal and social outlooks.

The figure of the man standing nearest the bookstore in the northwest corner of the courtyard particularly resembled mirrored specific feelings that I have at this time. When guessing his age he looks older than the typical college age. He stands alone seemingly prepared to go forward toward education with bookbag in hand, though this course of action is less typical considering what his age appears to be, yet there he is.

I now find myself standing at a crossroads choosing education over other things. Now that this choice is made I am on my own facing my education relying solely upon myself.

The next figure of consideration in the entire response that I had is the young lady poised reading in the southwest corner of the courtyard. She appears so intent on the contents of the book before her, this book representing to me a symbol of learning and intellectual growth. The lone man seems to face that direction as if now that he has chosen education he will inevitably need to find contentment in study as this young lady apparently has.

I found meaning in the two figures interacting in the center of the courtyard represent the social aspect of this whole experience. There is a balance with these four figures. Just as these two social figures are positioned between the single man (the intent to learn and work toward a greater education) and the woman (learning and education) somewhere in the middle the social aspect must be fulfilled. Not only are these two being social, but also they are male and female adding a new dimension of the all important search for a mate, which really enhances the reality of this experience I am having as a student.

The more I sat and pondered these things the more I came to see in the message these figures portrayed. These figures are very appropriate for a collage courtyard considering what they represent of this culture of the college student.

Bibliography

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