

ANGLIA POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY
BA (Hons) Art (Practice and History)
BA (Hons) Art History (and combined)
BA (Hons) Modern Visual Culture
Level 1 first semester
Paul Shakeshaft

SAB1012/2012 OBJECTS IN SPACE

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SAB1012/2012 OBJECTS IN SPACE

The module complements in a number of respects *SAB1007/2002 Introduction to European Painting: the SAB1013/2013 Framing Modernism* and also supports the practical module *SAB2048 Sculpture*.

Learning outcomes

If you are taking this module for 20 credits, you should aim by the end to be able to:

1. Distinguish between some of the different forms of classification used to categorise figurative sculpture
2. Recognise examples of sculpture from these categories
3. Demonstrate an understanding of some of the ideas on which modern sculptors have drawn
4. Relate the history of modern sculpture to some broader historical themes
5. Construct an informed analysis of individual examples of sculpture
6. Communicate in an appropriate language, both orally and in written form, the results of your inquiries

If you are taking this module for 10 credits, you should be aiming to achieve aims 1, 3 and 6 as well as being able to demonstrate an understanding of spatial concepts in the analysis of 20th century sculpture.

These learning outcomes will be used to inform the marking criteria for your assessed work. Remember, also, that the generic assessment criteria listed on the Study of Art coversheet (there should be an example in our student guide).

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Structure of the module

The module is devoted to studying the representation in sculpture of the human figure.

We need to recognise that the representation of the human figure is highly contentious. In some monotheistic cultures, such as Islam, Judaism and Orthodox Christianity, the sculpted figure is virtually unknown, as it is associated with idolatry.

However, the primary purpose of sculpture in many societies at most times has been to depict the human figure. The sculpted body is central to the traditional western histories of art, which connect the figures of ancient Sumeria to those of Egypt, Greece, Rome and Christian Europe. It is possible to find instances of the representation of other subjects, for instance the cat and frog in Egypt and the horse in Rome, but these are relatively rare. The vast majority of sculpted objects that have come down to us have represented the human figure. This is

true also of many of the cultures of central and east Asia (Hinduism and Buddhism), of Oceania, Africa and central America. The sculpted figure is the embodiment of the beliefs societies have about the nature and significance of both human beings and of their divinities.

We shall try to use a consistent method in our approach to the analysis of the figures we encounter, from whichever culture and time. We shall need to ask questions about the following:

- Materials, method and finish
- Maker
- Original location and function
- Identity of figure
- Inscriptions
- Signs of rank, age and gender
- Scale, posture, proportion
- Anatomy
- Activity
- Position of figure in space
- Relationship to other figures and to spectator
- Clothing and accessories
- Mental and moral attributes

The module is divided into two unequal parts.

In the first part of the module, from weeks 1 to 4, we shall be taking a very long view of the history of the figure, examining in a series of case studies, the very different ways in which the figure has been represented in earlier traditions. Using the museums of Cambridge (*The Fitzwilliam Museum, the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, and the Museum of Classical Archaeology*) we shall look at examples of figures from the Egyptian, Greco-Roman, Christian European, sub-Saharan African and Oceanic traditions.

The purpose of this preliminary part of the module is to introduce you to the collections of Cambridge, to ask fundamental questions about the purposes of figurative sculpture in human culture, to construct a fragmentary history of the type and to provide reference points for the study of modern sculpture.

In the second part of the module, from weeks 5 to 12, the focus will be upon the modern sculpted figure. We shall be concentrating on the figure in the century between the 1880s and the 1980s. (*Objects in Space* does not go on to look at contemporary sculpture, as that will be covered in the module *SAD1043/2043 Art Now* at level D).

The claim that the concern for the human figure waned in the 20th century is hardly sustainable. Modernist and Post-Modernist sculptors were as interested as their predecessors in the making of images of the body. What is so remarkable about sculptors of the past century, is the novel ways in which they re-imagined the figure, often to the point at which it is not easy to recognise.

In this second part of the module, we shall be studying the ways in which the human figure was represented in a number of movements. By the end of the module, you should be reasonably familiar with the approach sculptors working within the following movements represented the body:

Academic Sculpture, Cubism, Expressionism, Constructivism, Productivism, Surrealism and Biomorphism, The New Sculpture, Pop Art, Minimalism, Arte Povera, Performance Art, Earth Art as well as Modernism and Post-Modernism.

The study of the figure in modern art will also be shaped by certain themes, which might best be expressed as antitheses. These will criss-cross the module. The ones which will recur most frequently, and which you will be expected to develop an understanding of, are:

object and space, the arrested and moving human figure, matter and consciousness, public and private sculpture, the industrial and natural object, the built and natural environments, scientific rationalism and mysticism, the enclosed and disclosed, metamorphosis and stability, wholeness and fragmentation, high art and popular culture, life and death.

Finally, in the later section of the module, you will be encountering the work of many individual sculptors who took as their primary subject the human figure. The ones who will figure most prominently in our course, are:

Auguste Rodin, Paul Gauguin, Henri Matisse, Aristide Maillol, Ernst Barlach, Constantin Brancusi, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Pablo Picasso, Marcel Duchamp, Jean Arp, Gerrit Rietveld, Vladimir Tatlin, Naum Gabo, Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, Henry Moore, Barbara Hepworth, Hans Belmer, Salvador Dali, Kurt Schwitters, Alberto Giacometti, Marino Marini, David Smith, Reg Butler, Piero Manzoni, Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg, Claes Oldenburg, Jean Tinguely, George Segal, Anthony Caro, Carl Andre, Eva Hesse, Joseph Beuys, Gilbert and George, Rebecca Horn, Robert Smithson, Richard Long.

This list, as you may gather, is highly selective; another tutor could devise a list which might look unlike this one in significant respects.

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Set Books

There is no one book which adequately deals with the topics covered in the first part of the module.

The second part of the module, however, which centres upon modern sculpture, will be supported by the close study of two books, which you ought to purchase. They both belong to the *Oxford History of Art* series and cost £9.99.

Penelope Curtis, *Sculpture 1900-1945* O.U.P., 1999 (ISBN 0-19-2884228-5)

Andrew Causey, *Sculpture since 1945* O.U.P., 1998 (ISBN 0-19-284205-6)

Why place this burden on you? The two books, flawed as they inevitably are in certain respects, are probably the best in print at present. They offer us a dense and demanding up-to-date text which is well-illustrated. Given the numbers of student taking the module, the library cannot hope to offer us all the copies we need. Besides, there is an advantage, especially at the beginning of a degree course, in working from a common text in seminars, so that we are all able to understand the shared references.

When using these books, it is important to keep the following in mind:

- You are not expected to recall everything you read; it is more important that you understand the general argument of the authors. Both Curtis and Causey are academic writers working to a restrictive publisher's brief, which requires them to pack a great deal in, even at the expense of readability.
- Don't treat these books as authoritative (though that's what they appear to be). The authors have been selective in what they have chosen to include and exclude and in how they have arranged their material; they have their points-of-view and their hobby-horses (just as our module has). Keep an open and critical mind when reading them.
- A good test of whether you are making sense of what the authors are saying is to start with the illustrations: study a group of images closely, seeing what you make of them and then read the text and see whether it enlightens you in any way. You may find that this a much better way of making intelligible notes than simply reading the text and trying to abbreviate it.
- One of the important study skills at this stage of your degree is building up an appropriate vocabulary; it would be useful to compile in your notes a list of familiar and unfamiliar words and expressions from the text, which might come in handy as you improve your fluency

Though we shall be relying on Curtis and Causey, your reading should extend further.

A supplementary bibliography is given at the end of each week's programme. All of the books are in the APU library, some of them in multiple copies. Unfortunately, if you are to be given

the chance to borrow these books, not all of them can be made available to everyone in the group, on demand. However, if you are unable to read a recommended book when the classes on the topic are taking place, you should aim to get your hands on it sometime later on in the module.

Other recommended general books on modern sculpture, of which we have multiple copies in the library, are:

Read, H. (1964), *Modern Sculpture: A Concise History*, London: Thames and Hudson.

Krauss, R. (1998), *Passages in Modern Sculpture*, Cambridge: MIT Press.

Elsen, A. (1974), *Origins of Modern Sculpture: Pioneers and Premises*, New York: George Braziller

Elsen, A. (1979), *Unknown Beings and Other Realities*, New York, George Braziller.

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Lectures

Each week there will be a 50-minute lecture on Tuesdays. The lectures are intended to give you an introduction to the week's topic, presenting the leading individual sculptors and their work, formulating some of the questions we should be asking and suggesting some of the possible answers we might offer. The primary form of evidence we shall be using is projected images (slides) and you may want to give priority to looking and listening before writing.

Seminars

The seminars explore the themes introduced in the week's lecture. Seminars are sessions where we meet as groups for discussion. Various forms of activity will take place. The tutor may put questions to the whole class or to individuals. Members of the class can put questions to the tutor or to each other. There may be class-wide discussions, when the tutor acts as a kind of chairman; there may be small group discussions, when students argue amongst themselves in groups of four or five about particular issues. There will also be presentations, when pairs of students introduce the others in the seminar group to a piece of sculpture using a projected image (see below).

How should you prepare for the week's seminar? For each seminar, after week 4, you will be expected:

- to have completed the set reading for the week, from Curtis or Causey, which will form the basis of one part of the seminar discussions
- from weeks 5 to 12, to be prepared to explain what you understand to be the meaning of the leading quotations for each week (see the weekly programme)

- to be ready, if called on in the seminar, to analyse with a partner:
the illustrations in the book related to the week's reading
or images from the lecture of that week
or (in certain weeks) pieces of sculpture seen on visits.

Seminar Presentations (not assessed)

You should try to answer some or all of the questions listed above (in the section on the structure of the course).

- avoid reading from notes, head down; it's much better to speak freely and openly to the group
- don't give a long introduction about the artist; address the image directly from the start, getting the class to look at it closely

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Week 1 Ancient examples

This week, we shall be asking the most fundamental questions about the origins of figurative representation in sculpture, drawing on examples in the Fitzwilliam Museum. What are the earliest examples and what is known about them? How far can we get in understanding these figures, applying the key analytical questions in the list above (see 'Structure of the Module, page 1)?

Independent visit

You will need visit the [Fitzwilliam Museum](#) , in your own time, to find the very rare neolithic and Syrian figures of the 5th millennium b.c. and the Sumerian and Cycladic figures in the lower galleries.

Idol - Naked Fat Woman 5th-3rd millennium b.c. (neolithic)

Woman on a birth throne 5th millenium b.c. (Syrian)

Cycladic figures 2500-2000 b.c. (Cyclades islands)

Large-eyed idols 3200-3100 b.c. (Tell Brak, Sumeria)

Deity or Hero grappling with monsters 8th century b.c. (Luristan)

In the seminar, we shall examine the figurative sculpture of the Old and Middle Kingdoms of Egypt, dating from 2465 b.c. to 1425 b.c. The common view is that Egyptian sculpture is highly conventional and largely unchanging, over long periods. There is some truth in this. What are the conventions which govern this sculpture and what could have been their purpose? However, Egyptian sculpture is more various, and often more naturalistic, than you might at first suppose. What evidence can you find to support this view? When do variations from the norm occur?

Group of Hety and his sister Henwek V-V1 Dynasty 2465-2150 b.c.
The chieftain Ankhwedjes V-V1 Dynasty 2465-2150 b.c.
An Old Kingdom Official V- V1 Dynasty 2465-2150 b.c.
The Stele of Amenemhat Nebuy X11 Dynasty 1843-1786 b.c.
King Amenemhat X11 Dynasty 1843-1798 b.c.
A Middle Kingdom Official X11 Dynasty 1963-1866 b.c.
The Burial of Khety early X11 Dynasty 1963-1862 b.c.
Fertility Figures XV111 Dynasty 1550-1425 b.c.
Naos of King Tuthmosis 111 XV111 Dynasty 1478-1425 b.c.

The seminars this week will be taught in the Fitzwilliam Museum itself. We shall have to divide into four groups in order for the museum to cope (their rule is a maximum of 15 students at a time). There will be seminars between 2 and 3 and 3 and 4 on both Tuesdays and Thursdays. Make sure that you are in the correct group, so that numbers do not become uneven. You should assemble in the entrance hall by the correct time to sign the class register and then we shall proceed to the Egyptian collection downstairs. The museum only allows pencils to be used – so no pens please and definitely no cameras!

Week 2 The figure in classical Greece and Rome

The literature on early modern sculpture frequently refers its complex relationship with the Greco-Roman and Renaissance tradition of sculpture. This week, we shall try to establish the central concerns of the Greco-Roman figurative tradition and some of the more significant mutations. This is a vast subject, so we shall go straight to its source, the sculpture of Greece and Rome, which can be studied in exceptional detail in Cambridge, thanks to the collections of the Fitzwilliam Museum and the Museum of Classical Archaeology.

Independent visit

You should visit the Fitzwilliam Museum's lower galleries and find the following pieces, amongst others which might catch your eye:

The Pashley Sarcophagus 150-180 a.d.
River God first century a.d.
Young Satyr playing a flute first century a.d.
Male torso 150-175 b.c.
Torso of Eros second century b.c..

Try to apply as many of the questions listed above ('Structure of the Module' page 2) to these sculptures, as we did in the first week.

In the seminar, we shall be studying in the Museum of Classical Archaeology. To find this museum, cross the River Cam at Silver Street Bridge and continue on to Sidgwick Avenue. About 200 metres on the right, on the so-called Sidgwick Site, you will see the Faculty of Classics of the University of Cambridge; the museum is there, on the first floor. We shall again divide into four groups and be assisted by Vivien Perutz. The groups will go into the museum in this order:

- Group 1 2.00
- Group 2 2.30
- Group 3 3.00
- Group 4 3.30

The museum displays a remarkable collection of casts and replicas of the most celebrated pieces of Greek and Roman sculpture. It is difficult to choose from these riches but you should take note especially of:

- Peplos Kore (34a)
- Munich Kouros (33)
- West Pediment of the Corfu Temple (12)
- Kritian Boy (81)
- East and West Pediments of the Temple of Zeus at Olympia (99)
- Cape Artemisium God (103)
- Caryatids from the Erechtheum (161)
- East Pediment of the Parthenon (143)
- Apollo Belvedere (352)
- Nereid from the Grave Monument at Xanthos (212)
- Apoxyomenos (259)
- The Dying Gaul (377)
- Laocoon (386)
- Sleeping Aphrodite (355)

Week 3 The figure in Christian traditions

This week we shall be taking examples from a number of movements from within European Christian culture. We must begin by noting that the representation of the sacred body has been a highly contentious issue in Christian culture.

For many Christians, to create a physical replica of God, or his saints, was tantamount to idolatry and in breach of the Second Commandment's warning about the making of graven images. Not only Jews, but Orthodox Christians, reformed orders such as the Cistercians, heretics such as the Cathars and Lollards and Protestants of all descriptions took this view.

However, for most Christians who owed their allegiance to the Roman church, imaging the body was, for over a thousand years, one of the principal ways in which their beliefs were expressed. Christ, after all, was the word made flesh, the incarnation of God. His mother, Mary, was not a spirit but a corporeal human. Christians had powerful imperatives to co-opt the realism, as well as the idealism, of classical sculpture for their own ends.

This is undoubtedly a vast topic but better we take some sort of measure of it than overlook it. It is impossible to construct a history of modern sculpture without having a sense of how that history relates to the dominant traditions of representation of the culture out of which modernism grew.

This week we shall look at case studies from the 12th century (sometimes described as the 'Romanesque'), the 14th century (often referred to as the 'Gothic'), the 15th century ('early Renaissance'), the 16th ('Mannerism') and the 17th ('Baroque'). (All of these terms are disputed by some historians, by the way).

We shall also need to look at the ways in which, after the Reformation, Protestant believers substituted memorial sculpture for the icon sculpture of the Catholic tradition.

Ideally, we should be working with objects from Fitzwilliam collection but the Medieval collection will be closed until 2004 and so, this week, the seminar will take place on campus.

Week 4 West African and Pacific Oceanic sculpture

Early in the 20th century, Modernist sculptors drew extensively on the sculpted objects of West Africa and the cultures of the Pacific, especially those of Papua New Guinea, New Zealand, New Ireland and Fiji.

This week we shall be taking a preliminary look at figurative sculpture in some of these cultures, using the collection of the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. The museum is situated half way down Downing Street (which runs between St Andrew's Street and Trumpington Street) on the left-hand side. (open 2 – 4.30, Tues. – Sat.).

Most of the Western research into this sculpture has been undertaken by anthropologists; it is significant that the Cambridge collection is not related to Fitzwilliam Museum, being considered outside its compass of art interests (the Fitzwilliam houses extensive collections of non-European art, but not of this sort). How are we to approach such art? Can we usefully apply the list of analytical questions used in this module? Can we apply western aesthetic categories, such as 'beauty', 'grace', 'emotive expression', 'style'? Is it even possible or appropriate to describe these objects as 'art' in any way which is meaningful within western

discourses? What approaches do the anthropologists adopt and what insights do they provide for the student of 'art'? Is a true understanding only available to those from within the culture? Are those of us from outside the culture open to accusations of cultural imperialism and appropriation?

Lecture

Trying to understand the figures of other cultures

Seminar

This week, we shall be working in the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (first floor).

Each seminar groups will divide into two, so the schedule will be:

Tuesday Group 1 2-3 pm

Group 2 3-4 pm

Thursday Group 3 2-3 pm

Group 4 3-4 pm

The main aim of the seminars will be to look at the systems of proportions in the figures in the collections from West Africa, Nigeria (including Benin), Melanesia (New Ireland), Fiji, Papua New Guinea

(Also, on the ground floor, don't miss the little figures in the collections from Central and South America (Olmec, Toltec, Inca, Maya, Nicoya, Chiriqui).

Additional reading

Vogel, S. ed. (1994) *Africa Explores*, New York: Center for African Art

Schmalenbach, W. ed. (1988) *African Art*, Munich: Prestel-Verlag

Week 5 Sculpture in France and England in the later 19th century

This week, we shall be trying to identify some of the main tendencies in French and English figurative sculpture between 1870 and 1905.

Sculptors of this time were well informed about both classical and medieval images and we ought to be able to reference what we are studying to those earlier forms.

Other questions we may want to pursue include: Who was represented in sculpture? What role did public sculpture play in the representation of the figure? In what ways did the debates about Classicism, Realism, Impressionism and Symbolism shape the appearances of the sculpted figure? What materials and processes were used and what forms did the sculpture take? What were the most important contemporary debates about sculpture? Can

the history of sculpture at this time be connected to wider economic, social, political and cultural developments?

Lecture

Auguste Rodin and the refashioned body

Seminar

This will take place in the Fitzwilliam Museum, where we shall be studying examples of the work of J-P Carpeaux, Auguste Rodin, Aimee Jules Dalou, Edgar Degas and Aristide Maillol (in the left and right rooms at the top of the staircase).

We shall need to visit the museum in four groups so the schedule will be:

Group 1 Tuesday 2-3

Group 2 Tuesday 3-4

Group 3 Thursday 2-3

Group 4 Thursday 3-4

As before, please assemble in the entrance hall on the hour.

Reading

Curtis: chapter 1, The Public Place of Sculpture, pp.5-34

Try to establish the main points in the argument. Look closely at pages 31-34, on Rodin's 'The Gates of Hell' and Vigeland's 'Frognerpark'.

Curtis: chapter 2, The Tradition of the Monument, pp. 36-74

Again, establish the main points and read closely the passages on Rodin, pages 50-52 and 66-69.

Quotations (from Curtis):

'From the mid-nineteenth century onward, sculpture was increasingly allied to the aims and ideals of the bourgeois state.' (p.6)

'Sculpture was rendered anonymous in different ways: in terms of its 'ownership', its function, its physical position, and the collective nature of its fabrication.' (p12)

'One way of being 'modern' in the decades at the turn of the century was to be interested in collaboration, necessarily putting individual pre-eminence to one side.' (p.19)

'Artists who had not embarked upon the academic ladder – those from different and in particular artisanal backgrounds – were freer to find other ways of making sculpture.' (p.29)

'Significant as the 'Gates' project is within any account of Rodin's career, it is of wider significance in understanding what was happening in sculpture in the early years of the century.' (p.32)

'We forget now how, judged by the criteria of an age attuned to monument-making, Rodin was not successful.' (p.50)

Additional reading

Butler, R. (1980) *Rodin in Perspective*, New York

Lampert, C. (1986) *Rodin: Sculpture and Drawing*, London

Week 6 Visits' Week

There will be a visit to Tate Modern and the British Museum on the Tuesday of visits' week. Normally, we leave by coach at 9.30 and return to Cambridge between 6 and 7. There will be a charge of about £3 – details to be posted nearer the date.

The British Museum

The main purpose of visiting the Museum is to study the African collection in the Sainsbury Galleries. For those of you taking the Framing Modernism module, the display of the collection should make an interesting contrast with that of the Sainsbury Centre at U.E.A.

Tate Modern

The collection is displayed at present under four headings; all of the themes contain examples of figurative sculpture.

History/Memory/Society

Still-Life/Object/Real-Life

Nude/Action/Body

Landscape/Matter/Environment

Below are the pieces of sculpture which I'd like you to track down, listed under the four headings. Some sculptors appear in two or more sections. Included in the list are works by artists we have looked at in class, works by artists we haven't discussed but whose sculpture relates to the artists we have considered and, finally, the work of artists we shall encounter later in the module.

Those of you taking the module at 20 credits should now be thinking about how to tackle the essay question. A number of the listed pieces deal with the human figure and ought to offer ideas for your essay.

History/Memory/Society

Gabo, Naum, *Head No 2*, 1916, Cor-ten steel

Boccioni, Umberto, *Unique Forms of Continuity in Space*, 1913 (cast 1972), bronze

Barlach, Ernst, *The Avenger*, 1914, bronze

Gabo, Naum, *Constructions* (you will find a whole room devoted entirely to them – look for figurative connotations)

Vantongerloo, Georges, *Interrelation of Volumes*, 1919, sandstone

Still-Life/Object/Real-Life

Oldenburg, Claes, *Giant 3-Way Plug Scale 2/3*, 1970. Wood

Duchamp, Marcel, *Fountain*, 1917 (replica 1964)

_____ *Fresh Window*, 1920 (replica 1964)

_____ *The Box in a Valise*, 1943

_____ *Why Not Sneeze Rose Selavy*, 1921 (replica 1964)

_____ *The Bride Stripped Bare by her Batchelors, Even*, 1915-23 (replica 1964)

Agar, Eileen, *Angel of Anarchy*, 1936-40, textiles over plaster and mixed media

Dali, Salvador, *Lobster Telephone*, 1936, plastic, painted plaster, mixed media

Manzoni, Piero, *Artist's Breath*, 1960

Belmer, Hans, *The Doll*, 1936/65, painted aluminium on brass base

Belmer, Hans, *The Doll*, 1937/8

Oldenburg, Claes, *Soft Drainpipe – Blue Version*, 1967, acrylic on canvas and steel

Nude/Action/Body

Rodin, Auguste, *The Kiss*, 1901-4, Pentelican marble

Rodin, Auguste, *Crouching Woman*, 1891, bronze

Brancusi, Constantin, *Maiastra*, 1911, bronze and stone

Epstein, Jacob, *Female Figure in Flenite*, 1913, serpentine

Gaudier-Brzeska, Henri, *The Imp*, 1914, alabaster

Giacometti, Alberto, *Spoon Woman*, 1926-7, bronze

Modigliani, Amadeo, *Head*, 1911-12, limestone

Schmidt-Rottluff, Karl, *Male Head*, 1917, wood

Moore, Henry, *Reclining Figure*, 1951, plaster and string

Hesse, Eva, *Addendum*, 1967, papier mache, wood and card

Giacometti, Alberto - there is a whole room dedicated to his figures

Landscape/Matter/Environment

Long, Richard, *England*, 1968

Beuys, Joseph - there is a whole room dedicated to him – look for figurative associations

Giacometti, Alberto, *Hour of Traces*, 1930, painted plaster, wood, steel

Smith, David, *Agricola*, 1952, bronze, steel

_____ *The Five Spring*, 1956, steel

_____ *Wagon 11*, 1964, steel

Week 7 'Primitive' expression through material

This week, we shall be looking at the ways in which the example of pre-Classical and non-European sculpture inspired European sculptors after 1890 to rethink the representation of the human figure. You ought to be in a position to make interesting connections between this week's study and the work we undertook in weeks 1 and 3.

How did these great shifts in representation come about? What interested western sculptors in this unfamiliar art? What connections did they make between pre-Classical and non-European sculpture? What did they take from these forms of sculpture? What did they leave behind? What part did native folk art play in their work? Can 'primitivism' as a European art movement be regarded as essentially a form of colonialist exploitation and appropriation?

Independent visit

If you haven't visited Kettle's Yard (corner of Northampton Street and Castle Hill, open 2-4 except Monday) in connection with *Framing Modernism*, you should do so in preparation for this week's class. Study, especially, the works of Brancusi, Gaudier-Brzeska, Hepworth and Moore. You could also visit the garden of Memorial Court, Clare College (halfway along Queens' Road to see an outdoor work by Hepworth.

Lecture

The figures of Constantin Brancusi

Seminar

An analysis of examples of direct carving by E. Kirchner, Amadeo Modigliani, Jacob Epstein and Henry Moore.

Readings

Curtis: chapter 3, Direct expression through the Material, pp. 73-104

Quotations:

'Carving could be promoted as honest in every way. As a result, clay assumed somewhat 'decadent; associations.' (p.77)

'In this binary history the lineage of stone carving, as represented in Egyptian and Assyrian relief-work, Cambodian, archaic Greek, and medieval French carving, represented the only true path.' (p.78)

'Carving has indigenous traditions; its rootedness gives it an 'anonymous' or generic quality which some artists have relished, and they have similarly played on its 'essentialist' character.' (p.83)

'African, Oceanic, Indian, Assyrian, Egyptian or Mexican carvings showed a holistic treatment in which image and material depended on each other, and a power derived very much from the original block'. (p.83)

'In England writers such as John Ruskin and William Morris had already called for a return to pre-industrial working methods as a way of avoiding the alienation of the worker from his product.' (p.73)

'the stone block (is) female, the plastic figures that emerge from it are her children, the proof of the carver's love for the stone' (p.87)

'The wood was very hard but it was wonderful to come up against resistance and also have to bring all one's physical strength into play' (p.88)

'The sites and class associations of direct carving combined to give it a somewhat anti-metropolitan flavour.' (p.94)

Additional reading

Gray, C. (1980) *The Sculpture and Ceramics of Gauguin*, London

Shanes, E. (1989) *Brancusi*, London

Teja Bach, F. (1995) *Constantin Brancusi 1876-1957*, MIT

Barron, S. (ed) (1984) *German Expressionist Sculpture*, Los Angeles

Silber, E. (1986) *The Sculpture of Epstein*, London

Philip, J. (1986) *Henry Moore on Sculpture*, London

Hammacher, A.M. (1966) *Barbara Hepworth*, London

Gale, M. & Stephens, C. (1967) *Barbara Hepworth: Works in the Tate Gallery Collection and the Barbara Hepworth Museum, St Ives*, London: Tate Gallery

Week 8 The constructed figure

The claim is increasingly voiced that Picasso's contribution to modern art was as significant in sculpture as in painting. In a series of constructed sculptures, made between 1912 and 1917, Picasso completely rethought the nature of western sculpture and, some would argue, the representation of the human figure. How did he do this and what were his motivations? What impact did his example make upon his contemporaries, especially those in Germany and the Soviet Union?

Independent visit

The most significant piece of constructivist sculpture by far in Cambridge is the very large Hepworth *Four-Piece (Walkthrough)* in the grounds of Churchill College (north-west Cambridge; take the Madingley Road and turn right at Storey's way; Churchill College is on the left; walk straight down the wide covered corridor towards the dining-hall and continue to the outside – the Hepworth is in front of you)

Lecture

Picasso's constructions

Seminar

Henri Laurens, Alexander Archipenko, Juan Gonzalez, Naum Gabo, Alexander Calder

Reading

Curtis: chapter 3, re-read pp. 97-104

Curtis: chapter 4, The Private Arena; The Possibilities of Painting, Pictorialism, and the Spatial Environment, pp.106-139

Quotations:

'Sheet metal and wire gave sculptors ready-formed planes and lines with which they could 'draw'. (p.97)

'The sculptor can use twenty different materials, or even more, in a single work, provided that the plastic emotion requires it.' (Boccioni) (p.100)

'Understanding Rodin involved seeing him invent and reinvent, form and reform.' (p.108)

'Sculpture was enjoying a new range of possibilities; the public stage promoted private experimentation.' (p.109)

'Rosso's criticism of Rodin was that he was still 'doing the statue.' (p.116)

'Cubist painting is an almost sculptural translation of the external world; its associated sculpture translates Cubist painting back into a semi-reality.' (p.118)

'To make an object in sculpture was, in itself, quite radical.' (p.121)

'Collage was recognized to pose the most fundamental questions about the unity of the picture's surface, the nature of artifice and illusion, and the artist's role in ordering them.' (p.122)

'Indeed composition, something we much more readily associate with painting, becomes increasingly central to modernist sculpture in the inter-war years, and is carried through by means of diverse and discrete components.' (p.127)

'...'sculpture is the path both from material-volume to virtual-volume, and from tactile-grasp to visual grasp. Sculpture is the path to the freeing of a material from its weight; from mass to motion.' (p.137)

Additional reading

The Tate Gallery, (1994) *Picasso, Sculptor and Painter*, London

Withers, J.(1978) *Julio Gonzalez*, New York

Calder, A. (1967) *Calder: an, S. (1987) Autobiography with Pictures*, London: Allen Lane
Nash Naum Gabo, New York

Week 9 Objects and figures

The Dadaists and Surrealists developed a sculptural approach which seems, in most respects, to be diametrically opposed to that of Constructivism. Their central interest was in the object. What did they mean by 'object'? What forms did their 'objects' take? What notion of 'reality' did they develop? What subversive purposes did they have? In what ways did their 'objects' relate to the rethinking of the representation of human nature?

In the 1950s and 1960s, the Dadaist and Surrealist interest in the strangeness of the familiar object was renewed within the context of a burgeoning culture of popular consumerism and materialism. How was 'popular culture' defined for the purposes of 'Pop Art'? What did this art appropriate from Surrealism? To what extent can this art be regarded as critical of contemporary culture? In what ways did it take on a political aspect?

Lecture

Dadaist and Surrealist figures

Seminar

The figure in Pop Art

Reading

Curtis: chapter 5, The Object: Function, Invitation and Interaction, pp.141-176

Causey: Chapter 3, Sculpture and the Everyday, pp. 85-108

Causey: Chapter 8, Objects and Figures, pp.228-259

Quotations:

(Curtis)

'The choice of ready-made is always based on visual indifference and, at the same time, on the total absence of good or bad taste.' (p.143-144)

'Duchamp's objects need the viewer – and the viewer's imagined involvement – to be activated. They suggest a corollary action, and, as a result of our being involved with them, they lead us somewhere else.' (pp. 144-145)

'The personal nature of the object, its particular relationship with its maker or owner, as introduced by Surrealism, has been of fundamental importance to the potential of sculpture.' (p.154)

'Though the unconscious was so rich a part of Surrealism, few artists brought sculpture and material form into any kind of working association with the unconscious urge to form.' (p.160)

'But at the very time the Surrealist Object was entering the world of the museum, where it would be preserved, the dynamic of Surrealist sculpture was taking it onto a wider, if more temporary, stage.' (p.162)

'But some sculptors, working from the same Surrealist framework, looked instead to defining a concentrated space by opening their sculptures within their own frame.' (p.169)

(Causey)

'...with the social change that accompanies industrialisation the experimental and flexible values of mass arts reflect culture better than the static and self-perpetuating values of high culture.' (p.86)

'The pedestal was the sign of the sculpture's privilege, the primary sign of its difference from other things.' (p.87)

'In introducing theatre to sculpture the Pop Art installation changed the status of the viewer....' (p.102)

'The vitality of Oldenburg's work and its endorsement of sensuality and excess marks the extreme in the art of this movement opposed to the cool irony of Johns.' (p.104)

'Multi-coding is central to its meaning.' (p.107)

Additional reading

Ades, D. (1978) *Dada and Surrealism Reviewed*, London: Westerham Press

Bonnefoy, Y. (1991), *Giacometti*, Paris.

Madoff, S. (1997) *Pop Art: a Critical History*, London: Un. of California Press.

Lippard, L. (1970) *Pop Art*, London: Penguin.

van der Marck, J. (1978), *George Segal*, New York: Harry H. Abrams.

MOMA (1969), *Claes Oldenberg*, New York: Harry H. Abrams.

Week 10 Sculpture and War

This week we shall look at sculpture against the background of the European crises of the 1930s, 40s and 50s – the rise of totalitarianism, the Second World War and the beginnings of the Cold War. How did the fascist and communist states view sculpture? Why was the human body again the main subject of sculpture in these decades? How did sculptors view the body amid the carnage of war? What impact did the Cold War have on western European sculpture?

Independent visits

Cambridge has a very significant example of a public war monument, the War Memorial of 1922 by H. Tait Mackenzie. You should go to see it for yourselves at the junction of Hills Road and Station Road (busy junction; enthusiasts! don't get yourself knocked down). Consider it in relation to Curtis's arguments.

To see what a 'Geometry of Fear' sculpture looks like, look at 'Talos' by Michael Ayrton (opposite the Guildhall, at the Market Square end of Petty Cury). Also visit the sculpture gallery of the Fitzwilliam Museum

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Lecture

Sculpture and the Second World War

Seminar

Marino Marini, Alberto Giacometti, Henry Moore, Reg Butler

Reading

Curtis: chapter 7, The Figurative Ideal, pp.215-250

Casey: chapter 1, European Sculpture after 1945, pp.15-60

Quotations

'This conundrum provoked the use of a figural type sufficiently established in itself to allow sculptors to concentrate on nuances of internal and formal variation rather than on dramatic profile or narrative thrust.' (p.219)

'The 'gravitas' inherent in the heavily-limbed figure is often borne by a nominally 'innocent' subject: the child, the girl, the peasant.' (p.220)

'A rejection of virtuosity meant a rejection of the possibly random or spontaneous traits of the hand.' (p.224)

'The classical tradition is one of appropriation, multivalency and revision.' (p.234)

'The climate of the 1930s and the ensuing war, both invigorated and desecrated the tradition of the figurative ideal.' (p.249)

'One thing that can be said with some certainty is that the first fifteen post-war years constitute a 'period' .' (p.16)

'It was a problem to which no solution was found.' (p.20)

'My aim is to render palpable the last stage in the dissolution of a myth.' (p.29)

'The theory of 'placelessness' became an important constituent of Modernism.' (p.39)

Additional reading

Cowling, E., Golding, J. (1994) *Picasso: Sculptor/Painter*, London: Tate Gallery

Elsen, A. (1979) *Unknown Beings and Other Realities*, New York: George Brazillier. (chapter 6)

Bonnefoy, Y. (1991) *Giacometti*, Paris

Week 11 Formalism and Minimalism

On the face of it, the formalist and minimalist movements do not seem to be about the human figure at all. However, a good case can be made for the argument that that is precisely what they were concerned with.

The view that the search for 'autonomous' forms is the true purpose of sculpture enjoyed a revival in the 1950s and 1960s, contradicting Pop Art's obsession with popular culture. What ideas lay behind this revival? Why were they so powerful for a time in America? Can they be linked to the wider cultural and social history in any way? What forms did this type of sculpture take? Why did formalist sculpture move towards an increasingly severe minimalism?

Independent visit

You can see good examples of Anthony Caro's Lap sculpture in the [Fitzwilliam Museum](#).

Lecture

David Smith, Anthony Caro and the ideas of Clement Greenberg

Seminar

Donald Judd, Sol LeWitt, Robert Morris, Carl Andre, William Tucker

Reading

Causey: chapter 2, 'The New Sculpture', pp.61-84, chapter 4:'Modernism and Minimalism' (pp.109-129)

Quotations:

'Smith's problem at this stage was refining an art of baroque complexity and maintaining the power of his inspiration without losing himself in a confusion of images.' (p.64)

'Industrialism, (Greenberg) said, "exacerbates and drives us to extreme positions where we write poetry but are unable to calm ourselves and live long enough to fix abiding plastic representations." ' (p.68)

'Some of the most effective metaphors in post-war sculpture were archaeological.' (p.74)

'Berger's objections were to the point: the sculptors were working to an anodyne specification and most produced anodyne results.' (p.80)

'Modernism's turning away from life and inward on itself was the prime cause, because it cut the discipline off from replenishment and inspiration from outside.' (p.83)

'The human body is no longer postulated as the agent of space.' (p.109)

'Caro's sculptures work as sequences of statements or gestures following from one another empirically, without prescription or closure.' (p.110)

'David Smith was the established sculptor who most successfully remade an existing reputation in terms of new priorities.' (p.119)

'The Minimalist debate had far-reaching implications because the idea of the theatrical and the greater role permitted to the viewer revealed a way beyond the self-containedness of Modernism....' (p.129)

'Significance was no longer necessarily vested solely in the finished object; value might be placed on the provisional, and on procedures and processes....' (p.131)

Additional reading

Merkert, J. (1986), *David Smith: Sculpture and Drawings*, Munich: Prestel Verlag

Waldeman, D. (1982), *Anthony Caro*, New York, Abbeville

MOMA (1986), *Richard Serra*, New York: Museum of Modern Art

Williams, R. (1985), *After Modern Sculpture: Art in the US and Europe 1965-70*, New York.

Week 12 New ways of representing the body

Perhaps unexpectedly, the grip of constructivism and pop art was broken in the 1970s and 80s and new forms of representing the human body emerged. What relationship did the new bodily forms have to the older traditions of sculpture? In what ways did this art deal with surface and interior? What was the spatial context of such art? What impact did feminism have upon the portrayal of the body?

Independent visit

To Jesus College, where you can see two Barry Flanagan pieces, *Horse* (in the first court) and *Cricketer* (opposite the cricket pavilion).

Lecture

Contrasted approaches to the body - Joseph Beuys and Richard Long

Seminar

- (1) Duane Hanson, Barry Flanagan, Eva Hesse, Anthony Gormley, Gilbert and George, Rebecca Horn, Bill Woodrow, Tony Cragg
- (2) Preparing for the final assignment

Reading

Causey chapter 5 'Anti-Form' pp.131-167; chapter 6, 'Natural Materials', chapter 8, pp 251-259

Quotations:

'The body as sculpture had a history in the work of Klein and Manzoni and in performance art and happenings from around 1958.' (p.132)

'...it meant using the body in a way that would give the artist a new critical focus on space and social context and architecture.' (p.133)

'In all of this (Hesse) was unlike the Minimalists, and the kind of clarity she achieved was not the result of industrially manufactured hard materials, but one reached through the revelation of process.' (p.138)

'Beuys's work is about transformation....for restitution and healing' (p.141)

'The switch from authorship to discourse..... was alien to Beuys')p.143)

'*Arte Povera* is anti-Modernist in its permissiveness and engagement with human experience, feelings, and instincts.' (p.147)

'A second distinction, which carries the argument beyond what is usually accepted as Body Art, distinguishes crucially between the body of the artist used as art and what the artist does to the bodies of the viewers.' (p.156)

'The work of Rebecca Horn....maps the human body and locates it in relation to the world.' (p.164)

'We have become aware of the millions of stories we did not allow ourselves to tell over the last years because of our suspicions of the conditions of expression. Now we know we can express without being expressionistic.' (p.252)

'One of the changes that enable the debate to get under way was the virtual elimination of the worn-out subject of the human figure as a subject for sculpture.' (p.259)

'Temporality emerged in Earth art in different ways...' (p.179)

'...he (Smithson) was interested in the process of change and felt that present art was a form of intervention as much as it was a thing.' (p.181)

'Long's arrangements are Minimalist.' (p.182)

Additional reading

Goldberg, R. (1987), *Performance Art*, London: Allen Lane

Guggenheim Museum (1993), *Rebecca Horn*, New York: Guggenheim Museum.

Varndoe, K. (1985), *Duane Hanson*, New York, Harry H. Abrams.

Beardsley, J. (1998) *Earthworks and Beyond*, New York: Cross River Press.

Kastner J. & Wallis, B. (1996), *Land and Environmental Art*, London: Phaidon

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ASSESSMENT

If you are taking the module for 20-credits, you complete the following three assignments:

1. Short essay (1)

Discuss, using examples taken from the first four weeks of the module, four ways in which sculptors proportioned the human figure (the only stipulation about your choice of examples is that you must include an African figure).

If you want to write a decent essay, you will need:

- to illustrate *diverse* approaches to the problem of proportion; the more extreme the contrasts between the examples, the better.
- to analyse your examples perceptively and to describe them lucidly and evocatively
- to find a fluent way of linking your examples so that the choices do not seem arbitrary and the connections you make appear significant and illuminating
- to explain, in however a preliminary way, what ideas might have motivated the sculptors
- (most important!) to give proper references throughout, both to books/articles/websites and to your chosen pieces of sculpture; your work should conform to the advice set out in Vivien Perutz's *Writing Essays* (which you should all have); you will also need to add a bibliography.

Maximum 1200 words

Submission to the Art Office (room 65) by 1 pm, Friday 8 November

2. Short Essay (2)

Write an analysis of any sculpted figure in Tate Modern from after 1930. Take into account, though not necessarily in this order:

- Size, materials and processes of making
- Mass, form, surfaces and colour
- The position of the sculpture in space
- What the artist's intentions might have been
- How the work relates to other works by the artist and to works by other artists
- What ideas about art and society could be said to inform the sculpture
- What the sculpture represents
- Where it might originally have been meant to be seen and how it is displayed now
- What Tate Modern (and any other commentators) have to say about the work and whether you agree

Again, this will need to be a properly referenced essay.

Maximum 1200 words

Submission by the Art Office by 1 pm Friday 6 December

3. The Longer Essay

Your old art teacher has asked you to give a talk to sixth-form Art students on “the human figure in 20th century sculpture”.

She has asked you to base your talk on examples which show the diversity of approaches to the figure in 20th century sculpture. However, she wants you to limit yourself to no more than ten illustrations so that there can be a really focused discussion afterwards. She's also keen that you explain to the students something of the background to each example. Copies will be circulated to the students, so you will need to recommend some reading to them.

to write a good essay, you will need:

- to use varied examples from different times in the century
- to make clear distinctions between your various examples
- to make sure that your discussion draws the students' attention to the visual evidence
- to keep in mind that you are not writing an orthodox essay; this is the script for a talk and it ought to be lively and uplifting, as well as informative
- to demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the sculpture and the times in which it was made
- to reference your work correctly, when you are quoting or referring to your pieces of sculpture
- to include a recommended reading list for the students

Maximum 1800 words

Submission to the Art Office by 1 pm, Tuesday, 7 January

If you are taking the module for 10-credits You should complete the Short Essay (1) in this form:

Discuss, using examples taken from the first four weeks of the module, three ways in which sculptors proportioned the human figure (one of the examples must be an African figure).
(1000 words)

If you want to write a decent essay, you will need:

- to illustrate *diverse* approaches to the problem of proportion; the more extreme the contrasts between the examples, the better.
- to analyse your examples perceptively and to describe them lucidly and evocatively
- to find a fluent way of linking your examples so that the choices do not seem arbitrary and the connections you make appear significant and illuminating
- to explain, in however a preliminary way, what ideas motivated the sculptors
- (most important!) to give proper references throughout, both to books/articles/websites and to your chosen pieces of sculpture; your work should conform to the advice set out in Vivien Perutz's *Writing Essays* (which you should all have); you will also need to add a bibliography.

The assessment date for the Short Essay (1) is 1 pm, Friday, 8 November and the Short Essay (2) (1000 words)

The assessment date for the Short Essay (2) is 1 pm Tuesday, 7 January

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