Chapter Thirteen: Sculpture

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

- Carving
- Modeling
- Casting
- Assemblage
- Earthworks

Works in Progress
Eva Hesse’s *Contingent*

The Critical Process
Thinking About Sculpture: Anthony Caro’s *Early One Morning*

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

This Chapter Will:
- identify and illustrate subtractive and additive sculptural processes
- describe the lost-wax casting process
- distinguish between low-relief, high-relief, and in-the-round sculpture
- define and discuss earthworks

KEY TERMS

- subtractive processes
- additive processes
- replacement processes
- carving
- modeling
- casting
- lost-wax process
- investment
- assemblage
- construction
- low (bas-) relief
- high (haut-) relief
- earthwork
LECTURE AND DISCUSSION TOPICS

1. Sculptures and Space
Have students look through the chapter to familiarize themselves with the variety of additive and subtractive sculptural methods and techniques. Discuss the relationship between the sculpture, a freestanding object, to the space we ourselves occupy to point out the integral aspect of space to sculpture.

2. Relief Sculpture
Differentiate between freestanding sculpture and relief sculpture. Discuss the nature of relief as it relates to sculpture using the provided works in the chapter from Egypt, Senwosret I led by Atum to Amun-Re (fig 362) and Greece, Maidens and Stewards (fig. 363), and Atlas Bringing Herakles the Golden Apples (fig. 364). Ask students if they are able to see the difference between high relief and low relief? Emphasize how light played an important role on these relief sculptures that were carved on the outsides of ancient buildings like the Greek Parthenon. Compare relief sculpture with sculpture in-the-round using David Smith’s Blackburn: Song of an Irish Blacksmith (figs. 366 and 367).

3. Carving
Carving is part of the subtractive sculptural process in which the material being carved is cut away from the sculptural material. Illustrate the variety of carved works in the chapter—from Michelangelo’s Atlas Slave (fig 368) to Jim Sardonis’s Reverence (figs. 374 and 375) to discuss the nature of the carving process. Michelangelo, known for his painting achievements on the Sistine Chapel Ceiling, actually considered himself, first and foremost, a sculptor. He even wrote poetry about sculpture. Michelangelo imagined figures trapped inside blocks of stone and it was his task as a sculptor to free that figure from the imprisoning block of stone. In an unfinished work such as Atlas (fig 368), point out Michelangelo’s attempt to free Atlas from the encompassing stone.

4. Modeling
Sculptures made from clay, wax, or other pliable materials are part of the additive sculptural process. Artists, such as Robert Arneson, modeled clay to form his whimsical works such as Case of Bottles (fig. 376). Sculptures created using clay are referred to as ceramic sculpture. In the long history of ceramic sculpture, the Chinese have been acknowledged as masters of the medium. The amazing archeological discovery in 1974 of Chinese Emperor Shih Huang Ti’s (otherwise known as Emperor Qin) tomb revealed the expertise with which the Chinese modeled form. Made entirely of ceramic, life-like soldiers, horses, and chariots are distinguished by individual details that exemplify the Chinese mastery of the ceramic medium.

5. Casting
In Africa, in the Kingdom of Benin, brass casting reached an unsurpassed level of sophistication. The Head of an Oba (fig 380) is an excellent example of the intricate detail that is possible to achieve in one of the most complicated casting processes—the lost-wax method. In order to fully understand the lost-wax casting method, direct
students to the diagram in the chapter (fig.381) as well as the Lost-Wax demonstration at A World of Art Companion CD-ROM.

6. Assemblage
David Hammon’s *Spade with Chains* (fig. 387), H. C. Westermann’s *Memorial to the Idea of Man If He Was an Idea* (fig 388), and Clyde Connell’s *Swamp Ritual* (fig 389) are all examples of assemblage sculpture. Assemblage is an additive sculptural process since the artists gather together and assembles found objects to create their respective sculptures. Ask students how the materials assembled by each artist contribute to the overall content of the work?

7. Earthworks
As seen in Chapter 1, with Christo and Jeanne-Claude’s *Umbrella Project* (figs. 1 and 2) and Robert Smithson’s *Spiral Jetty* (fig. 6), Earthworks are usually large, sometimes temporary works of art. Nancy Holt’s *Sun Tunnels* (figs. 393 and 394) and Walter de Maria’s *Lightening Field* (fig.395) are also Earthworks that are specifically designed to utilize nature and the elements of the cosmos. Both Holt and De Maria are manipulating the landscape do some degree in order to communicate their ideas. Ask students how they respond to this type of sculpture?

**CRITICAL THINKING: More Opportunities to Think About Art**
Several artworks are detailed in the Critical Thinking and Works in Progress features found in this chapter. In addition, diverse opportunities for studying these works are located on the Companion Website and Companion CD-ROM.

1. Works in Progress: Jim Sardonis’s *Reverence*
Jim Sardonis creates stone sculptures, bronze casts and jewelry. His *Reverence* (figs. 374 and 375) featured in this chapter, are sculptural tributes to whales. Discuss how the artist used black granite to carve these sculptures? Read about nature of working with this type of stone and the difficulties the artist encountered during the sculptural process. How did funding for this work determine its final installation? For more information about his work and to see more sculptures see his website at www.sardonis.com/.

2. Works in Progress: Eva Hesse’s *Contingent*
Eva Hesse died of brain cancer at thirty-four, an age at which most artist's careers are barely under way, yet she left a condensed body of work of remarkable power. Her sculptural installations sometimes evoke a sense of inner life, sometimes they are fraught with anxiety. Hesse grew more and more interested in what usually didn't pertain to sculpture. Backing away from its male rigidity, which included the rhetoric of Minimalism, she allowed herself to explore her fascination with female imagery. The phallic mockery in Hesse's work can be comically obscene: black salamis wound with string, slumping cylinders of fiberglass. Even when it looks entirely abstract, her work refers to bodily functions. Have students examine Eva Hesse’s drawings and sculptural work *Contingent* (see figs. 390-392) to notice how the artist has constructed a particularly feminist ideology long before the Women’s Movement even began.
3. Thinking About Anthony Caro’s *Early One Morning*

Have students think about the elements of sculpture when viewing a work such as Caro’s *Early One Morning* (figs. 398 and 399). Consider how we look at sculpture? How does sculpture change depending on its location or viewpoint? Notice how Caro has resolved the traditional element of a base. Compare Caro’s work to that of David Smith’s (figs. 367 and 368) to identify Smith’s influences on Caro.

**PROJECT ASSIGNMENTS**

*Direct students to their Student Study Guide when assigning Hands-On Projects as the following assignments are written as instruction for the student and are contained in the guide as they are here. For additional project ideas, remember to investigate the Hands-On Projects found on the Companion Website.*

**A World of Art Companion Website Feature Project: The Ergonomic Egg**

Reread the sections called *Shape and Mass,* and *Three-dimensional Space.* The most basic, and certainly the oldest, of any of the sculptural techniques is carving. Almost all of us have tried carving at one point or another, whether it was soap carving, plaster block carving, or turkey carving (turkey carving, though not technically a "fine art," does fall under the category of "foul art," and is a valid subtractive experience). The question for many people who try carving for the first time is often "What do I carve?" Indeed, not having an idea is more challenging than having an idea. The ergonomic egg project provides answers to such questions for the first time carver, and you'll be amazed at the result. See *A World of Art* Companion Website for detailed instructions.

**RESOURCES**

*A World of Art Companion CD-ROM:*

**Lost Wax Bronze Pour**

Have students enter the *Visual Demonstrations* room found in *A World of Art* Companion CD-ROM and complete all the *Lost Wax Bronze Pour* demonstrations. This elaborate process is fascinating, and will heighten your appreciation of bronze sculptures upon viewing the artist at work in this demonstration.

*A World of Art Companion Website:*

*Remember to direct students to A World of Art companion website (www.prenhall.com/sayre) to help further their understanding of the materials discussed in this chapter with ideas for completing hands-on projects and exercises. Self-testing materials are also available and offer students the opportunity to evaluate their understanding of the chapter materials in a variety of formats. In addition, links to*
websites featuring contemporary artists, and museum and gallery exhibitions related to this chapter will enhance discussion and comprehension. Links for this chapter include:

**CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS: Nancy Holt** created *Sun Tunnels* (page 276) in Utah's Great Salt Basin between 1973 and 1976. Holt's themes often cause viewers to make connections between their own earthly presence and their relationship with the cosmos. Another example of this is Holt's *Dark Star Park* in Arlington, VA, which can be viewed at the Art in Context web site, created in 1995 by the Art in Context Center for Communications, a publicly supported nonprofit organization. Art in Context "has maintained this site as an online reference library for the publication and dissemination of information about artists and where to find their work."

**CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS: Sir Henry Moore**  The Henry Moore Foundation, A brief chronology. This page contains a chronology of Henry Moore’s life and achievements. Scroll to the bottom of the page and click on "Works on View" see images of works by Henry Moore.

**GALLERIES AND MUSEUMS: The International Sculpture Center** Website is the only online magazine dedicated solely to sculpture. It features a portfolio section of member artists, articles on contemporary sculpture, criticism, reviews of contemporary exhibitions and opportunities for artists. To see the tremendous breadth of work being produced by the ISC's members, click the Portfolio button.

**GALLERIES AND MUSEUMS: The Isamu Noguchi Garden Museum** displays a comprehensive collection of artwork by sculptor Isamu Noguchi (1904-1988) in a tranquil setting created by the artist. On exhibition are more than 250 works, including stone, metal, wood and clay sculptures, models for public projects and gardens, dance sets, and Noguchi's Akari light sculptures.

Other Suggested Websites:

**Marble Stone Carving** -Tools of the Trade is a site that features the work of a contemporary stone carver Walter S. Arnold. A history of the medium as well as pictures of the tools used is provided at www.stonecarver.com/carvtool.html

**Robert Arneson’s** work can be found online at numerous exhibitions. See www.artcyclopedia.com/artists/arneson_robert.html

**Tomb of Emperor Qin**, information about one of the greatest archeological discoveries is provided online at www.warriortours.com/cityguides/xian/mausoleum_qinshihuang/discovery.htm
Benin Bronzes at the British Museum are provided in an online exhibition at www.costumes.org/pages/uktour/uktour_p19.htm

Eva Hesse images and biography is provided at www.artchive.com/artchive/H/ hesse.html

Nancy Holt’s art can be found at numerous online locations at www.artcyclopedia.com/artists/holt_nancy.html

Suggested Videos:
Videos and other resources are available for purchase through any of the distributors listed in the Resources section of this manual.

Sculpture and the Creative Process (2 videos, 30 minutes each)
Monumental Statues (50 minutes)
Mobile by Alexander Calder feature artist (24 minutes)
Alexander Calder: Calder's Universe (30 minutes)
Isamu Noguchi: The Sculpture of Spaces feature artist (54 minutes)
Behind the Scenes with Nancy Graves feature artist (30 minutes)
Paper Sculpture Projects technique instruction (55 minutes)
Assemblage as Fine Art technique instruction (40 minutes)
National Gallery of Art Sculpture Processes overview of all processes (11 minutes)
Sculptors at Storm King: Shaping American Art (47 minutes)
Betye and Alison Saar (28 minutes)