

'Stories of Sculpture'

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STORIES OF SCULPTURE

ISMOND ROSEN

Introduction

'Every picture tells a story' is usually associated with paintings or photos. Here, the sequel is reversed, with stories of how sculptures came into being, their meaning, relevance, and the amusing or at times amazing circumstances of their making. Sculpture is unique for many reasons. It has great durability and the facility to portray condensed three-dimensional images directly from the unconscious mind.

For the artist, the sculptures are the record, in this instance, over a life-time, of aesthetic and spiritual growth. Each work embodies a series of decisions that not only set the problems to be faced, but also illustrates the success or otherwise of their resolution. These stories of sculpture tell the history and meaning of specific works. The stories explain how sculpture evolves through the interaction of inner fantasies with external chance occurrences - which is a basic mechanism of artistic creativity.

Historical

As a toddler, in Johannesburg, South Africa, I was an enthusiastic maker of mud-pies. This was an era when playing in a suburban garden with real earth and water, peacefully on one's own, was a legitimate creative activity. This was before it was rendered sterile by hygienic sand-trays, or socialized into a group-activity. One could be totally absorbed in an activity personally discovered and pursued. The outcome was an avid interest in all earthy derivations, growing things, planting, then, as a three-year-old, furiously making things at nursery school.

My interest in sculpture was aroused a few years later by a young African boy who worked in the house. To amuse himself, or to remind him of his life in the country, he modelled small clay Afrikaner cattle, with their characteristic large wide horns and the hump on their backs. The oxen completely fascinated me, and so did his creativity, where he effortlessly produced these meaningful creatures from an invisible inner heritage.

At the age of eight, the family moved into the city, and I changed schools. I must have felt the need that many children have at that age for a talisman, for some sort of fetish object to keep in one's pocket, as comforter, protector and friend. Why I fashioned a small skull out of wood for this purpose, I cannot recollect. The immediate association with a skull, is the idea of death, but this was not a preoccupation of mine, either then or subsequently. Much later in life I learned that the skull is a disguised unconscious symbol of life. To me as a boy, it indicated a free spirit of pirate adventure, and a warning to others to beware. The trusty little skull could be held tightly when one had to walk alone to the school playing-field. We had to pass through the narrow high-walled passage that ran between two sections of the city prison; where sometimes human voices resounded in an unintelligible cacophony, that would end as suddenly as it began.

2.

The flowering of puberty intensified the feelings of closeness to nature and the urge to make things. My early teens began at a boarding school in Pretoria that was proud of its splendid sporting and academic tradition, and its fine buildings designed like an Oxford college. Although Walter Battiss, a leading painter, was the art master, I only enjoyed his support indirectly, as I enrolled in the Latin class. I became used to producing art on my own, eschewing the formal art education that was present but somehow unavailable.

The school lay in sixty acres of gardens, forest and rocky hillside. Wandering in the woods, I was attracted to the gnarled bark of the old pine trees. I could split off sections of bark and cut away the rough exterior to reveal the fine-grained, honey-coloured, soft wood beneath, which was firm enough for carving. Following in the tradition of my earliest impressions of sculpture, I carved the shapes of animals. Finally I made a model in wood of a public monument consisting of a square central pillar with animal heads set around it. These heads, fashioned out of bark, alternated on all sides, and were of creatures such as deer and lions.

Because of the apparent impossibility of ever realising my monument in reality, together with the imagined inadequacy of my materials, I decided to give up working in bark in favour of carving directly in wood. The decision was momentous.

With a small length of timber and a curved chisel costing a shilling, I set about carving my first real sculpture, a reclining lion. The tail fitted separately on the one side, as I had carved the figure the full two inch width of the block. My lion may not have been chosen to grace the portals of an ancient citadel, but it had an agreeable archaic presence. I loved it as a descendant of the lions in my fantasy who were my friends and who protected me from the invisible predators inhabiting my childhood fears of the dark.

This brief history takes account of my childhood and early adolescence, before I began to make sculpture properly. At the age of fifteen, another inner urge became manifest which was to influence my later life and complicate my relationship with sculpture was in my last year of high school and was a prefect in our boarding-house of fifty boys. It was plain to me that several of the younger boys could profit from talking to them about their daily or personal problems. I would invite them from the common prep-room into my study for 'chats', which were mutually rewarding. Thus began my interest and subsequent professional career as psychiatrist and psychoanalyst. How these two major interests, sculpture and psychotherapy, functioned in my life will be clear in the stories. Suffice it to say that on the urgings of others, I faced myself for years with the problem of which to pursue. Eventually it became clear that I had to do both and that each had a practical and spiritually beneficial effect on the other.

JOHN HUNTER (1738 - 1793)

Surgeon, anatomist, and founder of surgical pathology.

The problem in making the bust of John Hunter was to achieve accurate proportions and his facial likeness from a small photograph. In particular I wanted to bring out his determination and strength of character.

John Hunter was born near Glasgow and came to London aged twenty, the same age as I was doing his portrait. He came to join his brother William, who was already well established medically, and enrolled to study surgery. For the next eleven years he studied anatomy and physiology, then spent three years as surgeon in the Seven Years War. A few years later he was appointed surgeon at his old teaching hospital, St George's. He never forsook his love of learning and research, for the lucrativeness of consultant practice. His prodigious labours in the creation of his surgical museum resulted in a collection of 13,000 specimens. This work is enshrined in the Hunterian Museum at The Royal College of Surgeons of England.

On the 250th anniversary of his birth on the 14th February 1978, the numerous areas of his researches were debated at a series of scientific meetings, culminating with a reception attended by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip. The British Medical Journal expressed the modern surgeon's veneration for this great man, 'whose labours provided the origins of the science of surgery based on observation, experiments and the basic principles of biology'.



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There are many accounts of his life experiences. One was that he inoculated himself with syphilis in order to study the processes of this cruel disease. This is now discounted by modern authorities. More accurate was his statement that his life lay in the palm of anyone who dared cross him in professional argument. A fiery proponent for the truth, he was a sufferer from angina, and he died during a weekly board meeting at St George's Hospital on 16th October 1793. In 1859 his remains were interred in Westminster Abbey, and a tablet was inscribed:

"His genius as a gifted interpreter of the Divine Power and wisdom at work in the laws of organic life."

This 1944 bronze bust of John Hunter is now displayed in the collection of The Royal Society of Medicine in London.

WHITHER?. Woodcarving. 1944.

The year 1944 marked the turning of the Second World War in the Allies favour. Great efforts were being made to overcome the Nazi stranglehold on much of Europe. This apparently diverted the Allies from defeating an aim that was being fiendishly pursued with utter ruthlessness by the Nazi hierarchy. This was the Final Solution which meant the total destruction of the Jewish race. Jews had been systematically persecuted since 1933 when Hitler came to power. Evidence had filtered through to the West of Nazi atrocities in the concentration camps and deals were apparently offered by the Nazis to save Jews in exchange for war materiel. None of this brought any relief to the millions of Jews threatened with genocide, though individual acts of heroism to save Jews were performed by many righteous gentiles.

The sculpture 'Whither?' depicts this tragic situation. An elderly man, dressed in Jewish traditional style with yarmulke and long jacket, sits pondering his fate. The world he represents is being torn apart, and he himself is doomed to disappear. Meanwhile, the world is silent.

The sculpture is carved directly in an African hardwood called mavula, and was completed in 1945. The composition of the figure is set within the wood in such a way that the grain follows the lines of the form. This link between form and medium became an aim to strive for in all subsequent woodcarvings. Here, it enhances the warmth and integrity of the old man, but adds to his sense of isolation and despair.

The seriousness of this subject was consistent with what was happening in the world, and also reflected the engrossing nature of medical studies in the wards. Not that one didn't have fun as a medical student, one certainly did, and in wonderful company with fellow students and the nursing and other professions. But there were opportunities to learn about the vicissitudes as well as the pleasures of mankind. We were encouraged to attend the casualty departments especially in the evenings, through which patients were admitted to the wards and to follow their progress. In the dead of night, or rather, in the early morning, it was fascinating to talk to the tramps who would come in for warmth in the winter. They would unfold a whole life history, quite unimaginable from their appearance and status. Somehow the idea of portraying the human condition in sculpture was born there, akin to Balzac's *Comedie Humaine*.

The following fifth year, in addition to medicine and surgery, we had intensive practice in obstetrics. The birth of a baby became in my opinion without parallel in human experience. I began woodcarving depicting a baby in the foetal position. But it was inconceivable that it could or should exist on its own. I therefore added a life-size male and female head at each end, so that the forms merged into the unity of the family.

SPIRIT OF MY YOUTH. Woodcarving. 1947.

Of the wonders in biology, the emergence of the butterfly from its chrysalis rates highly. The transformation from medical student into fully-fledged doctor is equally marvellous if less obvious, especially to the person concerned. The change in status, the new opportunity to perform and grow on life's next stage is miraculous at the moment of realization, if barely comprehensible. Particularly when the mutation from youth into maturity is usually imperceptible and life experience of change is limited. My only prior observation was from the side of youth, which at the event seemed even quite momentous

My school was sports oriented, in a country where rugby was regarded as a higher calling. Playing rugby for the school First team and earning one's colours was the ultimate schoolboy life-experience. Little wonder then, returning to the school in Pretoria, after a home visit at the beginning of the autumn term, with everyone already in class, I went straight to the rugby notice board. There the teams were listed for the first matches of the season. As captain of the Under Fifteens the year before, I consulted the Second team list, where I expected a place almost as of right. To my dismay, my name was missing. I turned disconsolately to the Thirds, where it was also absent. I had been dropped altogether. Almost as an afterthought, and for the sake of completion, I looked at the First team, where to my incomparable delight, I had been chosen to play as the outside centre-threequarter. The match against a rival local school was very important. It was to be a curtain-raiser to the Saturday afternoon interprovincial Currie Cup, at the Loftus Versveld ground. The morning before the match, the headmaster, who taught history with a subdued dramatic flair, assembled the team in his study. He harangued the standing throng of boys with images of how the Springboks struggled mightily and overcame the opposition at Twickenham. To emphasise his point he described the weather on that occasion as being identical to that morning, grey and inclement. He exhorted us to maintain such sporting traditions and to play our best, if not beyond ourselves. Each boy seemed to have swelled with silent determination. We were transmuted from a group and fused into a mass of purpose. He wished us luck and as we turned to leave the room, he called out 'Rosen don't you be scared'. Why he felt the need for this final exhortation I failed to understand. As everybody was in a high state of tension following his efforts, his remark passed unnoticed except by me. I had a fine record of scoring tries, which was not too difficult as I was the school sprint champion and athletics Victor Ludorum. Scoring tries was often a matter of out-running the opposition. Being scared made one run even faster. What did the headmaster mean when he said 'don't be scared'?

By the afternoon on Saturday, the weather had cleared, the two rival schools were in force in the stands, and as we ran on to the field from under them, the school rose and gave the war cry. We were exhilarated. The opponents kicked-off, the ball was caught by our fly-half who passed to the first centre, who passed the ball to me, and I ran through and scored under the posts. We converted and they kicked-off again, with similar consequences, except that this time I drew the full-back and passed to the wing who scored as before. Walking back to one's position on the field was an exercise in modesty. We put up twenty-nil at half-time and thirty-nil by the end of the match. The newspaper critics rated us better than the Provincial match which followed.

We never again displayed the same team-spirit or the rugby skills, and I lost my fear. But then the headmaster never again inspired the team in his study. Some things were unique and unrepeatable. Such was the spirit of youth.

Six years later In a spirit of youthful exhilaration I drove home from the results posted at the Medical School to inform my parents that I had passed. I was twenty-two. Most of the way I honked my horn, as if to warn an unsuspecting world of the presence of the newly licensed practitioner. The embraces were of relief as well as of pleasure. Youth had delivered its promise of accomplishment and medical qualification.

Happily I departed on holiday with five newly graduated friends driving round the coast sampling the surfing and the golf courses. On a beach in the Cape I found a tree-trunk washed up from the sea, which I persuaded the owner of the car to bring back in the boot. At the end of the holiday, we took it in turn to drive all night the thousand miles to Johannesburg, where we were to take up our house-jobs the next week.

Spurred on by the acquisition of the wood, I spent my free time after dinner in the evening carving a memento of the metamorphosis from callow medical student to doctor. I called it 'Spirit of my Youth'.

The wood with its trunk erect and spread of roots below, was about three feet high and two feet wide at the base. The immersion in the sea and erosion by other objects had rounded off the roots and had given them an integrated structure. The grain structure had also radically altered, losing its vertical character and consisting instead of fine concentric markings, making identification of the species difficult. The trunk had snapped off just above the point of a bifurcation, leaving two separate forms at the summit. When carving directly, I always believed in working to the maximum space of a block, never cutting it down to shape or size to fit some preconceived notion. Apart from the protruding roots, there were no other distinguishing characteristics or forms. I was therefore forced for the first time to rely on my own inner fantasies. The resulting images were symbolically representational.

Probably under the influence of Rodin's 'Thinker', I carved a youthful face, chin on fist, somewhat based on a self-portrait, immersed in thought about the world. In particular, preoccupied with the significance and relationships with the accompanying forms. In front was a nude female torso representing sexuality. At the reverse of the head I carved a pair of hands, open, in an attitude of prayer and gratitude. By this means, I acknowledged the many graces and gifts of youth, life had actively bestowed, through the medium of parents, teachers, and friends. In contrast to the receptivity of youth, at the base, I carved another single hand, actively exploring outwardly, seeking personal experience of the world in an adult manner.

This direct carving, was also made with the same original shilling chisel. Not long after the carving, I mysteriously came into the possession of a small case filled with the carving chisels of a master carver. How does one explain such occurrences?. They remain unfathomable, except to say that if and when one is properly prepared and ready for the next stage, life often supplies what is required. Perhaps I had proved my abilities and readiness for more mature works with 'Spirit of My Youth'. Years later, in London, I made a bronze cast of the woodcarving.



from the protruding roots, there were no other distinguishing characteristics or forms. I was therefore forced for the first time to rely on my own inner fantasies, even though the resulting images were representational. At the reverse of the head I carved a pair of hands open in an attitude of prayer or receptivity. By this means, I acknowledged the many graces and gifts of youth, life had actively bestowed, through the medium of parents, teachers, and friends. In contrast at the base, an adult hand was exploring outwardly, seeking personal experience and active gratification.

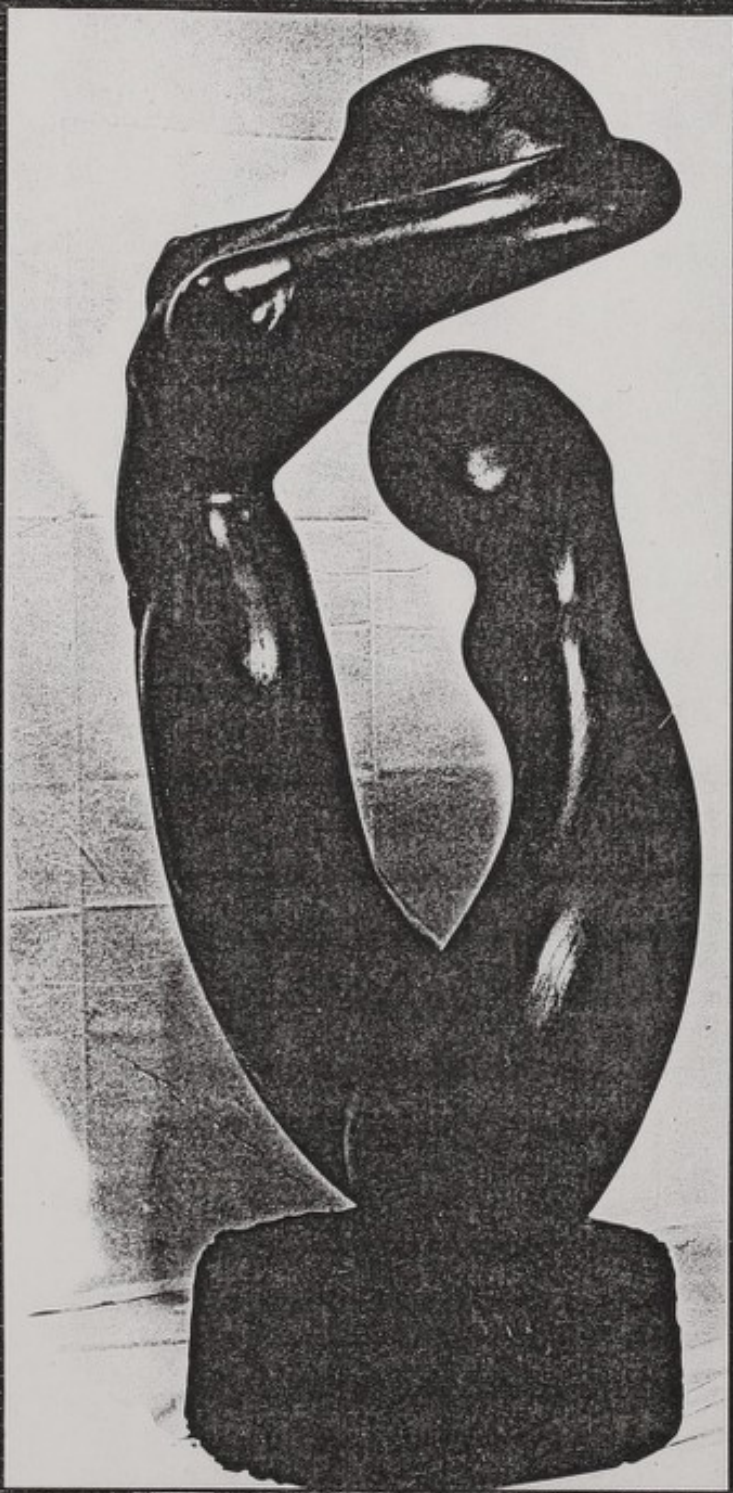
This sculpture was also a direct carving, using that same shilling chisel. Shortly thereafter, I mysteriously came into the possession of a small case full of beautiful carving chisels which had belonged to a master carver. How does one explain such occurrences? They remain unfathomable, except to say that if and when one is properly prepared, or ready for the next stage, life often supplies what is required. Years later, I cast the work in bronze for an exhibition in London.

THE TRIBUTE

My ambition at that time was to work on larger pieces. I had delivered to my home a magnificent block of hardwood, ten foot long and already planed to three foot square. The shape was rather unwieldy because of its length, so I sawed it into two five-foot halves.

Wood of this dimension would have taken years to season. It had been recently cut, and like the stinkwood, would still have cracked in the process. Carving it revealed a rich red surface which was wet and stained my hands a deep rose colour - hence the name rosewood given by the supplier. Apparently rosewood does not grow in Africa, so it either came from abroad, which was unlikely, or remains unidentified. The rose colour was unbelievably beautiful. My idea was to carve away as much of the heartwood as possible, to prevent any cracking. This factor therefore determined the form and subject-matter of the sculpture, about which I had no definite ideas when I began. I was dedicated to direct carving, and attacked the wood spiritedly with one of the massive chisels in the case I had inherited. Great chunks of wood flew in all directions covering the floor of my room. Getting into bed at night first meant removing all the slivers of wood I collected on the way. The idea of two figures entwined about each other emerged as the logical solution. I felt I had the knowledge and confidence to carve any figure with perfect anatomical structure. Influenced by the post-war preference for abstraction, I launched my two figures and especially their mutual relationship, in the abstract, retaining some realistic details in the female form. The latter realism seemed necessary, integrating abstract and realistic forms. But I chafed inwardly at the thought that I had balked at rendering a fully abstract piece. I think the conflict was between the realization of the idea and the rendering of the form. The result was successful as a combination of idea and form, which it would not have been as a purely abstract piece.

The woman arches over the man, while the man is also inclined towards her from below. Their torsos curve about each other in unison. The curve of the man's head approximates to the back of the female form without quite touching. Viewers can position themselves so that this relationship can be made acutely sensitive to the point of touching, in the same way that the two curves of *The Kiss* can be visually approximated.



The Tribute. Rosewood 5'x3'x3' 1950

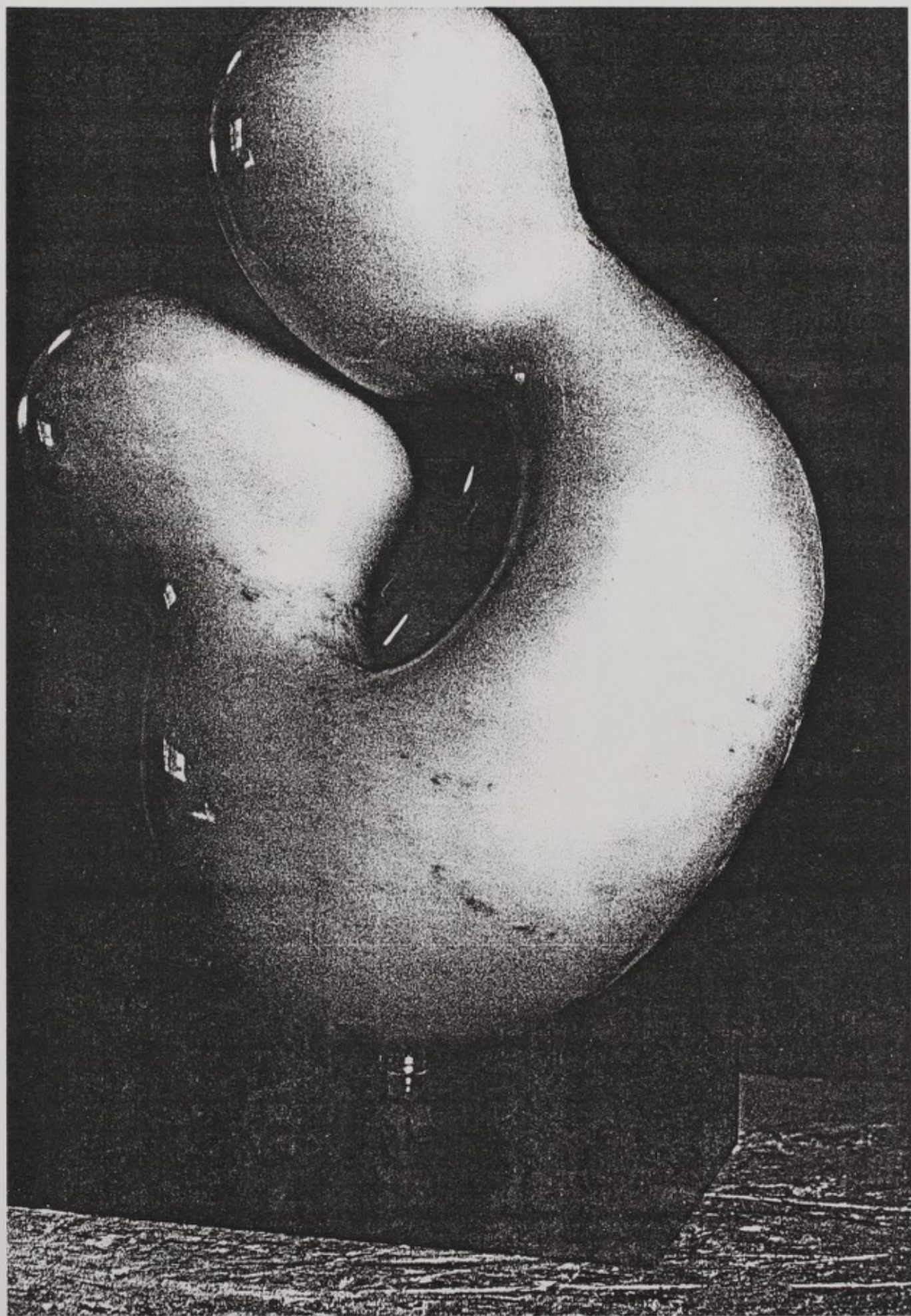
THE KISS

One of the graces unexpectedly bestowed in an almost classical fashion was love. Apart from the technical skills required in the plastic arts, the capacity for love is an equally important requisite. Love for another person, and love for the medium and message of the work of art. Love of proportion, relationships and the feel for aesthetic clarity. The relationship between the artist and the work, mainly visual, partly tactile, consists of a subtle series of what psychoanalysts call projections and introjections. In my case, I spent hours purely gazing at the work, infusing it with emotional interest, and in return, the work would speak volumes. This was particularly so with *Spirit of my Youth*, and repeatedly with later works, where the way forward had to be intuited at each turn, without any preconceived plan. Any decision had to take into account the effect on all of the rest of the sculpture, three-dimensionally. There is no possibility with this approach of taking off too much, or in the popular mind, of removing the nose! With practice, the sculpture informs whatever the next action should be, in a logical sequence determined by the work itself, rather than being imposed by the artist. Exceptions exist to this rule, where major changes to the whole work are undertaken. These will be discussed later, but here too, the work itself is crying out for finer expression of the aims.

Love walked in through the door one day in the shape of a beautiful voluntary helper at the John Gray Community Health Centre of which I was the Medical Director. The clinic was funded by the University of the Witwatersrand, through the monies collected by the Student Rag Committee. The Director was Mrs Helen Joseph, who gained lasting fame later as an heroic fighter against apartheid. We looked after a thousand families drawn from the poorest white community in Fordsburg, teaching them proper health care, treating their ailments, trying to raise their social level, and endeavouring to keep their daughters off the streets.

A typical problem was that of the woman who complained that something had entered her ear as she slept. Would I please examine her and remove it? A bit sceptically I shone the auroscope in her ear to reveal a bundle of insect legs. Gently I removed what turned out to be a cockroach. She diffidently requested to be told what sort of insect it was. Did she really want to know?, I replied, hoping to spare her any further embarrassment. She insisted. When I revealed the nature of the beast, she was terribly relieved. Thank goodness, and thank you doctor, I was so afraid it was a bug!

I spent a year at this fine applied research and therapeutic institution in its slum area. The slums were later cleared away to make room for Johannesburg's burgeoning financial district



L. was the daughter of one of the city's most successful chain-store owners. Her family were very friendly disposed towards me, and her father proudly showed me the cheque for a million pounds with which he concluded a remarkable deal over a week-end in London. As a visitor, he was in Oxford Circus, on Saturday morning, liked the look of one of the stores, valued it at a million pounds. He went in, made the offer to the directors, who, taken by surprise, agreed, hence the evidence of the cheque. When the directors met again on the Monday, they realized they had made a terrible mistake. To buy it back, it cost them an additional half-a-million pounds.

The millionaire's daughter meeting the impecunious young doctor at the slum clinic, added a spice of romanticism to our relationship, which then flowered. We would spend hours in amorous embraces in her living room. Leaving late one evening under the pressure of our mutual exchanges, a sculptural image appeared fully-formed in my mind. I lost no time in translating it into plaster of paris as 'The Kiss'. In this sculpture, two abstract heads voluntarily approximate above, in the potential act of kissing, while below they have already fused into a unity, the acme of loving togetherness.

The influences on me at that time were manifold. I was struck by the classical work of Michaelangelo and Rodin, and the modern abstractions of Hans Arp and Henry Moore. However derivative 'The Kiss' may have appeared, I considered the image to be original, as it bore an unconsciously integrated authenticity. It has remained probably the most popular of my works, having sold out in a resin edition when exhibited in Cork Street, London. Copies in also exist in Carrara marble, owned internationally, including one in the collection of The Royal Society of Medicine in London.

AUSTRALOPITHECUS PROMETHEUS

At the Medical School in the late 1940's, exciting new discoveries were being described by Prof Raymond Dart, working with the fossilized bones of early hominids. Dart believed he had found the 'Missing Link'. Bony evidence of the line of creatures which lay intermediate between the great apes and man. As one of his former students, I was invited to work on the soft tissue reconstruction and appearance of the creature he called 'Australopithecus Prometheus'. Australopithecus meant Southern Man. Dart found fossilized ash in the breccia (lime-stone deposit) where the bones lay, and concluded that the creatures had the propensity to make fire. Hence the name Prometheus, the first maker of fire. (In 1974 I etched a design for a metal sculpture of the mythical Prometheus.)

A great rivalry existed between Dart and Robert Broom, each of whom had internationally noteworthy finds in early anthropology to their credit. They carried out their studies in secret from one another though they maintained a very friendly exterior. Only two portions of the skull of A.P. existed, a piece of the maxilla, and a bit of the occiput. From the shapes and marks of the muscle attachments, it was possible to say that the creature walked upright. For the rest of the shape of the skull, one had to work on a comparative scale, between the great apes and other early fossil finds. Dart was away on holiday, and I was working in the lab with the plaster replicas, trying to determine the correct skull shape. I had selected as a base line, the horizontal from the external auditory meatus (ear-hole) to the base of the nose, a measurement I used in portrait sculpture. On this basis I could set the comparative shape with some satisfaction. Engrossed in this task, I did not notice someone standing watching. Dressed in his dark suit and bats-wing collar, white hair, gold-rimmed glasses and thin intent features, Robert Broom enquired what I was doing. He was merely passing by saying hello, but Prof. Dart was away. I was trapped. Honoured and aghast, I explained all my theories of comparative anatomy to Dr Broom, who complimented me and examined the specimens with the utmost care and then departed. I wondered what Dart would say on his return, that the research finds had been so simply revealed to his rival. Dart was delighted that Broom, whom he held in the greatest esteem, had taken the trouble to come over especially from Pretoria, where he was the Director of the National Museum. That Broom had arrived when Dart was away was surely more than coincidence.

Everyone who worked on the fossil remains became entranced by their significance and especially by the beauty of the specimens themselves. They had to be chiselled out with the greatest care from the surrounding material, to reveal the chemical changes wrought by earth acids which produced delicate hues in the grey matrix after thousands of years. This included top surgeons as well as all the research workers. One was working on the frontiers of knowledge concerning the human race.

Dart had an inimitable style of presentation of the life of these early creatures. In a large room where trestle tables were laden with fossil bones of primitive animals, Dart would demonstrate how the end of an animal long bone had been used to crush the skull of a small monkey, precisely matching the bone end and the marks of depression on the crushed monkey skull.

Then he would show how the half of a lower mandible of a pig had been used as a saw to remove flesh from other mammalian bones which still bore the impression of this activity. Dart concluded that Australopithecus Prometheus not only could make fire, but that it was the first creature to use weapons and thus manifest human aggression and violence.

These theories were written up by Dart in 'Adventures with the Missing Link' (Hamish Hamilton, London 1959.), from which the accompanying photographs are gratefully acknowledged. His theories were later challenged, the experts feeling that the marks on the bones could have been made by marauding animals.

I decided to make two models of the appearance of *Australopithecus Prometheus*, I say models advisedly, because this was science rather than art, though more of the latter entered into the final product. The half-section displayed in black the two fossilized portions of the skull that had been found, alongside the appearance of the creature on the opposite side. When it came to modelling the full facial features, I worked in plasticine, so as not to rush the work. I combined the primitive skull with the intelligent expressions of a human creature, given the attributes indicated by Dart.

Rivalry and envy and also destructiveness are apparently the order of the day in the studies of early man. There were others who wanted to portray the appearance of this celebrated fossil creature. My full face interpretation had been photographed and appeared in Dart's book. The sculpture itself disappeared from the department never to be found. The half-rendering remained extant, and I was presented by Prof. Tobias my good friend, with a copy, years later.

The study of earliest human evolution now centres on findings at Olduvai Gorge in Tanzania and Abyssinia. What has not changed is the intense emotional involvement in the subject by all concerned, sponsors and scientists, and the keen rivalry between those engaged in making the finds.

The impact of these anthropological studies was not confined to the laboratory. At the height of my involvement with the creation of the soft tissue representation of *Australopithecus Prometheus*, when one felt inspired by the opportunity and the task, I was invited to dinner with L.'s family. The talk ranged almost entirely on what were the finest examples of commercial products, such as watches, or clothes etc. I was raised in a commercial environment which was entirely practical and never idealised. My medical studies had in fact set me rather against commercial values. For much of the dinner I sat silent, engrossed in my own thoughts about the anthropology, feeling it was incumbent upon me to contribute to the conversation, against my better judgement, I launched into a passionate description of the work on the fossils. I was heard out in a polite but stiff silence. 'Can you make a living and support a family from fossils?' asked her father. The question seemed fair from the point of view of the prospects of a suitor. The moment of truth opened a gap which I felt could never be filled, between my artistic and professional aspirations and the commercial outlook of the family. Nothing further was said. *Australopithecus Prometheus* may not have provided a living, but it did save a life from commercial servitude. L. and I continued to meet, but the chances of a fruitful consummation had disappeared.

PSYCHIATRIC PORTRAITS

With hindsight, anyone would have predicted that once I had entered the profession of medicine, I would end up as a psychiatrist. The only one blind to this fact was me, as I was bent on surgery. In addition to the psychotherapeutic stories recalled above, Amusing evidence of psychiatric competence was revealed, when as students we spent a few days talking to some of the two thousand mental patients in the closed wards of Weskoppies Hospital situated in Pretoria.

The patients were segregated according to sex and colour. A colleague and myself entered the day room of a male European ward, to find it empty except for a single patient standing on his head on one of the leather couches. Not wishing to disturb him, we waited some time until he decided to come down. As he advanced towards us in friendly fashion, I observed that he was probably Jewish, and for some unknown reason I felt prompted to ask him, 'Are you the Messiah?'. 'Who else?', he replied without hesitation.

I found the patients fascinating, but felt repulsed by the unreal stillness and beauty of the grounds and gardens, and the endless alienation from normal life of the chronic patients in the back wards.

Five years later, as part of my psychiatric training, I spent six months on the staff as a registrar. Instead of commuting every day from Johannesburg with colleagues I agreed to live in on the condition that I occupied one of the doctor's houses in the grounds. These were only for married staff, but I had my way as there were staff shortages, and the Superintendent had taken a shine to me. This was expressed by my being supplied with a fridge, something, I was informed, that usually took six months for permanent members of staff.

Initially I was put in charge of seven hundred chronic patients. This sounded a lot but entailed relatively light duties. Every morning one visited every ward and talked to or was observed by every patient, so they could have free access to a doctor. In the era before modern psychoactive drugs, the only treatments were sedatives, electric shock treatment, and insulin therapy. Chronic syphilitic disorders such as General Paralysis of the Insane (GPI) were treated with malarial therapy. Many newly admitted patients on the active treatment wards recovered with the treatments available and were discharged. My patients, mostly chronic schizophrenics, were already institutionalised, and my main duties were to examine them at yearly, five-yearly or ten-yearly periods laid down by law. The written in many instances was a repetition of the previous record, which was the abbreviation I.S.Q, short for 'In status quo', meaning unchanged. Fulfilling these statutory requirements left the afternoon free. I knew that I would soon be given further more active duties, and I was determined not to let the opportunity pass to make portraits of the patients. I therefore began to look for likely sitters who would best exemplify the psychiatric disorders I wanted to portray. The intention was to combine my psychiatric and artistic awareness.



Primitive Man 1951



The position of Physician-Superintendent at the Weskoppies Hospital was virtually that of a king in his own kingdom. He exercised his authority through the medium of the descending hierarchy of medical and nursing staff. From a clinical point of view, his authority was exercised once a week at a conference to which patients were presented who were either new, required treatment, or were up for discharge. The conference room was fairly large with a fine mahogany horse-shoe shaped table round which the medical officers sat according to their seniority and rank in descending order. At the opening of the horse-shoe, a chair was placed in which the respective patient was invited to sit with the nurse in attendance, usually for purposes of interpretation or information, but otherwise it was a purely private confidential experience. Sitting at the foot of the table on one side of the arm of the horse-shoe, I was able to observe the proceedings at some vantage point. The Superintendent was meticulous in his observance of the procedure and also very firm in his opinion of either a diagnosis, treatment, prognosis or a result. His clinical acumen was such that he could, and would, spot the diagnosis of a new patient as he was walking into a room before sitting down in the chair. Decades of clinical observation had gone into this and he was very much admired and respected for it.

It is accepted that most large organisations have their tone set by the person at the head. Nowhere was this better exemplified than at the conference table. As he spoke in measured tones, the Superintendent would light his pipe, suck on his pipe, play with his pipe and, when I realised it, so did everybody else on the permanent medical staff in unison. This must have made a deep impression on the patients who were probably already humbled and cowed by their having to enter a mental hospital. Pipe-smoking had become a symbol, not only of authority, but of wisdom.

In order to test my own opinion and learn from the proceedings, I wrote down on a small piece of paper whatever the probably diagnosis or treatment should be and then checked this with the final opinion of the whole conference as annunciated by the Superintendent himself. At the beginning I found that there were clinical syndromes which would mutiny and which one learned, but that after a few weeks, one was getting nearly a hundred percent of the diagnoses correct, purely because there were only five or six which were being employed. Within this range of categories, a clinical diagnosis of a new patient was usually unanimous. The treatments which followed were also unanimously agreed, there being also few in type. The medical authorities had the rather invidious task at times of deciding whether a man charged with a serious crime, such as murder, was psychiatrically ill or not. Here again, the simple categories applied. Rather disturbed individuals who did not exhibit the signs and symptoms of a formal psychiatric illness were judged to be normal with all the consequences.

I began to realise that working in the Service, as it was known, again in principle, was never to make a mistake. To play for safety and not endanger the ascent to the next rung on the professional ladder. As someone seconded to the hospital for the purposes of training from a quite different service, I was able to experiment therapeutically with the treatment of some of the patients, which had the blessing of the senior medical staff member in charge of that ward.

Like the rest of the staff, I held the Superintendent in awe, in spite of the friendly relationship which had sprung up between us. This, then, was the background to the sittings for his portrait which took place like the previous ones with the patients, in the small front room of my house in the gardens. I decided I would do his portrait as realistically as possible, with an eye to the fact that he would probably in a short time be promoted to the position of Commissioner of Mental Hygiene. The work went well and was soon completed. We talked about his early life and medical training, how he had come from an Afrikaner family and gone to England for his training and had come back more English than Afrikaans as a result. He wondered whether this would have been held against him, given the prevailing mood of the Afrikaners to dominate every professional activity wherever possible. This was the aim of the Broederbond, the secret society which ruled the Afrikaner political and cultural affairs. Their influence was particularly strong in Pretoria where Weskoppies was situated, the administrative capital of the country. A few days after the portrait was completed, when we had agreed that it would be cast into bronze, I had a very early morning telephone call from the Superintendent, destroying his agreement to have the work cast in bronze. He repeated his idea that nobody would want it, that it was too expensive (£30) and that his shares and investments on the stock market were not doing too well. There was nothing I could say in spite of an attempt to dissuade him, and we had to accept that it was not going to be cast in bronze. Now I think that he felt forced to do this, apart for the reasons stated, that it would have appeared presumptuous for him to have his portrait in bronze, as heir-presumptive to the Commissioner. Questions might also have been raised as to what one of the Registrars was doing making sculptures in the hospital instead of treating the patients.

Completion of the fifth portrait marked the cessation of my sculptural activity in the hospital. I was taken off the chronic wards which were then given to my other student colleagues and given much more serious responsibilities. Each of the wards and shepherd psychiatric services within the hospital and supplied by the hospital to outside agencies, was under the medical responsibility of a senior Consultant. However, juniors such as myself, were responsible for the day-to-day treatments and the running of the particular ward or service.



Prof. Ian Vermooten 1951



Suddenly there were no more free afternoons. I was given charge of the dispensary, two active treatment wards, and in turn the malaria therapy ward, electric shock treatment, and the insulin ward. This was followed up by a stint in the acute male admission ward. There, a junior doctor only entered to do the medical examination on a newly admitted patient, or for some particular need. Otherwise the running and daily life of the ward was maintained in the hands of the highly skilled male nurses.

I only took three pieces*****. At Tara Hospital in Johannesburg, where I was formally placed for training, I had had experience with former soldiers who had had severe traumatic experiences in the war and who suffered still from shock and nightmares. It was possible to relieve them of their symptoms and improve their conditions with the administration intravenously of sodium amytal which put them into a trance, in which they remained semi-conscious and could talk about their experiences which otherwise had been repressed. This abreaction therapy was highly successful in the treatment of such conditions. In one of my wards there was a patient diagnosed as catatonic schizophrenic, who stood motionless, sometimes with his arms extended and immobile for hours on end and who had to be moved out of the sun into the shade from time to time so as not to get burned, by other patients in the ward. He had not spoken for about nine years. This intravenous sodium amytal, after a great deal of effort on my part, trying to make contact with him by talking to him continuously, I was able to somehow reach him within himself, and he came out of his catatonic stupor, talked and walked about like a normal, if rather hunched, figure. This was of course a very dramatic outcome, but it failed to be maintained, and he regressed back into his catatonic state. I was at my wits end what to do to try to maintain him in his normality and consulted the other senior members of staff. By common consent they felt he should have electric shock therapy, which to me seemed rather violent and debasing. I had no other alternative and was present when he was given the first of these treatments. The patient fought like an animal to escape but was manhandled onto the table and the shock given. However, these in due course failed to maintain his improvement, and probably sealed his fate. These were very bitter lessons for a young doctor.

Tara was also a centre for group psychotherapy, where I developed some expertise in this area. I therefore set up a small group of chronic schizophrenics where they held their meetings daily in the sun, but these patients had been selected by the nurses, and there was very little sign of any improvement, which to the amusement of the charge-nurse who, though extremely co-operative, had done his job for years and could see no reason for any changes.

The other area in which I did more successful group therapy, was in what was known as a Work Colony, a sort of detention centre for minor and first offenders. I wrote a small paper on the results of this work, with a recommendation that such group therapy be instituted as part of the regular therapeutic regiment in the Work Colony and submitted it to the Superintendent. My recommendation had to go through to the Commissioner and the Superintendent was required to give his opinion on the matter. This was wholly negative. In rather vivid descriptive terms, he expounded how, in his opinion, such group activity would merely be the focus for criminals to learn from one another and other similar condemnations. At that point I felt at least I had tried and as I was due to leave the hospital and go back to Tara, I put the whole matter behind me.

Although a mental hospital of this size tends to be a world of its own, events in the outside world put a tinge upon it. Each ward had a radio which played all day and kept the patients in touch with what was going on. Field Marshall Young Smucs had died and the radio in the ward described the procession of his funeral cortege which was passing up from the centre of Pretoria towards the railway station. This was a few hundred yards up the road from where we were, and so I jumped into my car and drove up to what is called Church Street at a point where the Transvaal Museum, where Broom was the Director, lay opposite the Pretoria City Hall where I was standing. The sad procession made its way up the hill and I had arrived just in time to see the coffin on its military carriage with Field Marshall Smucs' black charger following, his cavalry boots in the reverse position in the stirrups. This was a most poignant symbol of greatest laid low. There was his Field Marshall's baton and his honours carried as well. As soon as they had passed I returned to the Hospital, but remained mindful of the image. Smucs was not only a great soldier and statesman, but also a philosopher who coined the term Holism for the integrated study of mankind, the sort of approach I was following myself.

A few months later, back at Tara Hospital under the full rigours of intense clinical work and preparations for the finals of the psychiatry exams, I was called up by telephone by the Tara Superintendent. Would I please go over to Pretoria the following week where they were forming a new mental health society and needed a psychiatrist in attendance. The Medical Officer of Health of Johannesburg was going over in his car and would give me a lift. I remonstrated with him saying that I was not yet qualified and therefore unsuitable. The Superintendent's reply was that a meeting would probably be a few old ladies and I would only be there to answer a couple of questions if necessary. Reluctantly I agreed and made the arrangements with the capital's MOH to drive to Pretoria the next week. On the drive I had a merry time swapping yarns and there in Pretoria I asked him what the agenda was. "It's on the back seat," he replied. Under the aegis of the Mayor in the Pretoria City Hall with the wife of the Minister of Health as the guest of honour, a few doctors were listed a making speeches, but there was no name against the main speaker. I asked the MOH who this was going to be. "It's you," he replied, as if I should have know all about it. Feeling rather hysterical as we approached the precincts of the City Hall, I laughed, and we both laughed at this together as I had made no preparations whatsoever. However, I fortified myself with the thought that there would be a few old ladies only in the audience. The MOH drove right up to the stairs of the

City Hall, above which stood the Mayor in his official robes waiting to greet us. Rapidly we were ushered into one of the main conference halls, which was full of the most solemn-looking men in dark suits you could ever have imagined. The only lady in evidence was the wife of the Minister on the platform who motioned me to come and sit beside her. The main business of the meeting was the appointment and election of Officers to the new Pretoria Mental Health Society, and it became perfectly obvious to me that no-one from the Government Mental Service had been invited nor were any of them present. This was curious as Weskloppies provided the whole of the mental hospital services for Pretoria. As the meeting proceeded, which it did instantly, we sat down, and the true purpose of the meeting was clear, which was to appoint members of the Committee, probably under the aegis of the Broederbond but ostensibly with the connivance of the Professors of Psychology at the University of Pretoria.

After being welcomed by the wife of the Minister, I duly rose to make my speech. Feeling that I had to make a purposeful connection with the audience, I decided to open my remarks in Afrikaans, at which I was rather poorly equipped. Most languages have words in common with others which are derivative, and English and Afrikaans are no exception. I thanked them for inviting me and for the honour for me to give them my address. Except that the word I used, which was "address" didn't mean a lecture one had prepared, but rather where one resided. At what I thought was a rather amusing thought of mine, I looked at the audience to see their response. No-one so much as batted an eyelid, hardly was there a glimmer of a smile. In fact there was no smile whatsoever. Accepting the serious tone of the meeting in realizing that whatever I said would have no consequence whatsoever, that it was a political gathering, however, I decided to let myself go. On the basis of my experience in a mental hospital and working in Tara, I harangued them on the need for psychotherapy for young people who had attempted suicide, and other problems in community mental health, ending up with the vital need of group therapy in the Work Colony. When I sat down, I turned to the Minister's wife and apologised for my language error. She brushed it aside and was full of praise, more I think, as the mother proud of her grown-up son, than because of anything I said. I returned to Tara and carried on as before. The meeting in the City Hall was a fitting conclusion to experience in the mental hospital and the orders of its Physician-Superintendent.

The Amsterdam String Quartet. Woodcarving. Music is, of course, a creative stimulus to all the arts. The ensemble playing of a quartet is inspiring not only for the quality of its music, but also for the wonderful spacial relationships between the forms of the instrument and the reactions of the players. In the woodcarving illustrated opposite, I endeavoured to show the combination of these two facets. Wood as a medium does not allow for the fine details of the strings or the bow, etc, but it does lend itself very well to the expression of rhythmical forms of music. This carving then is the fore-runner of much of my very much later work along the same lines. Such as the abstraction from human relationships into the music in this civilisation and the drawings of the street jazz players as well as those of Isaac Stern and his Quartet, drawn in Jerusalem.

After the final exams for a Diploma in Psychological Medicine which I passed, I had a joint one-man show of my sculpture with a painter friend. Needing a few extra works, I was able to put myself back into the mode of 'The Kiss', and produced a similar sized sculpture entitled 'Mother and Child'. This was the first time that I had extemporized on any image. The variation was successful, but due to the limitations on my time in producing art, I was never able to really make all the derivations that should have been made from any one set of ideas. In the October of 1951, I sailed from Capetown for London. I was due to spend a few weeks there before going on to Europe, to Italy where I hoped to study sculpture. As events turned out I reached Paris with the friends I was travelling with, only to hear the news the next day that my mother had passed away. This determined me to stay in Paris and to one of the friends who had been a student at the Academie Julian, I was able to sign on there as a student of life drawing.

The traumatic experience of loss certainly knocked on the head any ideas I had of exploring my creativity away from the professional practice of psychiatry. I had intended to take a year off working in Rome, but at an interview with Professor (later Sir) Aubrey Lewis at the Maudsley Hospital, I was persuaded by him to take up an appointment six months after my departure from London for the Continent. The way things turned out, I was rather grateful to have made this decision.

In Paris, I applied myself, in the New Year, to life drawing, quick sketch classes and through the good offices of one of the artists who was friendly with a Professor at the Ecole Les Beaux Artistes, I was admitted without examination under the rules which allowed them to admit ten percent of their places for "Etrangers". Other students had to pass a rather rigorous application and entrance exam. I wanted to study stone carving and I was taken into the studio, or the "Atelier" of M. Saupique. He had been a student of a famous sculptor contemporary of Rodin, called Maillol, and M. Saupique produced large nudes which were almost identical in the high old tradition. I was set to work copying what was called a head of one of the Kings from Chartres Cathedral under the tutelage of the senior student in the room. M. Saupique, who spoke no English, took hardly any notice of me except to glance at my work when he came in from time to time. The technique I was being taught was that of pointing, where one applied a three-pronged pointer to marks set on the work to be copied and applied then assiduously as a correspondence to the block of stone one was carving away. I thought to take my time and produce a single work of at least a viable copy rather than rush through and try to produce some original works of my own. The result was that I was able to eventually carry away a fine copy in stone of the head in question, which I had not carved down to the final finished quality of the original model. Instead I left my treadle marks and something of the expression rather undefined, which gave the work a more life-like air.

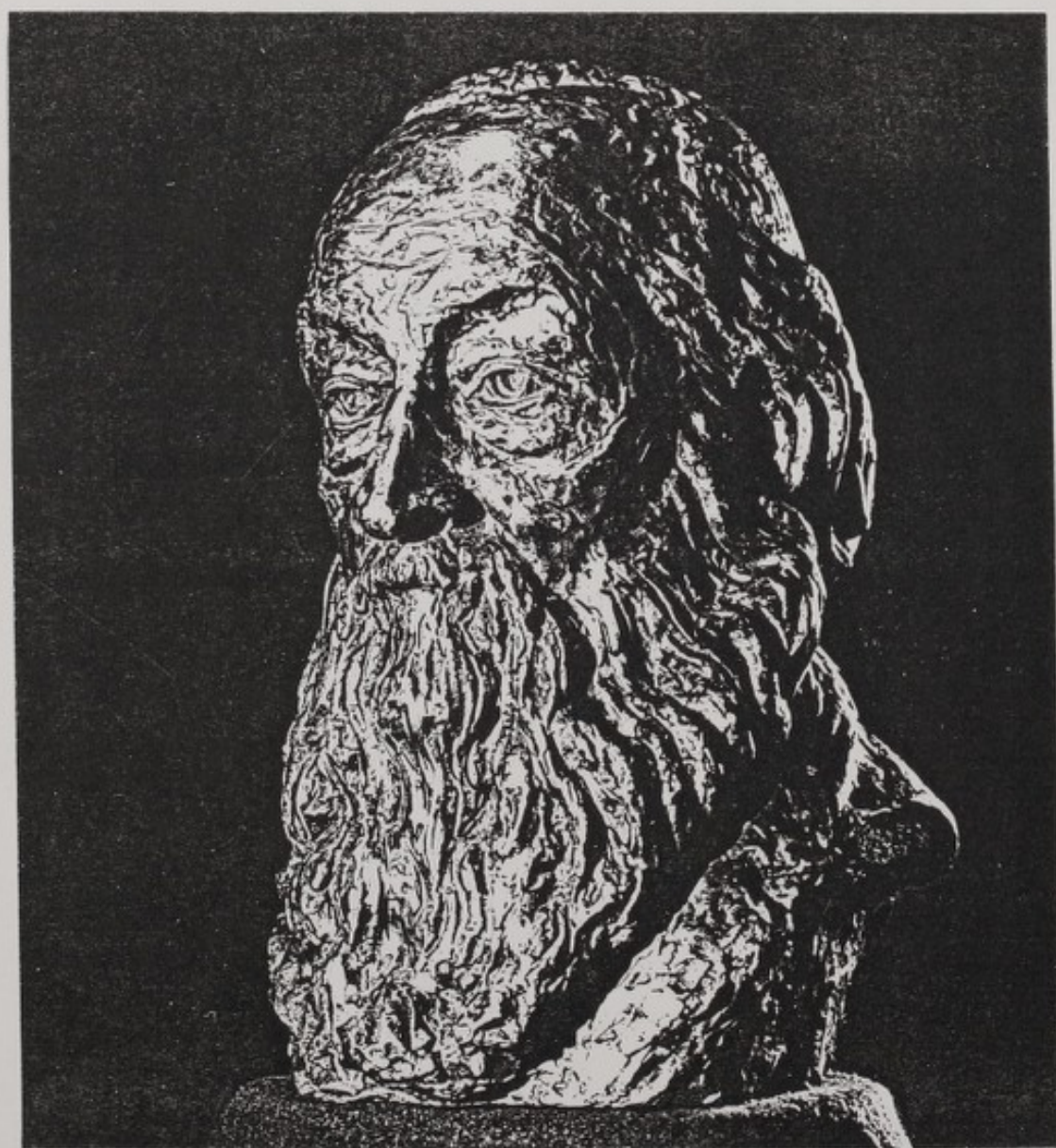
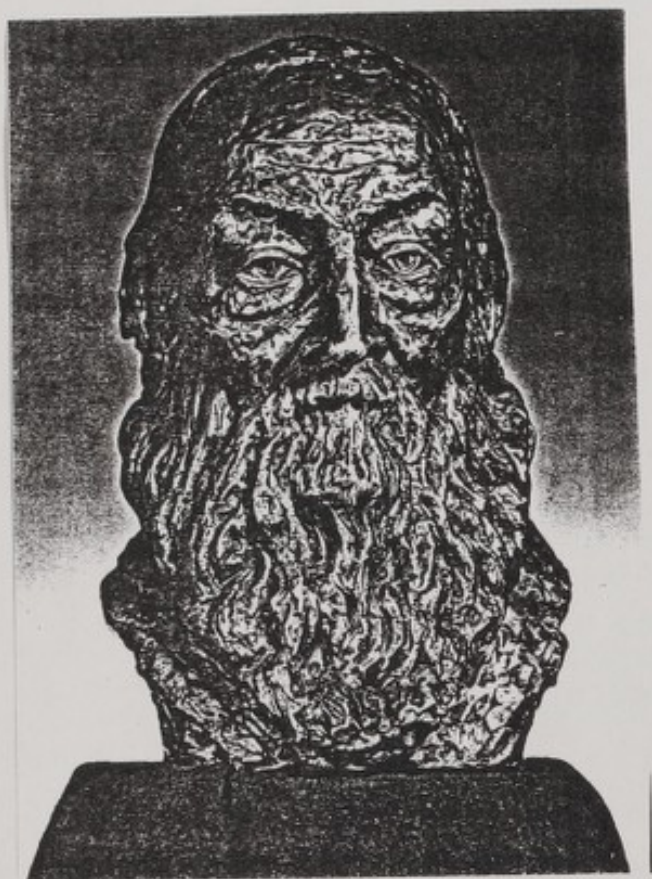


As luck would have it, M. Saupique's wife was the keeper of drawings in the Louvre, and they were both invited to London with an exhibition of drawings from the Louvre, at which they were presented to H.M. The Queen. M. Saupique was so delighted and encouraged by this experience, that he lost no time in making me aware of the fact. He tried speaking English to me and was most encouraging about my work following this, adding at my departure that I was most welcome to come and work in his department at any time in the future. This was my first encounter with the benefits of international relationships. Each atelier ran separately. It was nothing for the girls in our studio to capture to couple of intruding female students, smear them, especially their hair with clay and lock them in the claybin for trespassing. I also found it difficult to understand how or why someone appeared to be playing airs on a trumpet all day from somewhere in the building, without anyone complaining or the person concerned taking the time off from their studies. But on questioning, we considered that this was probably an architect who was a student in that department of the school.

I tried to identify which head it was that I had copied, and always failed to do so, from books or illustrations. I had taken, when I visited Chartres and had time to look at all the sculptures, I found that the head I had copied was not one of the Kings at all, but was that of St Paul, resplendent over one of the main portals. Without knowing it, in retrospect, I can see this as a portent of things to come with my sculpture.

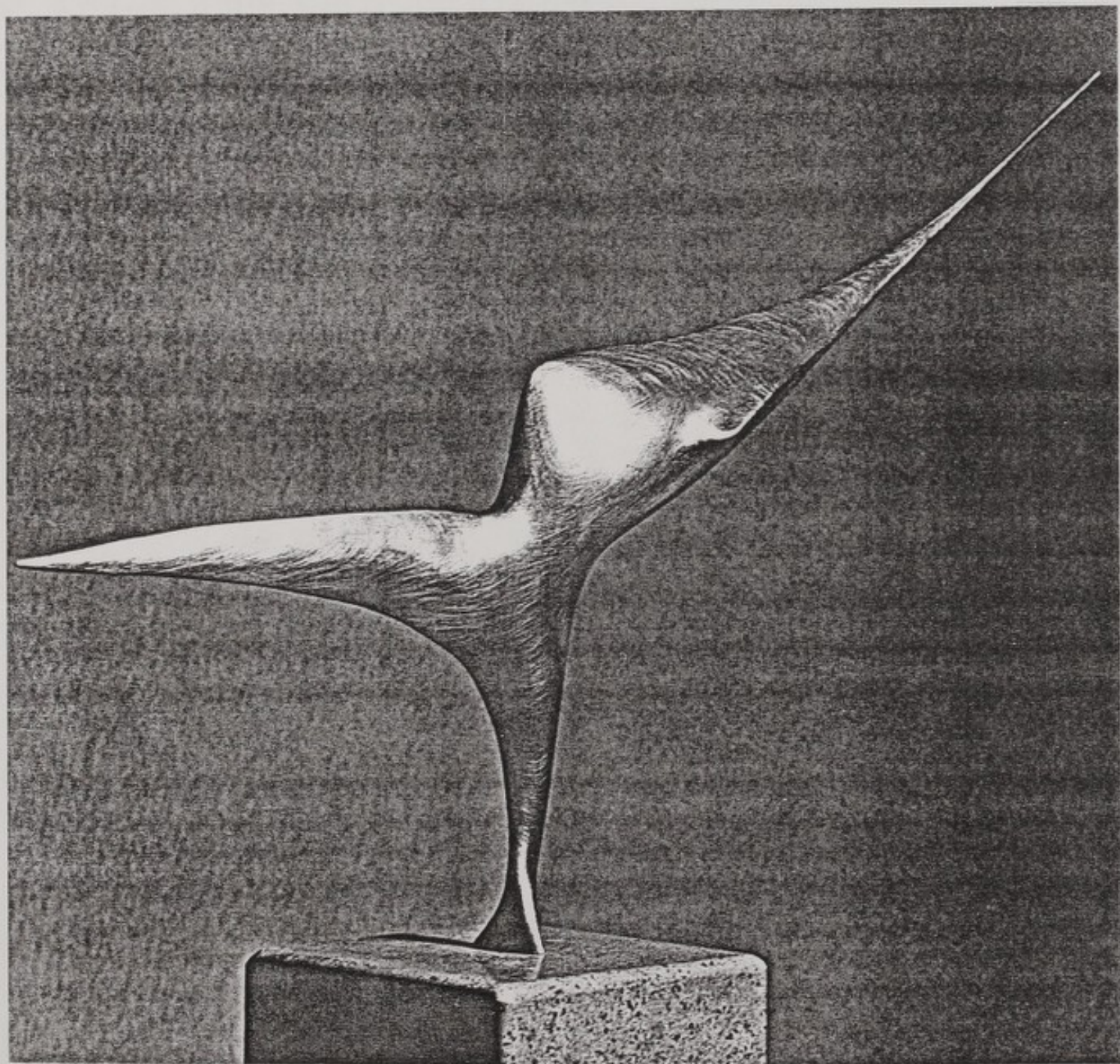
Without knowing it, I had imbibed the whole feel and understanding of gothic proportion from making the head. It is common knowledge that the subject matter and proportions of the sculptures in the medieval Cathedrals were all laid down by the ecclesiastical authorities. Within the narrow confines of the prescribed forms, the artists were able to exercise their originality. The limitations therefore acted as a spur to their individuality. I hoped that my own limited conditions for producing art would act in a similar fashion.

To escape having to escort the rather plain daughter of the wealthy relative of some of my new friends, to a grand ball in Paris, I left the capital for the Mardi Gras in Nice. This was the first one to be held after the War, and the streets were inches deep in confetti, the floats magnificent, as were the fireworks displays. I made my way down to Italy seeing as much art as I could in Pisa, Florence and the hill cities down to Rome. Some untoward accident occurred soon after my arrival and I decided to return to London and to take up my appointment at Maudsley after Easter. I had seen the Michelangelo's in Florence, especially at the Academia and also the Moses in Rome, and I felt mightily inspired, but rather diminished by the encounter.



THE DANCING FISH

This work was produced in plaster and later cast into bronze as a series which sold out. The work proceeded from a spontaneous small drawing about 2 inches in length which was then translated into the three dimensional form. This semi-abstract work depends for its effect on the delicate balance between the two arabesques which go to form the Goya tail and the upwardly pointed nose like a swordfish. There is a play between the energy of movement and the balance of the material form. The drawing appeared quite spontaneously and heralded a new stage in the development of what seemed to me to be a basic configuration in my sculpture of that period, the relationship of the two arabesques, which here, are much more open in their position with regard to each other.



SERIES OF PORTRAIT SCULPTURES

I was elected as a Foundation Member of the Portrait Sculpture Society and managed to send portraits annually to their exhibition for some years. Among the portraits I made was that of my sister.

I had been accepted for psycho-analytic training and was undergoing a personal analysis as part of the training, which was rather stressful. The effects of the experience can be seen in the bronze mask as a self-portrait which I made at that time. The attitude of the face was one of deep introspection. It very accurately described the feelings with which one was occupied when immersed in the deep personal examination of one's past and present emotional life. Some time later I incorporated this self-portrait as part of the sculpture "The dream of monsters brings forth reason."

STEPHEN

In the accompanying picture of the portrait of my nephew, Stephen, I hoped to capture the quality of innocence and youthfulness of a true adolescent boy.





PORTRAIT OF FRANCIE HOGLE

The Hogles were American and he was the scion of an American mining family. They were Quakers who were always on the lookout to do good work. One of them commissioned me to do a portrait of their young 4 year old daughter, Francie. Francie was a very active child and I did the portrait at their home, usually remembering Francie's features and shape so that the portrait slowly grew while she amused herself. I liked the idea of her ponytail which could introduce a very subtle sculptural form of its own. I was very happy to do this portrait which turned out very well as another example of young children for my series.



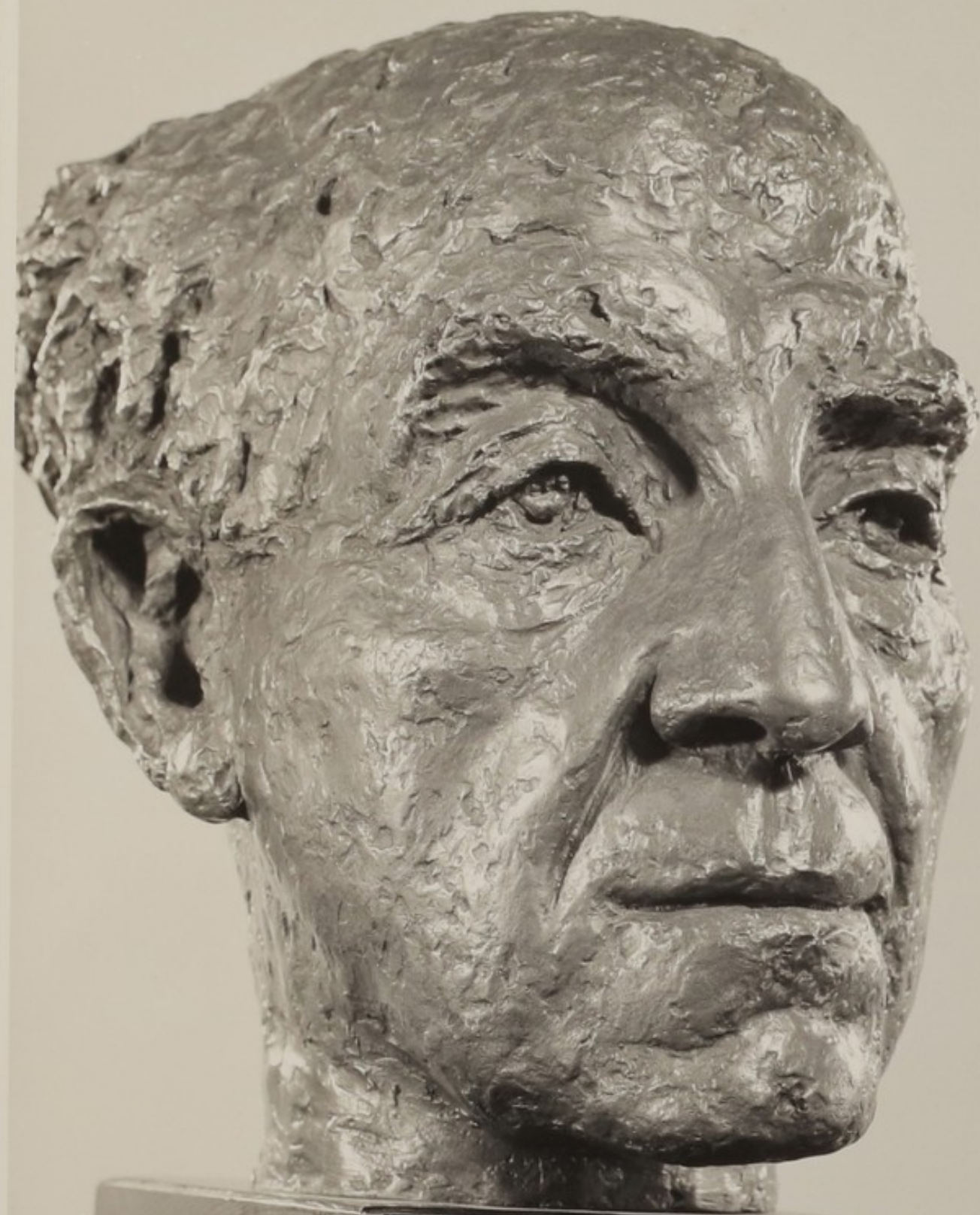


JULIUS ROBINSON

Julius Robinson was a South African millionaire who came to London regularly and lived in suite at the Savoy Hotel. I had known him previously and, on one of his visits, he commissioned me to do a portrait bust of him. While I was setting up the various requisites for the portrait, we went out together with others a few times socially. One of these was an invitation to lunch on a Sunday, and for me to come to the Savoy and meet him at his suite. To a Registrar, used mainly to the canteen food at the Maudsley, this seemed a fine opportunity for a slap-up meal. When a few of us were assembled in the suite, Julius rang down for his chauffeur to bring the Rolls Royce round to the front door, saying we were going out to lunch. We all trooped down and were driven by the chauffeur almost round the corner to Piccadilly Circus where we alighted at the door of what was then a rather well-known eating house called the Nosh Bar. Julius had a penchant for salt-beef sandwiches and they together with some pickled cucumbers formed the main dish for our Sunday lunch. After this fine repast, we all crowded back into the Rolls Royce and drove back to the Savoy. It was certainly one of my more memorable meals, but for the wrong reasons.

Later on, when I came to do the bust, a curious set of circumstances had to be operated by me. Julius was a man past middle age who still retained a strong penchant for young ladies. One of his entourage was a young man who would encounter these creatures and invite them up to the suite for Julius to meet. Whenever I was there, a sort of running cocktail party would be going on in the living room, whatever the time of day or night. Julius of course was loving all of this and having a great time chatting away to the ladies. For me to get any work done, I had to take one of them aside and persuade her to invite him into the bedroom where I had set up my easel and clay armature etc, and I would wait like some spider for the prey to enter.

When Julius came in with her full of expectations, she had orders to disappear back into the living room and Julius, knowing that he was supposed to sit for me, would recalcitrantly sit for a while so that we finally got the portrait done.



(11)

My friendship with the Stengels continued long after I had left his firm. I had then been promoted and was the Senior Registrar at Bethlem Royal Hospital, where Stengel lived in one of the Hospital houses. After some persuasion, he agreed that I should do a portrait of him, but was loath to give me any time for sittings. He was a most conscientious person who, if he was not seeing patients or teaching, was carrying out a massive programme of research, particularly into suicide. At one junction, he had to prepare lectures which he was giving abroad and this gave us the opportunity for me to do the bust while he was sitting at his desk and writing his papers. The bust turned out very well and I was careful to give him something of a smile, an indication of his sense of humour. Unfortunately, at the point where the bust was finished, the armature wasn't strong enough compared with the life-size portrait in heavy clay and the head tilted backwards, cracking across the mouth and totally removing the smile, including my own. I was able to repair the portrait and strengthen the armature, but somehow the smile never quite came back in the same way. When the bust was finished and Aubrey Lewis saw it, he said, "Yes, what a fine bust, but where is Dr Stengel's sense of humour and his smile?" This was said with some relish in his manner of always finding the weak point of an argument or an observation. The bust went with Stengel to Sheffield where he was appointed the Professor of Psychiatry. Many years later, as one will perceive further down, I was able to make reparation for the loss of the smile in no uncertain way.

I did a series of portraits of the family members and the children of friends, some of them done abroad, which was, from my point of view, a way of keeping my sculpture alive as that was probably the busiest time anyone could have had in terms of medical training. In order to be appointed Senior Registrar at the Maudsley, one had to have a double post-graduate qualification. I had my DPM from South Africa, but had to spend two years in research for an MD thesis, which was done in my own time in the evenings and weekends after a very busy clinical day. After this, the academic training to be a psycho-analyst took its toll and in the final year of that training, my daily schedule looked something as follows:

8.00 a.m. - First patient at the Institute of Psycho-Analysis.
 9.15 - Personal analysis in Chelsea.
 10.30 - On duty in the wards at the Maudsley near Camberwell Green.
 5.00 p.m. - At the Maudsley, second psycho-analytic case.
 6.15 - Dinner at the Regent Polytechnic in Regent Street.
 6.30 - Life drawing class till 8.00 p.m.
 8.15 - Around the corner in New Cavendish Street at the Institute of Psycho-Analysis for a seminar lasting until 9.45 p.m.

and then to bed. To be repeated the next day and most evenings for the week and the year.

One of the portraits I made was that of a young patient in the children's department of the Maudsley who was suffering from behaviour disturbance, who had an extremely high IQ, which was at odds with that of his parents and the rest of the family who were of an ordinary working-class background.

CLARISSA LOXTON-PEACOCK

I first met Clarissa when I responded to her advertisement as a tenant for a flat at the top of her house in St John's Wood near Lords. She was Hungarian, claimed to be a Countess and was a contemporary of Za Za Gabor. She was tall and willowy with dark hair, beautiful face and a fearless wit.

If the Hungarians should become the inheritors of the earth, she would be witness to it. The living room and most of the house were adorned with ceramic birds of every shape, kind and colour. They formed a background to the elegant and swan-like character of Clarissa herself.

In my portrait of her, I wanted to express these features and did them in an abstract way. When the bust was finished, she claimed it didn't look like her and her friends wouldn't recognize her. She was a very good painter and became a very good friend.

ADAM AND EVE AND THE FALL

I left the Maudsley in 1958 and was appointed Psychiatrist to the Portman Clinic. As this was part-time, I went into private practice in Harley Street, sharing rooms with a good friend of mine from the Maudsley, Dr Henri Rey. These were very busy times as one was having to make one's reputation in the outside world, away from the shelter of a major teaching hospital. I took up other Consultant appointments and also worked as a research Psycho-Analyst with Miss Anna Freud at the Hampstead Child Therapy Course and Clinic.

In 1960 I decided I needed to return to some wood-carving having found a small round block, the section of the trunk of a tree while walking in the country with friends. I decided to do Adam and Eve and the Fall, and as this was a direct carving without drawings, I carved away at it for quite some time, very slowly until there wasn't any wood left to take off, and the work was complete.

Adam and Eve exist as two primitive figures intertwined at their bases with a semi-circular womb-like form symbolic of the Garden of Eden where they are fully protected. Eve looks up in anticipation having tempted Adam who reaches up for the fruit suspended from the top. The figure of the Fall, which exists outside of Eden, ejected from the womb in falling, is fully abstracted. There was a head of Adam in it, which I completely carved away, which was necessary as part of the logic of the abstract forms. This is a work which can be viewed from each and every possible angle and the forms and the shapes have a proper aesthetic quality and work. This is another work which I subsequently cast into bronze in an edition.

It was apparent that whenever I worked in an unconscious spontaneous way, the contrasting arabesques and curves would appear in the work. The significance of this in terms of an artistic development is discussed below and was best described in the paper entitled, "A Psycho-Analytical Study of Sculpture." This was published in French as part of the proceedings of a Conference on Psycho-Analysis and Art, which took place at Cerisy-la-Salle, Normandy. The Conference took place in a chateau which had been given to the French Government by Mme. Heurgon in memory of her father, who had owned the chateau and who had acted as Abbe to the most distinguished French literary personalities such as Andre Gide, when they were in exile in North Africa during the German occupation of France.

Mme. Heurgon was a highly efficient and extremely kind lady. I think she was attracted to young, creative people and she made a point of telling me what her impressions were of our meeting. "I have met many Nobel Prize Winners in my time, but I always met them after they had received the Prize.

You are the first person I have met beforehand." Her remark aroused a great deal of anxiety in me rather than pride. There was no way in which I would ever receive the Nobel Prize for medicine, no Prize was awarded for sculpture, and when it came to writing, I had written nothing at all.

I took it as another of the messages of encouragement I received from time to time, such as Aubrey Lewis meeting me on the stairs of the Outpatient Department and suddenly saying he could see me as a future Reith Lecturer. The trouble with these splendid notions, was that if you didn't achieve them, there was an inherent sense of failure to reach one's potential. A few years later it was Professor Morris Carstairs, one of Aubrey's proteges, who delivered the Reith Lectures.



Adam & Eve & the Fall.

LATER PORTRAITS

Henri Rey

Henri Rey, a psychiatrist and psycho-analyst of great distinction, was born on the island of Mauritius. He claimed first as a chemist in the sugar industry analyzing the qualities of the sugar being produced. A vital and exuberant figure, given to great passionate declarations and opinions, he was of course far too limited in that field and so he pursued his career in the field of medicine, in psychiatry and in particular, in psycho-analysis.

A man of fiercely individual views, he followed the teachings of Melanie Klein, and made important contributions to the psycho-analysis and understanding of related illnesses in women and the treatment of psychotic illness.

When I began private practice in Harley Street, it was in tandem with Henri.

We shared a rather back small room together at the end of the ground-floor corridor. I would work in the mornings until lunch-time, and at 10 minutes to 2, I would leave and Henri would arrive, thus giving us a few minutes to converse at the time of the handover.

I used to pull his leg saying that he should become famous and then I would do a bust of him. Nothing ever seemed to emanate from this remark which I made from time to time and which we both took as a source of amusement. However, when it came for his retirement as a Consultant and Senior Lecturer at the Institute of Psychiatry and at the Maudsley Hospital, I was invited to do a bust of Henri, commissioned by the Doctors of the Hospital.

Being old and good friends, experience of making the portrait was most enlivening and extremely enjoyable. I was determined to bring out Henri's salient characteristics. His great intelligence, his humour and his incisive comments about the mind and life in general.

In due course, Henri's retirement party at the Maudsley took place, at which the bust was presented. In his farewell speech with reference to the bust, Henri turned to me saying, "And now I am famous, because Ismond has made a bust of me." Can you imagine waiting all those years in order to be able to crack back. And with such grace and in such complimentary fashion.



ISMOND ROSEN working on the portrait bust of Henry Key, with Henry Key,
in his studio at Rome.

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METAL SCULPTURES

When my son was born in the Spring of 1964 at 5.00 o'clock in the morning, I celebrated the event with a cup of coffee in a new opened launderette which lay between the hospital and my walk home. I fell to pondering about the new responsibilities which were relying upon me as a family man and I had the idea of using a small legacy which I had received to create a similar launderette off-shore in Jersey. I worked at this project so that by the end of the summer holidays in August, the whole project was ready for opening. There were some serious snags about it opening on time due to some of the engineering units not being to hand. While I waited, I watched the men put an enormous metal chimney to take the discharge gases from the boiler way up above the building. They had cut a section of the pipe off and for the first time in my life, I cut out a metal sculpture with the assistance of the workers using oxy-acetylene. The sculpture was an abstract spiral, taking into consideration the curve of the pipe, and I fixed it as a sort of talisman to the wall of the launderette, where it may be to this day. I would not know. When, at the end of the year, we were visiting relatives in Capetown, I managed to get some additional experience and training in welding. With the pieces of scrap metal lying around in the engineering workshop, which came from one of the local abattoirs, I was able to make an abstract sculpture of an owl, and a rather macabre face with one of the meat-hooks from which the carcasses would hang. I then went beyond found objects to cut out triangular sections of steel plate which I made into a small, rather pointed, star-shaped sculpture. On a subsequent Easter holiday, I started a training course in gas-welding and cutting at the British Oxygen School in North London. One of the things we learned was pipe welding with rather small diameter pipes and, at the end of the afternoon, requiring a ceremonial candlestick for that evening, I designed and made a small candelabra which I later had silvered.

During our regular visits to Jersey in the summer holidays after that, I would spend time at the scrapyards which were filled with agricultural scrap. I then had also mastered the technique of electrical arc welding. Thus I was able to personally weld all my sculptures in mild steel. One summer, I made the following six sculptures, to be described.

Object in Space

In this sculpture, my intention was to provide the illusion that a large metal ball with comet-like tails was actually traversing universal space. It had, of course, to be held up by some support and I was able to find the necessary pieces of metal with which to accomplish this concept. The metal ball was one which was used to weigh down heavy fishermen's nets in the water, and the tails of the comet were old, used ploughshares which had been ground down by ploughing and which formed, in my view, a contradiction to something travelling in space, being about as earthy an object as one could ever imagine. Not having any assistant with these works, I had to contrive bits of support and clamps to hold them in position, and to play with the objects until one could achieve the right balance. At this point, one was able to weld them and change the quality somewhat. At the base of this work, I decided to put in more familiar heavenly bodies such as the sun from a section of a tooth-gear, the moon in its crescent shape and as a humorous side, a small mobile to represent the earth, which was part of my support stand for the ball in the air. This was a small, round object within a housing that could be delicately revolved with one's fingers, and this represented the earth. I was very pleased with this work as it maintained its movement and energies from whatever direction one observed it.

Progress

The idea behind this sculpture was one of a progression from the early use of the wheel, then the wind and finally the rocket as a means of travel and propulsion.

For the wheel I used an actual plough wheel and fashioned the wings by cutting steel plates or using sections I had found which is what I also did with the side-pieces which were like abstract comets joining the wings to the body and the final end of the rocket up in the front. So again the balance of the piece and its aesthetic and cultural function, from every direction, was important. In its whole proportion, it looks like an artillery piece. Another concept in ingredient determining progress, the use of arms, the function of aggression and war. I left part of the top part of the plough wheel as a ferric object which both threatens and fructifies.

Tree with Birds

Scrapyards usually contain pieces of metal which are cast off after the cutting of industrial processes to make particular objects. In this way one finds a repetition of forms and these small forms, which were sort of 'S'-shaped, I joined together and they formed the foliage of the tree, put this on top of quite a long metal pole and the birds were a whole mixture of varieties: a large bird at the top with the all-seeing eye, the bird below it, with what was a butterfly-type of wing coloured blue and a very old metal hammer formed the body and head. Below that was a sort of bird-of-prey with a pair of old tin snips and then various birds, pigeon-like or plumage-like were turned either from pieces of metal and designed as such, or happened to fit in as birds from their original forms. The exercise was in maintaining the balance between all the forms so that a very harmonious atmosphere was engendered where some of the birds appeared camouflaged and others were quite obvious.



Reclining Nude

With the reclining nude, I wanted to create an atmosphere of classical restfulness of the essence of femininity, using quite a variety of different metal objects. The form was a rather ungainly rectangle, a little over 4 feet long and about 50 inches high and to this I applied unusual metal objects symbolic of different parts of the anatomy. The larger portions of the head and the chest were applied and then a breast form and an arm at the top of the rectangle in the centre projecting away from the figure. To balance these I used a number of small metal devices, each of them different, to represent the internal workings of the person, as it were, and when these forms were balanced, I set another long metal rod on the left-hand side at an angle to the rectangle, to which it was attached by a small rod, so that the rectangle would be, as it were, flying out sideways like a flag in the wind from a flagpole. This device of the horizontal nature of the rectangle would then work with the rod providing the angle of movement.

Because I wanted this work to be mounted exteriorly on a building, I had it sand-blasted and then coated about 17 times with metal that was rust-free and then painted a new coats with many coats so that it almost rivalled a Rolls Royce in its final perfection and rust-proofness.

The Royal Family

The Royal Family was made as a sort of joke. The King and the Crown Prince have their bodies made of a chemical excavator blade which had been worn down by use or broken. The heads of the King and Queen were fashioned from old metal tractor seats which were then coated appropriately and a sort of symbolic face put on. The King has his own form of transport with a whirling propeller from the back of his head, while in front he has a king-size member befitting the role of the king. When it came to finishing the Queen, I felt I could once more indulge my fantasy with a gentle mobile. The two squares of her breast are threaded onto two bolts with an extremely amount of movement between them, but they can be moved. The Crown Prince is almost totally self-absorbed. His rather innocent face has beneath it a sort of three-sided fountain which, in the lower portion, would look purely back into himself with the receptacle there. A fine object, or fine objects.

The Sun on his Bicycle

This is another fun sculpture which consists of a large disk with a revolving sun pattern in metal in front of it on top of a rather slender metal pole which goes into one of the plough-type wheels supporting the body of the sun like a chariot, about which are extended the bicycle-like arms. The sun is, at the moment, about to take off and ride into the sky on his bicycle.

What is interesting about this work apart from the pleasure which it does afford, is the origin and the use of the material. The shape above, if it were the subject of origin in a quiz game would, I think, never be guessed at. It is part of a piece of apparatus which was used to mixed bat guano from caves for fertiliser. The handlebars of the bicycle are made from a metal tow-bar and there are other small pieces which lend it an air of grace and element of control between the pole and the chariot-like front. In the centre of the chariot portion, I put another small emblem of the sun. The whole piece was painted with a sort of hard-gloss paint used for bicycles.

The Mountains

All forms found in a scrapyard certainly give one food for fantasy and imagination. However, it is a bit dangerous to continue thus for too long because one surrenders the facility of designing an object from a personal source.

One of the great experiences of my life was to stand and observe the Parthenon at the Acropolis in Athens. Nobody who has not stood there can appreciate the subtle beauty of the proportion, not only because of the golden mean which was used and originated there, but also because of the fact that all the lines which are apparently straight, are in fact curves, gentle but imperceptible. When I decided to make a small model of two mountain peaks relating to one another, I cut the metal plates and ground them so that every line which appeared straight, is actually a curve. The surface is a curve, the edge is a curve; and all the plates were welded so that it appears quite solid, although it is made of mild steel.

My return to London from Jersey was shortly thereafter highlighted by the exhibition of David Smith at the Tate Gallery. As a former sculptor of his time in found and fashioned metals, it was easy to see how he had arrived at his forms because they were a logical progression from what you could do with such forms, and what sort of forms existed to be made. He had gone on to work in stainless steel which, of course, were his grands oeuvres and which I admired enormously.

I continued to work at the scrapyards in London, particularly at Silvertown which would put through about 2,000 tons of scrap a day. Four trainloads of 40 castings or pressings would arrive from the Ford Motor Company and be compressed into rather tiny blocks. I would wander round the scrapyard, noting the pieces and mentally storing them in some kind of library of memory for use later. In this way, one would trawl and have ideas and be able to go back and select pieces that one thought would be of some use. By now I was able to use much bigger welding apparatus and work in a much thicker gauge of metal plate.

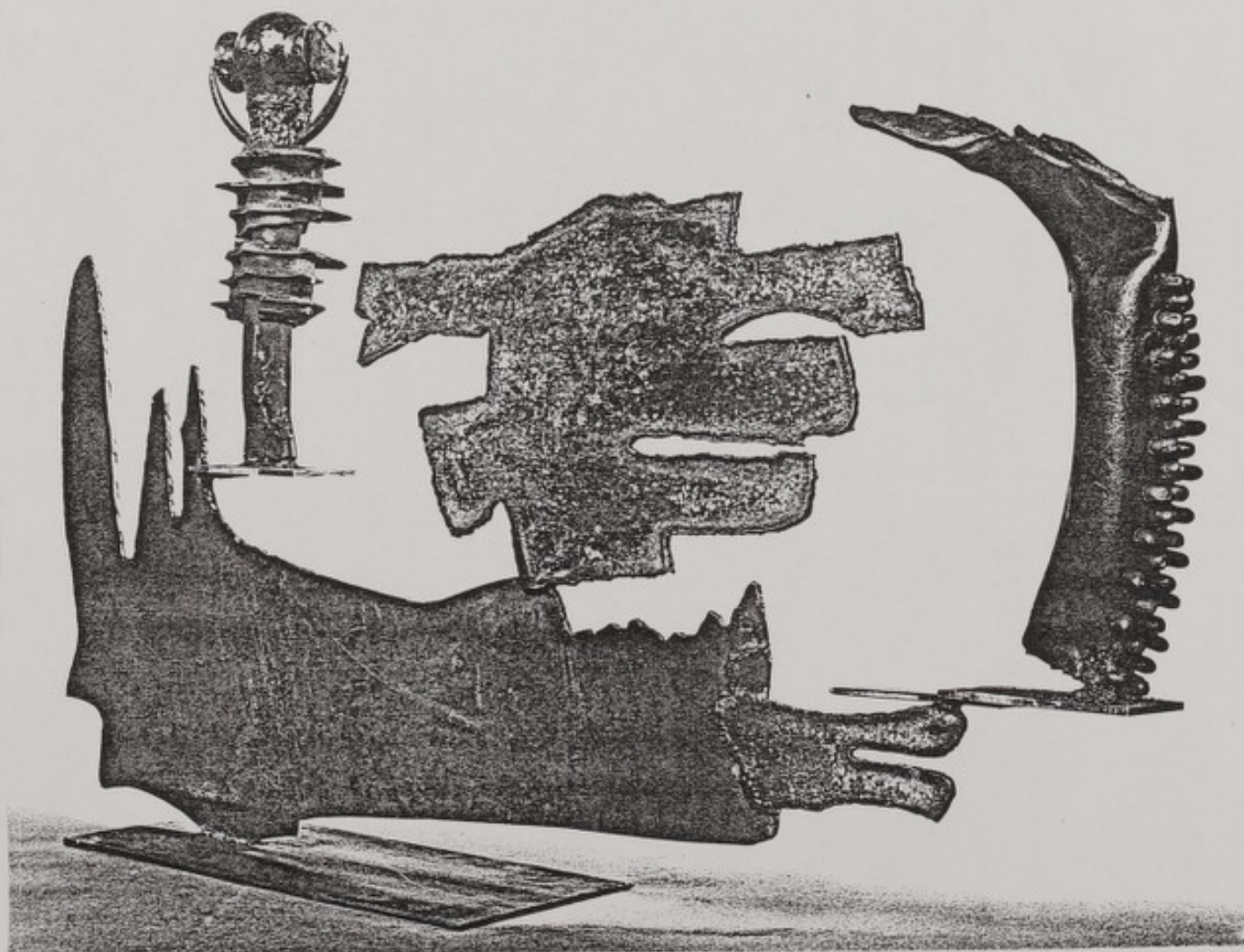
and
~~Sentinel at the Wall~~
~~The Berlin Wall~~

The Berlin Wall

The point of view I took about the Berlin Wall was as follows. It was essentially a divisive butcher, but its essence was that of aggression and its function that of the sentinel watching the movements of everyone and preventing them if possible from exercising any freedom of movement.

In this work I used a combination of basic design of my own and found objects. The whole tenor of the piece is like that of a Viking ship in the shape of a human mandible where there are jagged teeth at the end showing the essence of human aggressivity. In the centre is a sail which is attached to the mandible body. While at either end are two sentinels, one in front which is fashioned from old boiler pipes, and is a heat exchanger and therefore a heat sensor, while on the other side I had fashioned a sentinel-figure which had radar disks and antennae on each side of the head.

The accessories to the mandible-like body were tacked on very lightly in the welding, the object being to infer that the whole structure was a completely superficial fabrication that could easily be taken apart or knocked down if the will was there.

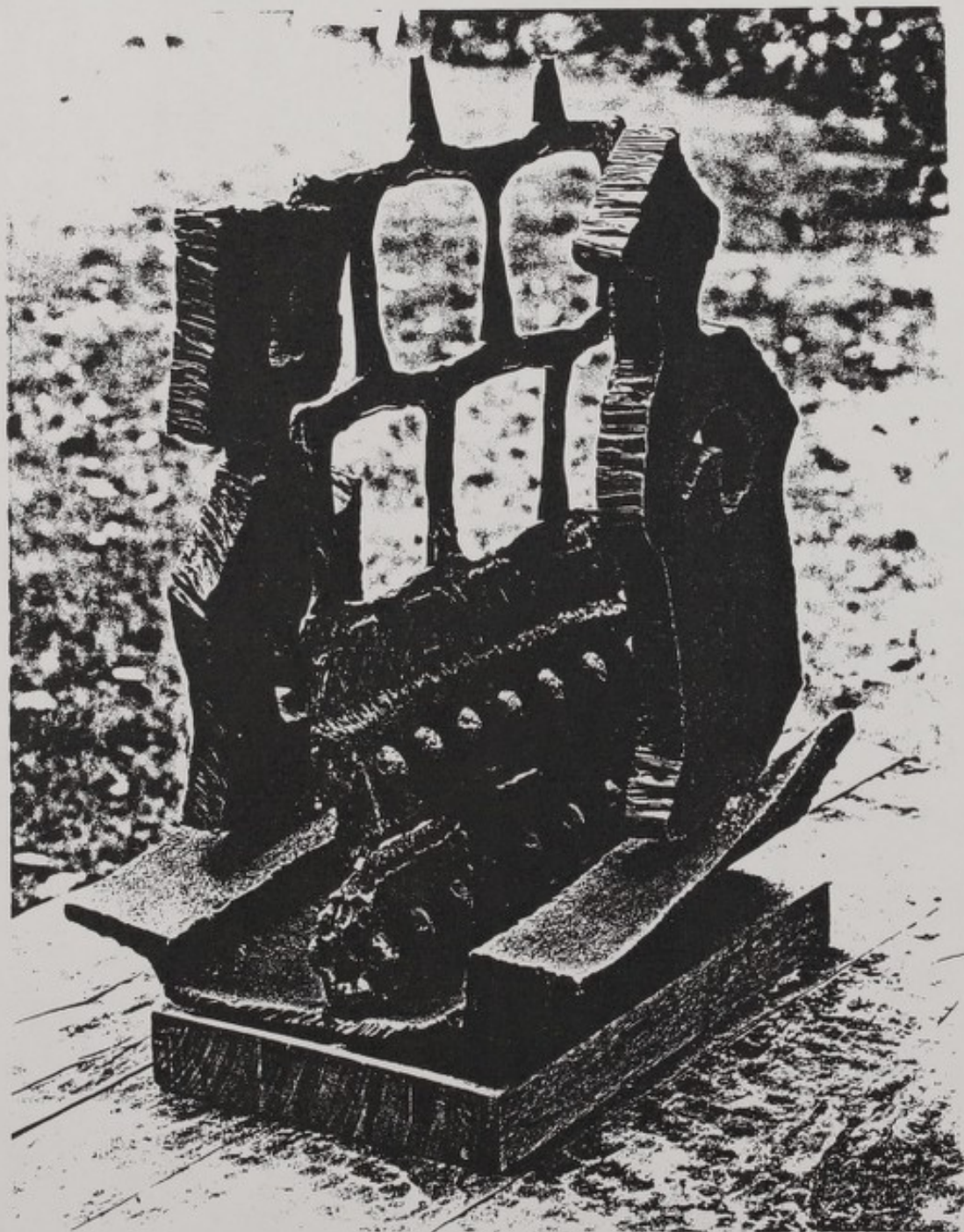


~~Sentinels and the Wall~~ ~~The Bell Wall~~ *Sentinels and the Wall*


As a companion piece to the above I cut out two figures in very thick metal, which observe and watch each other deliberately through the curtain-like apertures of the wall which divides them and which is set in a kind of moat.

I gave these a rather medieval quality in keeping with the character of the wall in this sculpture. I think I was reminded, while making it, of the etchings of Piranesi in Rome, in the way men have always divided themselves from each other for political and territorial advantages. In both these pieces, I wanted to bring out the sense of power and also that of foreboding

of our time.





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The Deluge

This was the last of the sculptures done in mild steel with objects found in the scrapyard, after which I gave up working in this medium.

This work was created years later in 1973 for the exhibition, Genesis, at the Camden Arts Centre. I was working at the scrapyard at Hale in Cornwall where all the marine scrap was brought from sunken vessels. At that time, they were salvaging the "Bessemer City". This ship had foundered off the coast of Cornwall, being an American freighter. In one corner of the large yard, was a huge pile of reinforced steel joists (RSJs) from this vessel. Pieces were twisted in various distorted ways as a result of the wreck. I had the idea to use metal from this ship as a very real symbol of disaster at sea. In other words, as a potent symbol of The Deluge itself in the biblical sense. I sifted through dozens and dozens of pieces in my mind and came across to what seemed to me would make a viable sculpture. The lower portion would be a sort of upright, and above it a section where an RSJ had been twisted to form a 'U' shape. There was no level ground in the scrapyard and it lay on the banks of a canal and so I constructed a platform for myself and used other lighter metal rods as a scaffolding with which to haul these two pieces into a sculptural position. When the two RSJs were put together, they characterised the full force and beauty of the sea. The effect of the erosion and the movement of the sea had shaved the metal down so as to be paper-thin on the one end of the 'U' while it was its original almost half-inch thickness a couple of feet away. The arms of the 'U' protruded forward, menacing with their weight which was about to fall upon the surface below. For the supporting RSJ, I had selected a shape which was bent at the bottom so that it was also on the point of collapse.

When I brought The Deluge back to London, I welded additional metal plates at the point where the two RSJs joined and these were then bolted together with rather large bolts and I set the piece on some rather large mahogany blocks in the shape of an 'H' with the sculpture lying on the centre of the 'H'. In this form, thus mounted, I had it up in my studio. At that time, I was hoping to have an exhibition in the West End and was trying to arrange for a suitable gallery. Some friends introduced me to a particular lady who had just set up a gallery which is still there, and on a Sunday morning she came along with her son to view the pictures and sculptures and also had a glimpse at what was like a small drinks party. She came dressed as if she was going to a cocktail party at Buckingham Palace. I had placed many of my pictures all around the walls of the studio, and there were several sculptures there as well, and she duly walked around and looked at them, and at that point, her only comment was, "Where did you get such wonderful frames?" Which isn't the sort of remark one makes to an aspiring artist, with not a single word about the works at all.

Well, the fates took a hand and she stepped backwards where The Deluge was standing and her heel abutted against the long arm of the 'H' and she fell over backwards and contorted herself as she fell. I thought she was going to hurt herself very badly, but she fell fair and square on her back in the area for the lower part of the 'H'. I was totally aghast at what had happened, but even more surprised by the fact that, as she hit the wooden floor, her hair came off because it was a wig and this most beautifully manicured wig gave place to an equally manicured hair-style of a different colour underneath. At my wit's end at what to do, I grabbed hold of the wig, jammed it back on her head and helped her to her feet. What does one say on such an occasion? I apologised for what had happened and said, complimenting her, "You were so wonderful to have fallen in the way you did, and to have avoided any damage to yourself." She drew herself up to her full 5 foot 2, and exclaimed, "I used to be a ballet-dancer." That's where it ended, there was to be no exhibition, neither could there have been in her establishment, and it cost me a very fine bunch of flowers which I sent her the following week. If ever I needed a friendly deluge, that was it, to make up for the way she had treated me.

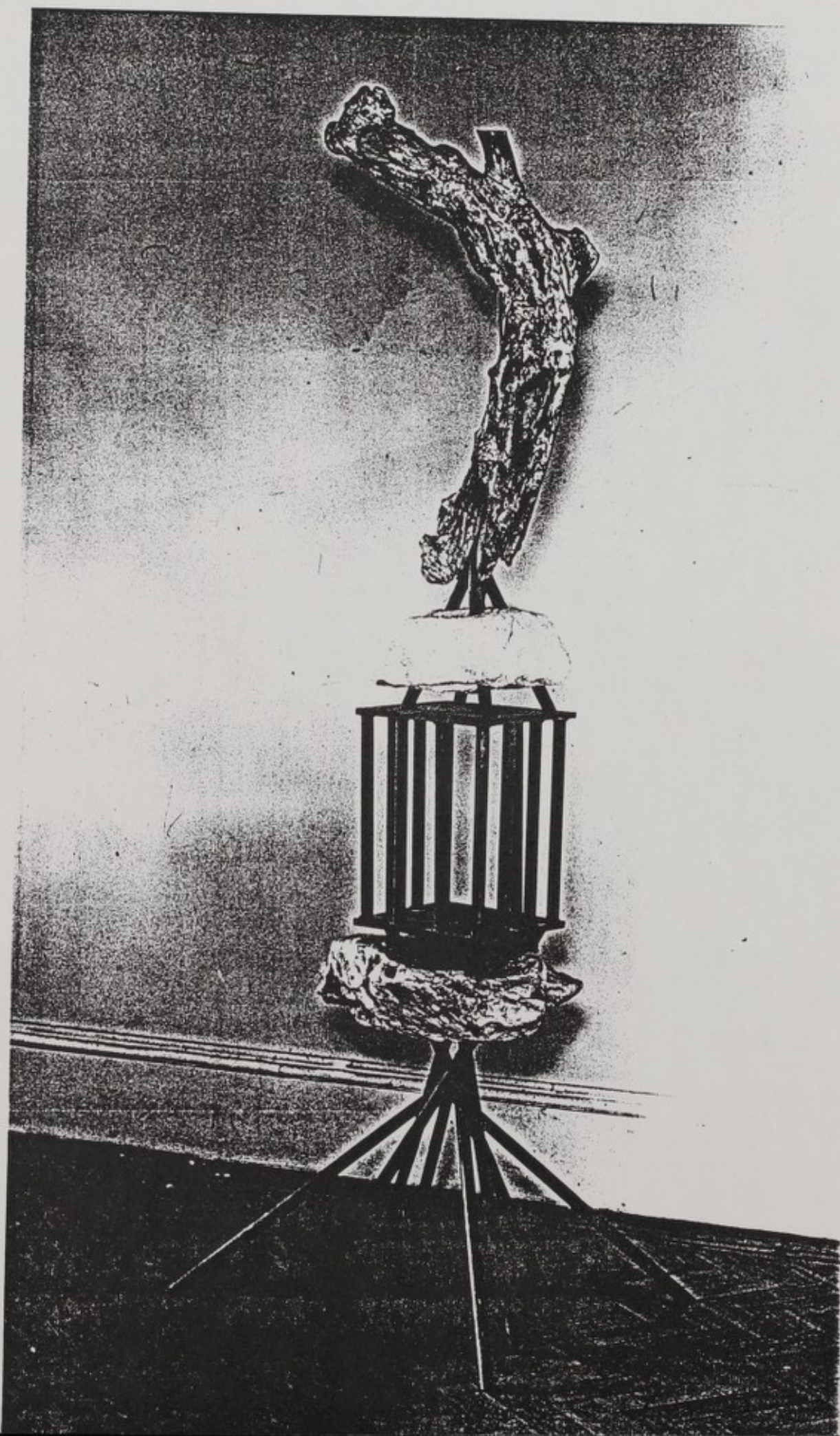
The Victory

When a rather large section of our very old apple tree had to be cut off, I kept it and carved it into the shape of an abstract form in the mode of the Winged Victory of Samothrace in the Louvre. I was not quite sure how it should be mounted and then thought about the relationship of the Victor to the Vanquished in modern times. In fact in our days, there were no more pure Victors. All are engaged in the reparations. If controversy is the best principle on which to sell newspapers and television programmes, then contradiction is what is best in sculpture. Accordingly I decided to symbolise the Vanquished as an empty prison cage below the rather flamboyant and colourful figure of the Victor. The problem then became one of how to symbolise the strife and the war and the conflict between the two of them. I selected some large white marble stones with the idea that the mountings for the wooden form and the cage would be inch-thick metal bars which would pass through the two blocks of stone and form the base of the sculpture from the floor upwards. The rods would twist round each other at an angle, pass through the stone and then attach and be welded to the bottom of the cage whereas from the top of the cage, similar bars would go through the stone there at angles to each other to hold what would eventually be a bronze of the wood form of the Victor.

This was all very well in theory. In practice, I was making the sculpture at an architectural engineering firm which gave me permission to do the work there, although they were closing the whole factory down within two or three days. I therefore had to work alone and under great pressure to complete it. I now found I was in the middle, not so much of a sculptural problem,

although the balances of the forms would be essentially sculptural, but rather it was an engineering problem, that of measuring the inch-thick steel rods for the proper length and then cutting the bevels on each end very accurately so that they could fit perfectly into their position when welded.

The lower portion of the sculpture, I did upside-down so that when the work was finally turned over, the test of accurate workmanship was that all the many rods fitted perfectly and abutted against the floor without any gaps. If an impending hanging is a mighty source of concentration for a condemned man, so is the completion of a sculpture while everything around one is being dismantled and the place shut down. Fortunately everything worked and the engineering specifications were true so that the sculpture stood proudly as it should, firmly on the floor with each leg in position. I think this was my first public piece of sculpture. It has to be seen from all angles in the round for its proper effect which requires a great deal of space. It has, to date, not yet found its proper place.



Pregnant Form

During the time that my wife was pregnant with our second child in 1968, a friend kindly gave me a tree-trunk which bifurcated half-way up about 5 feet high. It was in lime-wood with a very light colour, easy to carve and without any really distinguishable grain. The work therefore proceeded very rapidly and I was able to do it in a month or so.

The aim in this work was to juxtapose square and round forms to illustrate the strength and creativity of the woman. Square forms merged into rather rounded curves with deep hollows, the latter being expressive of the inner psyche and physical propensities of women to produce children, one of the great mysteries of our species. What I found with this work when completed, is that it could stand in any position, on its legs as it were, on its back, upside-down, any position, hence giving credence to the fine balance and significance of the forms.

For the purposes of an exhibition I had a copy made of Pregnant Form in resin which stands in our sculpture garden.



The Dreamer

This abstracted portrait in fantasy is a continuation of the thoughts of the Pregnant Form. The Dreamer is submerged within herself, not only in the dreams of the night, but also the dreams of the day: those fantasies upon which creative life is based. It also looks rather forebodingly towards the future when dreams are no longer possible and we, as mortal creatures, must fade away.



The Jugglers

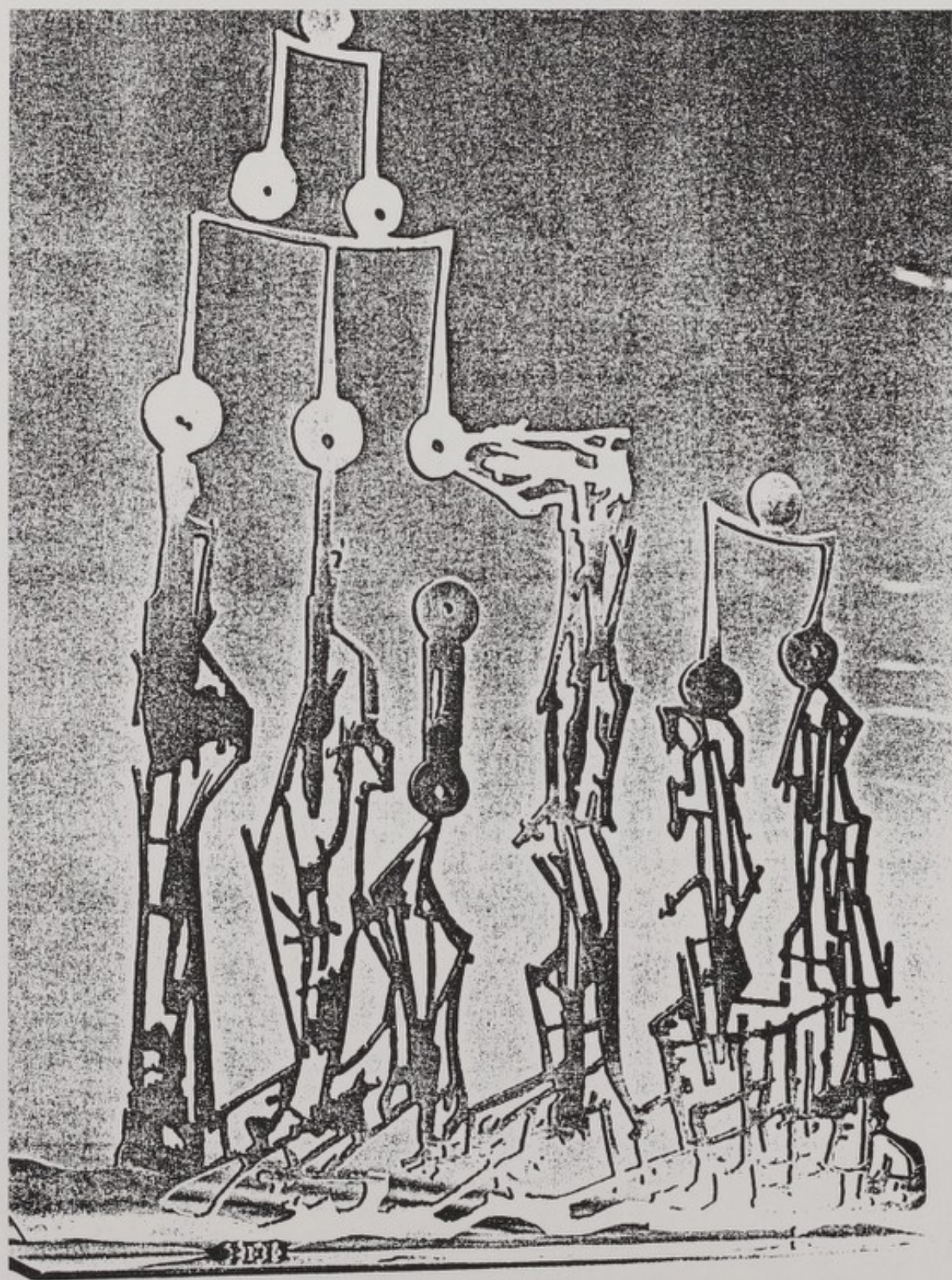
In 1972 I held my first London one-man show at the John Whibley Gallery in Cork Street. I required to produce several new sculptures for this exhibition, having had some success in selling out sculptures on a mixed gallery show previously.

One of the works which was subsequently sold on this show was a new departure in cutting out sculpture from copper plate. I had made a small drawing with ball-point pen, about 2 inches wide, of an abstraction of Jugglers. As in the past, the drawing had come quite of its own volition without any idea of what I was going to produce. As it was rather small I decided to photograph it and blow it up, when it became apparent that the use of a ball-point pen, which was fairly new still, produced a particular kind of line that was unique. Instead of being a straight line as one observed in the ordinary use of a pen, when it was enlarged, the line was much more varied with thick and thin, rather sensitive aspects. What I did then was to use the original line as the form of the sculpture and cut it out using a jigsaw. As this was a rather complicated piece as seen from the photograph opposite, one had to draw and cut out 130 sections within the work, taking care not to damage or alter the line one was following with the saw. What I found was that it would be best to leave the jagged finish of the cut within the plate as this also reflected light in a rather sensitive way and I mounted the finished cutout on a copper base. The Jugglers was the origin of a sculpture still to be described, called Civilisation, which was a further extension of these ideas and this work.

Amphitrite. Bronze.

The design for this sculpture was made spontaneously as a small drawing in ball-point pen which I kept, when suddenly one day my niece arrived, a young girl of 19, very attractive, from Greece where she had spent a little time en route from South Africa to London. Suddenly it all seemed to check and she was to be the model for what was later called Amphitrite. This piece was modelled directly in plaster-of-paris, and gave us both much pleasure in the making. This figure is part goddess, part earth-figure, where the lower earthly part has taken on the qualities of an ancient, eroded sculpture.





Flight

The idea of a body, energetic in flight has always been one of my pre-occupations. As I talk a Boeing 747 flies directly above, having just come out of London Airport. From a block of wax, I carved a maquette of Pure Flight. This was a sculpture, however small, in its own right.

For the purposes of the exhibition, I enlarged the Flight and the owner of a foundry and I worked assiduously on this bronze so that it was really the best bronze I have ever produced.

As is the way with these things, one is always rather pressed for time and this last bronze was only finished the day before the opening of the exhibition. I arrived from the foundry outside the gallery in Cork Street, parked the car and pulled the bronze from off the back seat, ready to enter the gallery. As I did so, my eye fell on the gallery next door, which was Roland Browse and Delbanco, and they had a show of bronzes in the window, with the words, "Bronzes", rather large above the works. In that moment of exhilaration, I shouted out loud, "My bronzes are better than your bronzes," whereupon my eye saw the rest of the writing on the window of that gallery, which was, "Bronzes by Rodin", below the rather flamboyant and colourful figure of The Victor. I thought to myself I would still hold to my opinion and went into the gallery. The bronze was sold on the opening night.

The Seasons. Carrara Marble.

In this work, I thought to approximate the contradictions between the icy-cold of Winter with the warmth of Spring as shown by the rather hard, angular, hard-edged forms of Winter below and the soft, rounded beetle-like forms of Spring above.

The form of Winter is diamond-shaped with hard edges all round and a spur coming out below, by which the work is mounted. None of the lines of Winter are straight, all of them being curved, the surfaces as well as the apparently straight edges. Winter is set at an angle flowing downwards towards the front of the work as it is passing out and giving way to Spring which it carries on its back above. The point of attachment of these two works was rather difficult, both technically and from the point of view of balance. This was because the under-surface of Spring is a semi-circular curve which then has to attach to the top of a running triangle. The foot of Spring is also somewhat like the prow of a ship which ploughs its way, changing, through time. The foetal head of Spring is slightly inclined to one side, showing the movement and motion of an awakened Spring. Another 747 is flying above at this moment.

This sculpture was made in plaster-of-paris, which allowed one the time and vision to connect all the very delicate forms with their feet of clay. This sculpture was then made in several editions in Carrara Marble.

All the following sculptures were prepared during 1973 and 1974 for the Exhibition entitled "Genesis" held at the Camden Arts Centre in Hampstead under the aegis of the Camden Borough Council.

The Deluge

In the summer of 1973, the family holidayed in Cornwall and I spent quite a lot of time at the scrapyard at Hale where a great deal of marine scrap was being salvaged from a sunken ship called The Bessemer City. Dozens of massive reinforced steel joists (RSJs) were piled up in one corner of the yard. What better material, I thought, to express The Deluge where there was actual destruction by the sea, than the material dredged up from a sunken wreck. I was used to scanning all the various pieces of steel with a view to guessing which would be the most profitable to use and, in the end, I managed to drag out two RSJs, one which was fairly straight with its bottom edge rather collapsed, while the top was in the shape of a 'U' where the RSJ had folded over at the top, being curved, and with one arm of it eroded almost to paper-thinness at its extremity by the motion of the sea. When I put this section on to a firm level floor, which I did when I brought it back to London, and rocked it slightly, the whole piece would rock as if driven by the rhythm of the waves until it mounted to a kind of orgasmic crescendo and then slowly died away. My intention was to raise the 'U' like a pair of arms on top of the RSJ, but as the scrapyard was situated on the banks of the river, there was no level surface upon which to work. I therefore dug out a sort of platform and erected with lesser steel frames a kind of scaffolding from which I could raise and then suspend the arms and the vertical RSJ, until I got them into the balance I desired. The eventual result was a very rhythmic figure with the shape of a sort of extended 'Y'.

The two arms of the 'Y' above curved forward in a kind of threatening fashion and the collapsed aspect of the uprights made the whole structure appear as if in imminent danger of itself collapsing upon an unsuspecting world below. I was able to weld additional plates onto a base and the two connecting areas of the RSJs, which then had massive bolts fitted to them, so that the piece could be taken apart and reassembled elsewhere later.

When I brought it to London, the only way of assembling it in a studio so that it could be erect was to bolt the foot of The Deluge onto the centre of the cross-piece of three rather thick mahogany pieces of wood in the shape of the letter 'H'. The whole structure stood about 9 feet high and is rather imposing. I had it standing at the one end of my studio on an occasion which I shall now relate in some detail.

Another Boeing 747 is flying above at this moment. Things were persuading me that I should invite a certain lady who had recently opened a new Gallery near Cork Street, to see whether she would give me an exhibition there. She arrived one Sunday morning with her son, dressed as if she was ready to go to a cocktail party at Buckingham Palace. I had invited a few other guests to meet her in an informal way and while they chatted, I showed her some of

my paintings and drawings which had been arranged all round the walls of the studio at floor level. With some intent she walked about looking at the pictures and when she came to the last of them, she turned to me and said, "Where did you get these beautiful frames?" I was stunned by her remark, which was in fact rather rude as she made no other comment about the works themselves and must have shown this, although I said nothing. At that moment, she stepped backwards without realising, or maybe unconsciously realising that The Deluge was standing there and the heel of her shoe abutted against the long arm of the 'H'. With the momentum of her stride backwards, she went up in the air, realised she was falling and, in mid-air, wriggled herself so that when she actually hit the floor, her back was flat on the floor. I was terrified that she had seriously hurt herself by falling against the sharp edges of the 3 inch high mahogany arms of the base of The Deluge. However, by some miracle, she managed to fall within the lower space of the edge and didn't touch the mahogany arms whatsoever. I breathed a sigh of relief and then, looking at her on the floor, I was further aghast. This lady, in all her finery, was lying there supine on the floor, but behind her, her wig, which I had not realised she was wearing, had come off and was lying about 6 inches away. What to do? On the spur of the moment, I seized hold of the wig and jammed it firmly back on her head, and then assisted her to her feet. What was surprising was that her hair, underneath the wig, was as meticulously dressed as the wig itself, but of a different colour. About this I made no reference to her whatsoever. But what to say? "I thought you were rather wonderful," I said, "to fall the way you did so that you didn't hurt yourself." She drew herself up to her full 5 foot 2 inches and said, "Of course, I used to be a ballet dancer." I apologised as reasonably and profusely as I could, by which time my feeling of relief that she was uninjured, had reverted to the idea that The Deluge had somehow given her what she deserved for being so unkind. With all that, I cost me a rather expensive bunch of flowers as part of my apology the next day. Needless to say, no exhibition ever materialised from this experience, nor could it have, because her gallery was rather small and of a specialised nature.

When the new Lloyds Building by the eminent architect (Sir) Richard Rogers, was opened, I met with him and one of the Lloyds Committee at the Carlton Club, with a view to submitting The Deluge as a possible sculpture for the new building. They were very charming and indicated that this would have involved approval by their Art Committee, but somehow I didn't feel up to all the harassment of committee selections at that time and, from my point of view, the project was left in abeyance. However, in retrospect, The Deluge would serve as a timely warning to Members that accidents do happen, breaks do occur, and insurance losses rather than profits may be the order of the day. Another 747 has just flown above. Perhaps the ringing of the Lutine Bell may have an insufficient or disregarded symbolic meaning for the Lloyds Members and they require a much more tangible evidence of the possibilities of damage and loss in the form of a fine sculpture like The Deluge.



STAINLESS STEEL SCULPTURES

Civilisation

At this point, it is useful to return to the exhibition of Genesis as the story of creation. In the catalogue for the exhibition, I examined the Old Testament Creation story in the light of modern theories for psychology with particular reference to psycho-analysis.

Using these theories, I thought to examine the sculptures created for the exhibition to go with some of the studies for sculpture which were exhibited at that time.

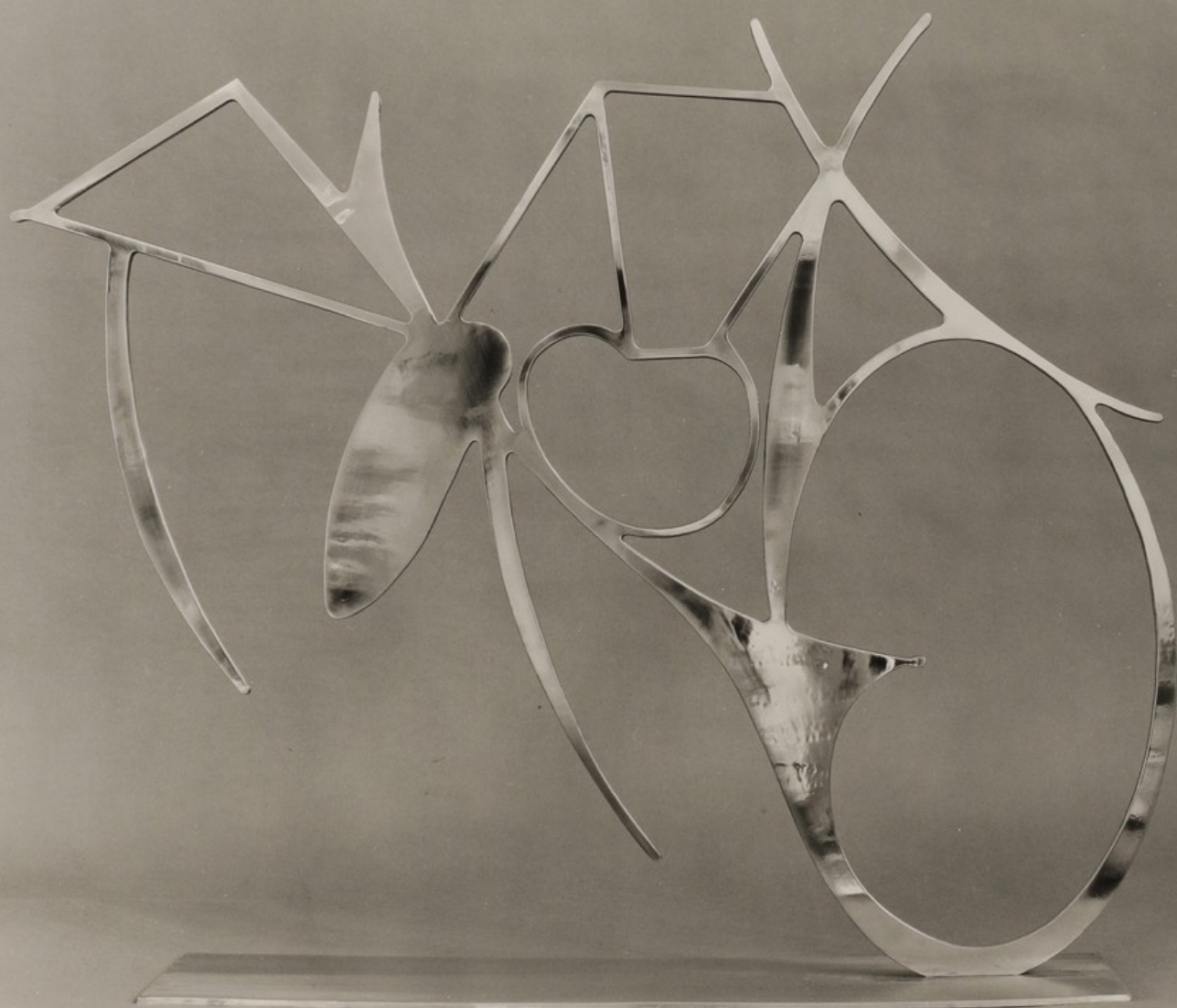
Please cut out the whole of the Genesis catalogue text at this point. Don't worry about whether it's fully relevant or not, I can alter that on the computer.

Noah Releasing The Dove

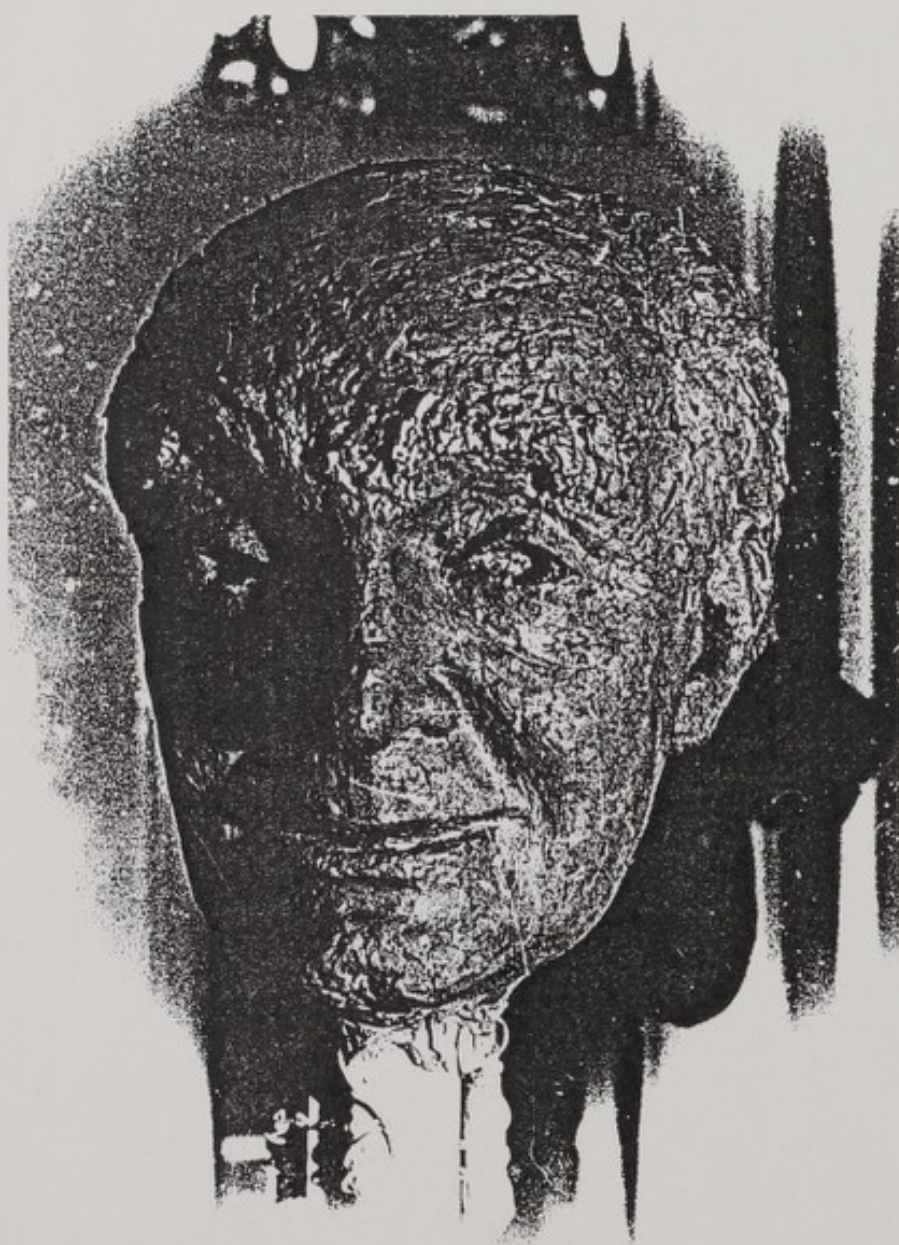
The story of Noah is significant from many points of view. It is the first account of the Covenant between God and Man in the Old Testament, and is of a universal nature, for all men. The sign of this Covenant is the rainbow, which heralds the end of the floods and presages God's granting to mankind dominion over the earth and all that there is therein, over the animals, over the creatures of the air and the sea. The granting of such powers carried with it the responsibility for the earth and its creatures which we are now facing as mankind for the first time. Never before did we have the powers to influence the environment in the way we can now.

Noah's relationship with the Dove is also important in so many ways. It is the dove that goes out in search of dry land and the Dove which returns with the sign that the earth is fruitful once more when it brings the olive leaf back in its beak. Taking my cue from Michelangelo as the great sculptor of all time, the essence of sculptural significance lies in the moment prior to immediate action. On this principle, I therefore selected the moment that Noah is about to release the Dove. Noah's hand gently cradles the Dove and at the same time releases it. The Dove is ascending, its wings not yet open in flight. Noah, in the sculpture, has assumed the form of a bird. According to the symbolism so greatly publicised by Picasso, of the Dove as the symbol of Peace, Noah has to turn into a bird himself in order to herald and bring Peace to the earth. Of course, Picasso's relationship with the Dove is greatly significant as his father was an artist who had stuffed doves and would draw them. Picasso surpassed his father early on, and in that rivalry, conscious and unconscious, between young son and father, Picasso won. His father gave up being an artist and Picasso gave up his father's name of Ruiz, and took the name of his mother, Picasso.

According to Old Testament tradition, the Dove is not a symbol of Peace, but of fidelity, the Dove being one of the birds which mates for life. When showing the sculpture to friends, I usually ask them, "What do you think?" They would think the Dove is being released and will fly off. Usually they are never sure of the answer, whether they have guessed correctly or not. It is the female Dove that flies off because, being the epitome of fidelity, she is the one creature most likely to return to her mate. The sides of the sculpture of Noah are carved, as they were in the original plaster, like the walls of a cliff. On the one side, nestling in the cliff, the mate waits for her return, facing the other way.



Adam & Eve & the Apple.



Dr Henri Rey 1978

Henry Maudsley and Erwin Stengel

It is not given to every sculptor to have the opportunity to revise a work completed nearly 40 years previously. In 1993, the Royal College of Psychiatrists announced that it would celebrate the 150th Anniversary of its founding in that year. I offered to present them with a sculpture to mark the occasion, and in response they replied that they wanted busts of Henry Maudsley and Erwin Stengel, the latter being one of their former Presidents.

Not only did I have the opportunity to work on the busts afresh, but I had it repeated several times. The story is as follows.

From a more seasoned vantage point, I thought that the head of Maudsley could be further refined, the original bearing all the hallmarks of youthful enthusiasm and broad modelling. In keeping with the spirit of maturity, both of the College and of my own experience, I decided to give a smoother finish and greater delineation to the beard and hair, without touching the essential features of expression of the face. I had a wax cast made of the original Maudsley head and worked on it very assiduously and in great detail for some time. My foundry, at that point, had amalgamated with a major American foundry who had installed new casting techniques. One of these was the use of a vacuum to draw the molten bronze up into the prepared negative mould. This technique avoided the use of a great many runners and therefore obviated much of the finishing process in the bronze. As luck would have it, mine was one of the first waxes to be used, and because the settings were wrong, the whole thing exploded within the apparatus and I was set the task of doing it all over again. The only way to meet such disasters which occur with great regularity in sculpture, is with fortitude, creativity and, in plain terms, to do the whole thing over again, hoping it will turn out better. Simultaneously with this experience, I also prepared a wax of the Stengel head and created an innovation whereby the hair was totally abstracted. In addition to this I put two very tiny symbolic abstracts, one on each side at about the site of the temples. One was an inverted horn to signify Stengel's devilish sense of humour. On the other side, to balance this, I designed a pearl of wisdom lying in its shell. Each of the abstract forms of the hair was like a perfect sculpture in its own right, which had a logic as they ran in conjunction with each other. There were spaces between them and I carved away at the wax so that the spaces penetrated through the thickness of the wax which would therefore have come out as spaces in the bronze. This of course was my intention. When this work was successfully cast into bronze, it was then sent to the finishers, who regarded the holes as some other kind of mistake. They then proceeded to weld them all up again, taking this as some sort of omen. When it came to re-doing the Stengel head, I omitted the fenestrations and left the head solid.

These busts were commissioned by a pharmaceutical company who presented them to the College on a particular occasion. The head of the company made a short speech, followed by an address by me. I thought I would take the opportunity to inject a sort of academic humour into the proceedings and gave a paper entitled, "The Contribution of Henry Maudsley to the Institute

of Psychiatry". Henry Maudsley had been long dead by the time the Institute of Psychiatry was established. It gave me the opportunity however, to make some comments about the siting of the original Maudsley head in bronze at the Institute of Psychiatry. When it was first presented, the head used to stand outside Aubrey Lewis's office and he remarked one day how he couldn't bear it standing there, because every time he came out of his office, it looked at him with a quizzical air, arousing great feelings of guilt. As soon as possible, he then had it transferred to the new Institute building which had been created and, to avoid any such further confrontations, I set it up above one of the landings between the ground and first floors. There it stood in its own solitary glory, much as Maudsley had done himself in his lifetime. When I questioned the subsequent Professor of Psychiatry about its position, stating that it should be moved to a more accessible place as nobody went up and down the stairs, he replied that of course it was there for the Registrars because they went up and down the stairs and would see it.

I expect that the position of Henry Maudsley and also the bust of Henri Rey in the Psychotherapy Department, would find their true situations sometime in the distant future.

An example of Erwin Stengel's devilish humour may be described on one of the occasions when he gave one of his regular clinical lectures at the Maudsley.

Most graduate students in psychiatry would come from far and near to attend this lecture which was usually filled to the brim and Stengel would present a clinical case with whom he would teach and exemplify psychiatric signs and symptoms that were instructive. At the lecture in question, Stengel presented a man with the strangest symptoms. He did not fit into any known category and everyone was baffled by the clinical picture. Stengel was at pains to bring this out very clearly. Right at the end of the lecture, he said to the gentleman, "You come up to the Maudsley for other reasons, do you not?" "Yes", the man replied. "And what do you come here for?" enquired Stengel further. "I am one of Professor Eysenck's normals", replied the man. Everybody nearly burst with merriment but in due deference to the patient, silence was maintained. Eysenck was, at that time, ruthlessly determined to mock at psycho-analysis and Stengel, who apart from being a great psychiatrist, had had a psycho-analytic training in Vienna. He was getting his own back and pointing fun at the so-called science of Eysenck's psychology.

Stengel was fearless, both in life and, one might say, in death. At the end of his life, he had a carcinoma of the colon removed and appeared fit and well after this. When asked how he was one day, he replied to me, "Now I am a semi-colon, and soon I shall be a full-stop."

The busts of Henry Maudsley and Erwin Stengel in their mature aspects, in bronze, stand side-by-side on the mantelpiece of one of the most elegant rooms in the Royal College of Psychiatrists in Belgrave Square.

Raymond Ackerman

Raymond Ackerman had been a very fine sportsman in his youth, particularly at rugby. As one of the most successful businessmen in South Africa, he continued his sporting interests with the patronage of sport wherever it was possible. In 1988, I began a bust of him from life in South Africa. Due to the little time we had to work on the bust, due to my living in London, I brought it to England and, for some years, it remained in its coverings and dried out completely in the clay. In 1994, I decided to do his bust all over again, this time one and a half times life-size.

The original bust was supposed to be at the ordinary life-size, but was a little smaller than that, because I am in the habit of building up a portrait from the basic bony anatomy and I had merely laid this groundwork before putting on any of the facial features. The head had cracked in very interesting ways. Amazingly, they followed to a large degree the same lines of junctions that the human skull does in foetal development, and embryologically-speaking, tissues come together along planes of cleavage and development. The head in that state, therefore, was a sort of portrait of a coming together, not only a cracking apart of a human head. With this in mind, I decided on the urgings of my assistant, to envelope the clay, which also had a rather fine colour to it by this time, in a thin envelope, as it were, or film of clear resin. This had the purpose of holding all the cracked elements together and unifying them further. In this state, I sent the head off for bronzing and was able to work on the prepared wax, further integrating the elements of the portrait. This was now called "The Creation of Adam". From the point of view of Creation, not only the head but also its mountings on its armature were significant and all was cast into bronze at that point. This followed an approach with regard to a head still yet to be described, that of "Ecstasy". The other technical aspect of this work was that in the final bronze, the sections of the head were polished as highly as possible so that the eventual effect was that of a coming together of disparate parts which individually did not bear much resemblance to human form, but together denoted the First Man. The expression and the mien is one of aggression, of having to face a hostile world and survive.

The final Raymond Ackerman head was made with the following considerations in mind. Firstly it was done from photographs, in the way I had done the original Henry Maudsley head. This time, I decided that I would make a work of art rather than a representational portrait and give the expression to the sitter to indicate those qualities by which he is well-known and admired.

I built up the head very carefully according to dimensions which I had measured on him in life in 1988 and, following the many photographs taken of him for this purpose, I was able to model an absolute likeness in terms of his physical form. All good sculptors are always faced with a particular problem when it comes to older or elderly sitters. By then, most people

The Dream of Monsters Brings Forth Reason

Far away places often stimulate exotic ideas. On holiday, in the island of Tenerife, I sought pleasure in combing the beaches for washed-up objects and driftwood. Amongst the material I collected was the outside framework of a wooden box, together with an old lady's slipper, the front half of a doll's head, various bits of driftwood and assorted odds and ends.

From these, I assembled the sculpture whose title is above. This title is of course, a take on the title given by Goya to one of his etchings entitled, "The Sleep of Reason Brings Forth Monsters", in which a man is seated at a table with his head on his arms asleep and various monsters arise in the air above him. I was rather proud of my monsters put together from bits of driftwood. They conveyed the sense of the primitive and I suspended them in a way which allowed them some freedom of movement. My idea was to illustrate human development from the monsters or creatures which came out of the sea, preceded through the various ages now enshrined in our unconscious psychological development and proceeding thereby to Reason itself.

When I came back to London, the concept changed slightly and I used the early self-portrait mask as the portrait of The Dreamer whose dream is encapsulated by the framework of the box. It is his dream of the monsters within him which is in the sculpture. It is safe to dream because the box and the monsters are held in place by small clamps. These together with the rectangular box set the limitations to the dream.

Within this space, the monsters which are now connected by a bronze tape in their mouths which passes through the eyes of the doll above, to indicate the early unconscious Oedipus-complex with their sexual and castrating aspects being symbolised by the possibility of blindness as in the case of Oedipus himself. Above this trio in the bottom right-hand corner is a further symbol, in the shape of the hand of an old-fashioned watch or clock which has been cut vertically so that only one half is present. This denotes time in the sense that the whole progress from primitive behaviour to reason is a maturation and also that the events which happen within an individual's life are tied most materially to time. The symbol, from another point of view, being condensed as in a dream, acts also as a phallic-symbol representing masculinity. This points directly across to the slipper now stripped to its bare essentials, symbolic of femininity and female sexuality: thus completing the cycle of human reproduction. All these elements have had to be manipulated to be in a perfect state of balance with each other aesthetically.

The consoling and final effect of all this is the tiny figure of Reason formed by two pieces of driftwood in the symbolic form of a classical nude, where the female form represents classicism and the search for perfection in Reason as well as aesthetically.

have accumulated extra folds of skin or creases, some of which are there as a result of ageing, illness, worry, overwork or sometimes, pure indulgence.

They don't necessarily denote the character of the personality. I decided that I would create a work of a man of his age without worrying about denoting the various creases and worry-lines, but rather the expression that I wanted to bring out. Here was a man who was a great entrepreneur, who was most successful, whose work brought benefit to thousands of people, and who was appreciated internationally for his foresight and judgement. When anyone him, there was usually the glimmer of a smile and he had managed to keep his tastes essentially simple and straightforward. There were no hang-ups or superficialities to this person. The head, I hope, illustrates all these features in a simplicity which I strove for.

Once again, my friends at the foundry took a hand. When the bronze cast was made of the wax on which I had worked further, the eyes and the mouth had somehow become grossly distorted and we had to make a further cast and start from scratch. The mouth retained its values in the second wax cast, but somehow the eyes had gone awry. I found myself forced to do something I had dreaded for years. Having to model elegant structures such as the expression in the eye in wax. I have no particular formula for the expression of eyes in sculpture. Some, more classical sculptors, would carve them out of circles or crescents with some pointed centre, both eyes being particularly parallel and equal in expression, making in my opinion, a rather dull portrait. When modelling the face, everything is done in such a way that the sculpture comes together as a sort of logical finality, in which the eyes are perceived, and the hands place clay substance in such a way that the correct expression somehow emerges.

Ecstasy

Ecstasy began as a portrait study of the actress Tracy Reed, the daughter of Carol Reed, the film director. Tracy was one of the beauties in the James Bond films. With her high cheekbones and almond-shaped eyes, powerful intelligence and responsiveness, she was a true subject for the study of Ecstasy.

The original sculpture was made directly into plaster, which took quite a time and rather exhausted Tracy's patience, which rather left it in the unfinished state characteristic of Ecstasy. The head flies in the air and not only the portrait but the armature and stand was put into bronze.



Notes by Ismond for Stories of Sculpture
in his writing (ym @)

- ① Editing to write foreword
- ② Decent art historian or art critic
- ③ Sponsorship
- ④ Publication Publisher
- ⑤ Photographs (to be made)

Ask to Dick Humphries - Tate Gallery
(ask Francie Towell)

Part of Lady Cate and Lord. Glasgow Art Museum