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MAKELIN, HELEN ESTHER. Lead Sculpture. (1971) Directed by:
Mr. Peter Agostini. Pp. 8

The thesis, consisting of 19 hand-size pieces of sculpture in lead, was on exhibit in the Weatherspoon Gallery of The University of North Carolina at Greensboro from May 2-9, 1971.

The sculptures were cast in lead by means of the lost-wax process; they were subsequently tooled and polished.

On file in the Jackson Library of The University of North Carolina at Greensboro are 35 mm color slides of the thesis.

LEAD SCULPTURE

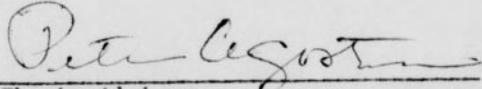
by

Helen Esther Makelin

A Thesis Submitted to
the Faculty of the Graduate School at
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Approved by


Thesis Adviser

APPROVAL SHEET

This thesis has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of the Graduate School at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

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May 5/71

Date of Examination

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I would like to express my appreciation to Mr. Peter Agostini, thesis director; Mr. Walter Barker and Mr. Gilbert Carpenter, members of the Art Department; and Dr. Barbara Terry, from the Department of Romance Languages.

Excerpts from a notebook which accompanied the growth of sculptural form are presented herein for they not only provide explanation of the works, but are themselves a facet of the creative process, and as such reflect thoughts, questions, resolutions, and the natural movement of the process. Selections are made with priority given to parts having explanatory value with regard to meaning and development. The sequential order is followed and sufficient passages are included to maintain the search-oriented, non-absolute quality of movement of the creative process. A summary follows the excerpts.

For clarification, the two forms to which the text refers are a spherical (although not necessarily geometrical) solid and a rod-like form, or three-dimensional line. Following the entry of Oct. 10, 1970, the two are unified and are subsequently referred to as a single form.

Oct. 10, 1970. "The two forms or types of energy are all there are (at this point). They relate to an endless number of things, oppose and complement one another, and may be combined infinitely. They are a synthesis of all forms. To this point I have studied the forms mainly as they occur separately (in Nature, the human body, and in man-made things) and have accordingly represented them separately."

Oct. 27, 1970. "The form is human, a synthesis; the result is not form alone, but form with underlying structure. It is of everything existent; although each sculptural embodiment may have a separate, predominating existence of its own, common roots are present always."

Nov. 5, 1970. "Rather than one object, a fruit or a figure, I pursue their common energy, and attempt to do this removed from them and entirely through self."

Nov. 22, 1970. "My forms are the unity of things, but are not didactic; the statement is there not in a diagrammatic way, but more in a conversational, natural way, to be heard by one who wants to listen."

Dec. 6, 1970. "I deal for the most part with space around the form; space encompasses but does not penetrate to such an extent as to create large opening, or large distances within or throughout the form. The reduced admittance of space calls awareness to subtleties of the spatial movements of the form."

Dec. 29, 1970. "Sculpture is always a symbol, be it of relations or of their components, of other symbols or their relations, or even of total non-relation, although it may naturally be termed 'related' for that reason. The abstract, icon-like object form I use is a direct symbol in that there is no confusion with pictorial representation. The 'directness' of the symbol is curious because it is indirect as far as being readable to anyone not informed of it, but it is direct insofar as it is not misleading as it might be, if it were a pictorial representation."

Feb. 7, 1971. "Force expressed by a straight line can actually be a circle in its entirety; the 'line' which is a part or segment of a planet's orbit, for example, when considered from a more encompassing view, becomes a circle or part of a spiral. Projections then (in sculpture) need not end freely in space to describe force; they may circle back and

reunite with the spherical form from which they stem. The proportional difference of planet and orbit and the relation of the mass of the planet to the path or line differ considerably from the sculptural statements, thus maintaining a uniqueness or difference of perspective sculpturally rather than restating the natural one, while at the same time describing the relations of the natural forms and energies. Sculpturally, if the whole is materially considered, the natural system could of course be diagrammatically imitated with fine wire or light to map the orbit. The sculptural idea, however, is not to imitate, or even to dwell on this, but fleetingly, lightly to relate, and simultaneously to maintain similar relations with innumerable other phenomena, both acts (occurrences) and objects, and with the results (as perceived by man) of these acts or with the influences of the objects."

Feb. 17, 1971. "A hole has finally grown which is not merely a hole in metal, but an inner-directed projection. The opening is not a space recalling the absence of matter, but is a growth similar to that of the outward projections."

Feb. 26, 1971. "The sculptures are simple and similar to a small, but clear and true statement. They are quiet, yet not in a suppressed sense."

Mar. 6, 1971. "There is the spiritual sense of an aura, an energy. The forms constitute an individually expressive statement, but one which is intelligent, as opposed to emotionally expressionistic. The creation or process involves both intuition and calculation, with intuition receiving primary faith."

The works stem from visual, tactual, and conceptual perceptions of constant change, infinity, prismatic, multi-faceted relationships, and dualities (or balances) in life. The primary concern is with natural forms and phenomena, and with the development, through observation and examination of particulars, of an open, more universal awareness of associative aspects of being. Specific considerations include: material objects, notably organic form in space; states of growth, movement, metamorphosis, or immobility of human and natural forms; concepts, systems, theories, and their occurrence in the above-mentioned states; additionally, an extensive interest in art history is a contributive factor. Specific data and generalizations are worked in a process of continuous, progressive associations. The search is for clear and simplified sculptural hypotheses which describe, trace, and finally become symbols for both tangible and intangible aspects of existence.

The specific forms (conceptual) with which I work are an essence, intuitively derived while grown within their organic, three-dimensional, sculptural matrix, which is essential, for it is a similarly apprehended matrix that corresponds to man's earthly existence. As sculpture, the matrix is a symbol with its own unique being; conceptual elements are recalled in materially constituent factors, which include the use of lead in conjunction with small scale, surface variation, and slight shine.

The small size together with the density and weight of lead is materially coherent and equational with the conceptual essence or unity referred to in the notebook, for both material and idea are compact, concise, and quietly assertive in nature. A predominant assertion of the

solidity of the mass with a simultaneous expanse of infinite space is maintained, but not to the exclusion of open form, which receives consideration in the projections and holes.

Surface variations recall the uniqueness of each piece, yet since the variations are subtle and not disruptive, an overall, unifying initiatory pattern is recognizable. A sense of infinity in the modulations of the surfaces is furthered by a muted shine, which is again of a subtly changing, not disruptive quality; thus neither variation nor shine transgresses the intactness of the sculptural mass.

From a receptive standpoint, the sculptures may be considered both separately and as a group. A dialogue may be established by an individual handling a piece; such communication is inclusive of visual, tactual, and conceptual considerations, and strengthens the sense of singular unity of each piece by allowing a complete perception of the weight and mass. Presentation of the sculptures as a group reflects the infinity of the individual variations on a multiple scale, thus emphasizing the physical distinctness of each piece, but simultaneously allowing a universal view of the basic, unifying pattern.