

“A beautiful entity within itself”: The Commemorative Sculpture

Vince Carducci

Sculpture is among the oldest of humankind’s creative expressions. It has served since prehistory as a mnemonic device, that is, an aid to memory, a way to pass on ideas from one person or group to another across space and time. In the public domain, sculpture has commonly taken the form of the monument, an anchor for collective memory, particularly of a significant place, person, or event. A key part of Marshall Fredericks’s oeuvre is his commemorative sculpture executed in honor of individuals, dating from his first public commission in 1936 to the last large-scale work completed before his death just over sixty years later.



Figure 8. Levi L. Barbour Memorial Fountain, Belle Isle, Detroit, Michigan (photo: 1936).

Fredericks chose as the central figure a leaping gazelle, a graceful animal not native to Michigan. He surrounded the majestic animal with four smaller figures of native island wildlife: a rabbit, a hawk, an otter, and a grouse. The ensemble can be seen as representing the civic ideal of assimilation, which the socially conscious Barbour espoused.

The end of the Second World War saw the dedication of memorials to deceased soldiers across the nation, and southeast Michigan, where Fredericks maintained his studio, was no exception. For several of these commissions, Fredericks selected the American eagle as the main motif. A symbol of national strength and sovereignty, the eagle took different forms in Fredericks’s work depending upon the situation. In the *Eaton War Memorial* (1948), one version of which was originally installed outside a manufacturing plant in Saginaw,¹ there are actually two eagles, a smaller one in profile clutching the arrows of war in its talons behind a larger frontal one bearing the olive branches of

One of the primary questions in creating commemorative sculpture is how best to embody the person (or persons) to be remembered, settling upon what essential ideas are to be conveyed and what form to give them. While for the most part practicing a conventional figurative technique, Fredericks generally opted for an allegorical representation of his commemorative subjects. This approach emerged with the artist’s first commission, the *Levi L. Barbour Memorial Fountain* of 1936, located on Belle Isle, a public park in Detroit (fig. 8)

Levi Barbour (1840–1925) was an important figure at the local, state, and national levels during the Progressive Era. A well-to-do lawyer, he advocated social welfare and immigration reform. In 1914, he founded the Barbour Scholarship at the University of Michigan, which exists to this day and supports the graduate work of Asian women who are not U.S. citizens. For the Belle Isle sculpture in Barbour’s memory,

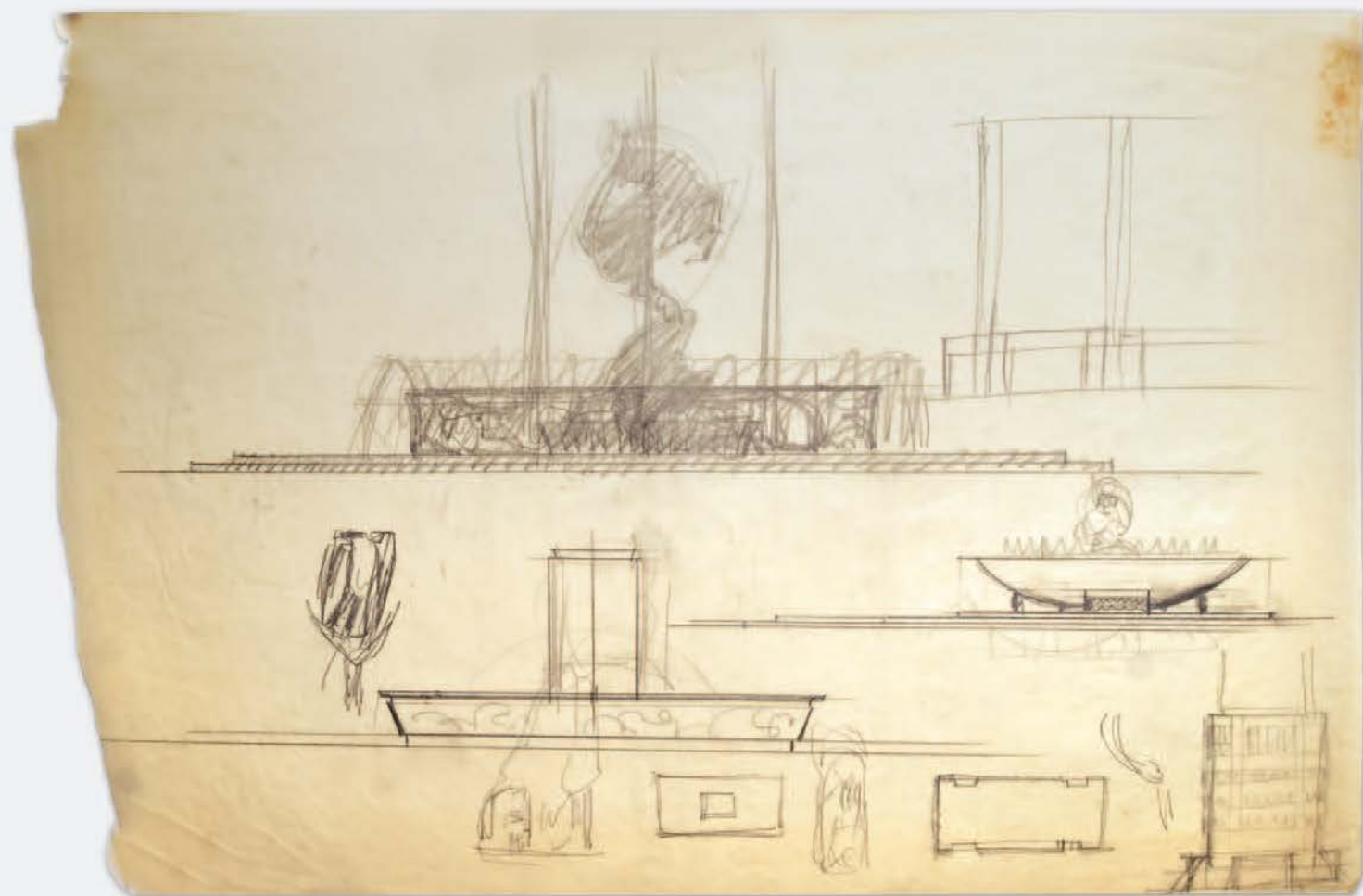
peace (see cat. nos. 19–21). In its original site, the bas-relief image was accompanied by the names of the sponsoring company's employees who gave their lives defending freedom, which the eagle also symbolizes. On the grounds of Michigan Stadium in Ann Arbor, the eagle of the next year was given more dynamic representation (see cat. nos. 22–23). The upraised wings of the solitary bird, swooping down in midflight, form a "V" for the victory achieved in part through the ultimate sacrifice of men and women affiliated with the university who died in the war.

A seeming exception to Fredericks's allegorical impulse is his portrait of Henry Ford, dedicated in 1975, located at the Henry Ford Centennial Library in Dearborn (see cat. nos. 26–30). In the manner of the ancient Roman patrician class, who memorialized their ancestors in highly realistic portraits, Ford is represented in exacting detail, dressed in a three-piece business suit, complete with a watch chain dangling across his vest. Hands in his pockets and deep in his own thoughts, the man who put the world on wheels is the calm at the eye of the productive storm that is the modern age. Here the allegory is a stylistic one.

Perhaps most interesting is Fredericks's last large-scale sculpture, *Lord Byron*, which the artist was working on at the time of his death in 1998 and which was subsequently cast in bronze the following year (see cat. no. 18). The nineteenth-century Romantic poet was an inspiration to Fredericks as a youth growing up in the Midwest. The design of the sculpture is based on sketches begun in the late 1930s when Fredericks was coming out from under the influence of his mentor, Cranbrook sculptor-in-residence Carl Milles. With its head tilted back, long vertical mass, and torso wrapped in a full cape, *Lord Byron* obviously refers to Auguste Rodin's sculpture *Balzac*, first exhibited in 1898, a full century before Fredericks's death. As Milles was Rodin's student, there is a direct line of descent from the acknowledged father of modern sculpture to Fredericks. Thus the artist framed an allegory of his own legacy within the sculptural tradition, moving from life into history, doing for himself in the end what he so excelled at doing for others.

Endnotes

1. The Eaton Company commissioned seven of the reliefs, which were installed at plants in Battle Creek, Detroit, Jackson, Saginaw, and Vassar, Michigan, and in Cleveland and Massillon, Ohio. The *Eaton War Memorial* from the Saginaw plant was donated to Saginaw Valley State University and the Marshall M. Fredericks Sculpture Museum in 2008.



Cat. no. 16 - Sketch for *Leaping Gazelle*, 1936
Pencil on tracing paper, 11 1/2 x 18 in.



Cat. no. 17 - *Leaping Gazelle*, 1936
Bronze, cast 2000–2002, 17 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 4 in.



Cat. no. 18 - *The Poet: Lord Byron*, 1938
Bronze, cast 1999, 30 ½ x 9 ½ x 6 ¼ in.



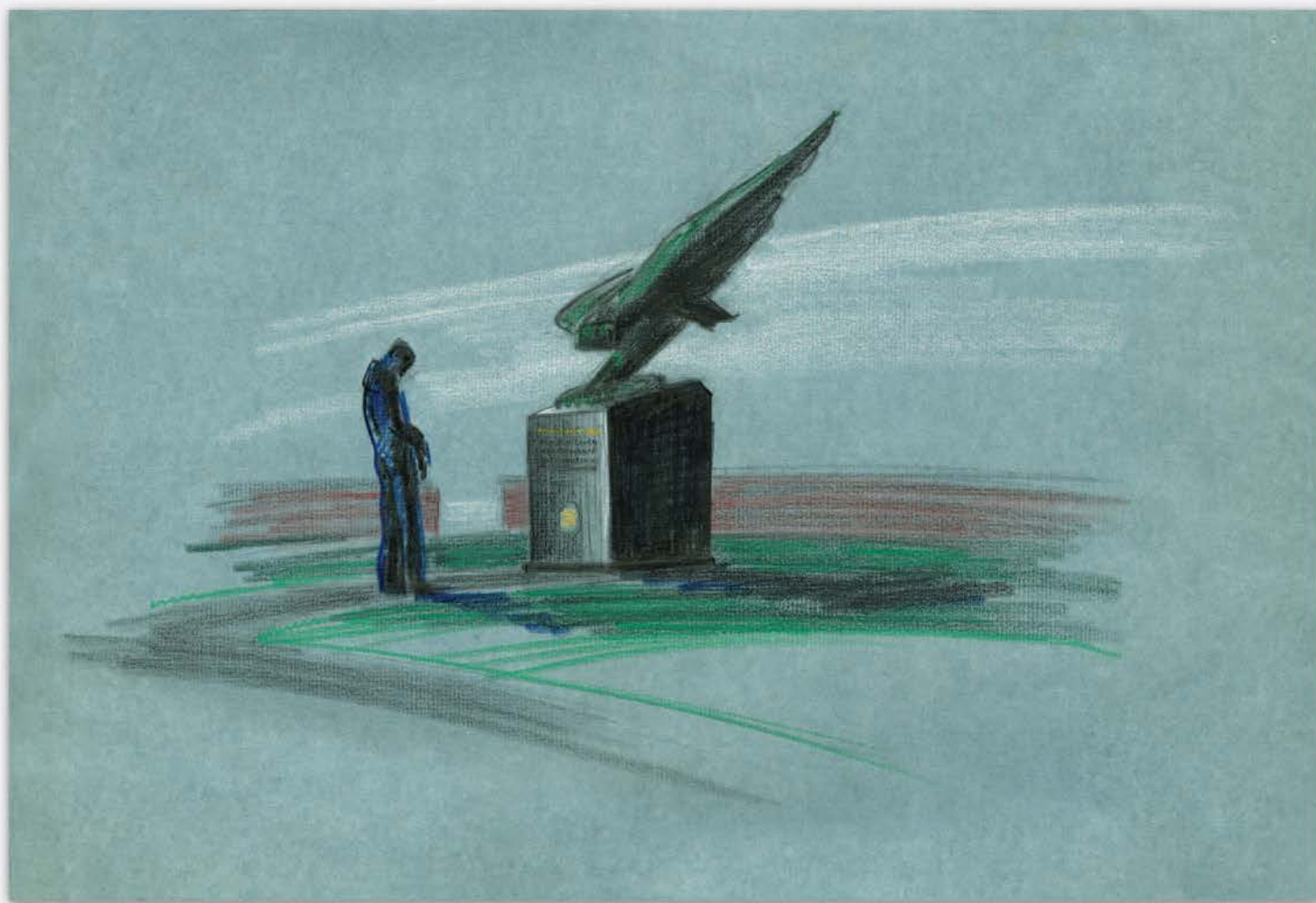
Cat. no. 19 - Study for *Eaton War Memorial Eagle*, ca. 1948
Pencil on paper, 12 x 17 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.



Cat. no. 20 - Presentation drawing for *Eaton War Memorial Eagle*, ca. 1948
Gouache and ink on drawing paper, 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.



Cat. no. 21 - *Eaton War Memorial Eagle*, 1948
Bronze, 25 x 27 ½ x 5 in.



Cat. no. 22 - Presentation drawing for *American Eagle (Ann Arbor War Memorial Eagle)*, ca. 1950
Oil pencils on charcoal paper, 14 1/4 x 9 3/4 in.



Cat. no. 23 - *American Eagle (Ann Arbor War Memorial Eagle)*, 1950
Bronze, cast 2000–2002, 7 x 7 x 7 ½ in.



Cat. no. 24 - Sketch for ***Flying Wild Geese***, ca. 1955
Pencil on paper, 14 x 16½ in.

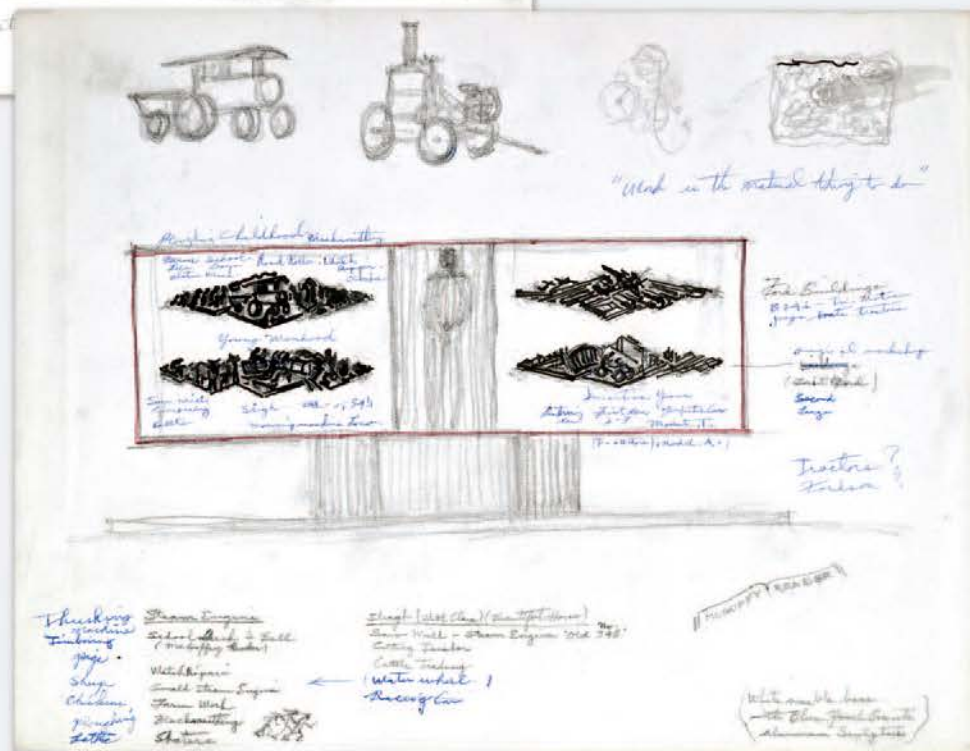


Cat. no. 25 - *Flying Wild Geese*, 1955
Bronze, cast 2000–2002, 14 x 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.

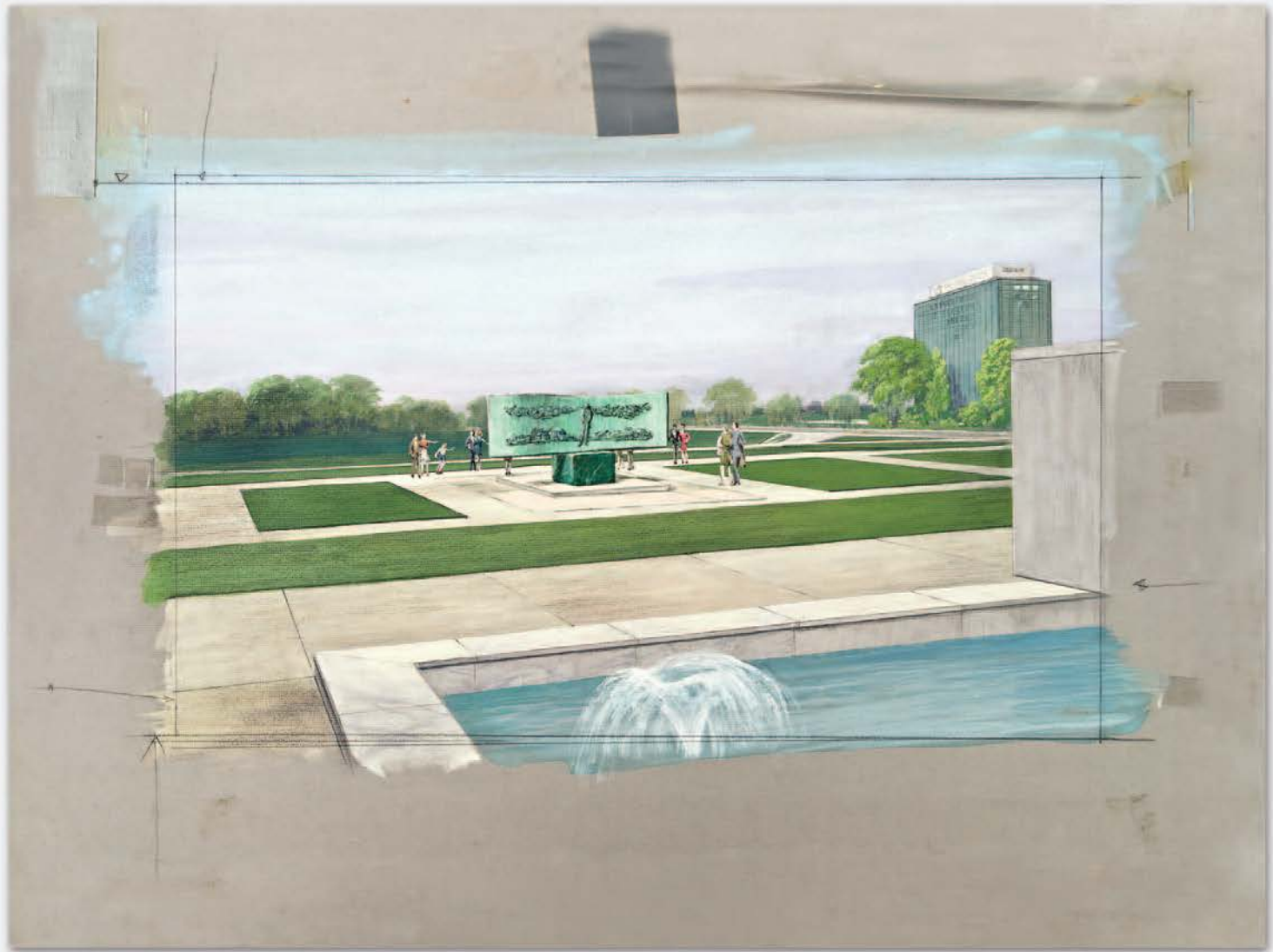


Cat. no. 26 - Sketch for *Henry Ford Memorial*, ca. 1975
Pencil on perforated sketchbook paper, 7 x 5 in.

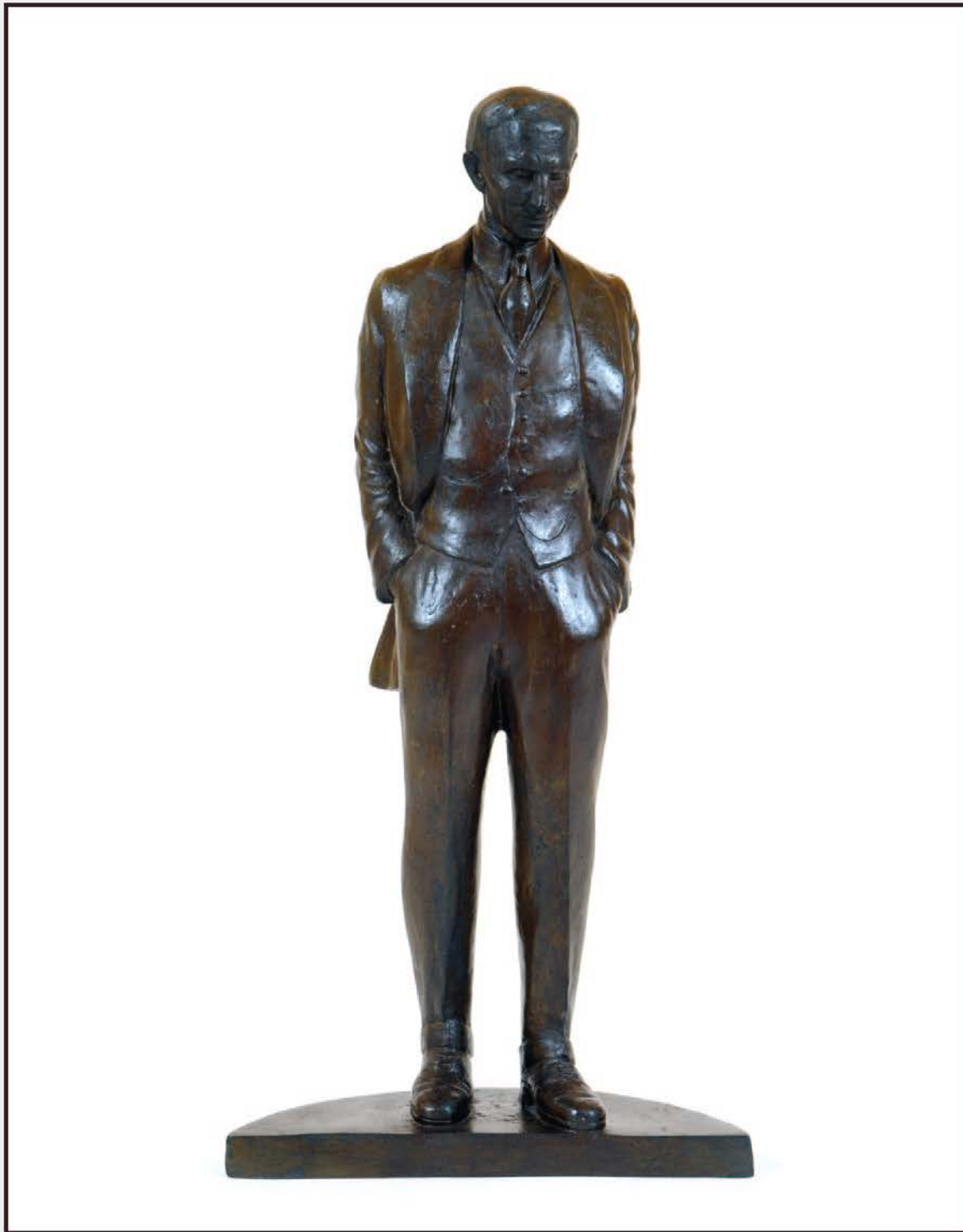
Buy Alphabet - Make Alphabet
Make Road
Get Flea Market



39



Cat. no. 29 - Presentation drawing for *Henry Ford Memorial*, ca. 1975
Gouache and charcoal on board, 24 x 32 in.



Cat. no. 30 - Study for *Henry Ford*, portrait statue from *Henry Ford Memorial*, 1975
Bronze, 25 x 7 x 5 in.

“We can free ourselves”: The Spiritual Sculpture

Dennis Alan Nawrocki

For the first time in forty-seven years of polling, the number of Americans who said that they have had a religious or mystical experience, which the question defined as a “moment of sudden religious insight or awakening,” was greater than those who said that they did not.¹

Marshall Fredericks, though hardly on the cutting edge of avant-garde art practice, was certainly well ahead of the curve in terms of the rise of spirituality among the American populace. Fredericks’s eponymous *Black Elk: Homage to the Great Spirit* (1980) depicts the Ogallala Sioux medicine man and spiritual leader (1866–1950) as he gazes skyward and angles his sacred peace pipe upward from his heart toward the Great Spirit (see cat. nos. 38–39). His gratitude for the sustenance provided by the buffalo, one of whom curls around his feet, and the rapport between the deity above and the man and animal below are effectively embodied through the chunky, blocky forms of man and beast. The sixteen-inch bronze, along with its larger-than-life counterpart, which rises to a height of twelve feet, was in part inspired by Black Elk’s affecting paean to spiritual harmony:

Then I was standing on the highest mountain of them all, and round about beneath me was the whole hoop of the world....And I saw that the sacred hoop of my people was one of the many hoops that made one circle, wide as daylight and as starlight, and in the center grew one mighty flowering tree to shelter all the children of one mother and one father.²

Other works by Fredericks, both maquettes and later enlarged casts, are replete with spiritual inflections, as even their titles suggest: *Sun Worshipper* (1937/94); *God on the Rainbow*, (1946/95; see fig. 9); *Star Dream* (1946/97; see fig. 3), the city of Royal Oak’s civic centerpiece; and *The Poet: Lord Byron* (1938/99; see cat. no. 18). In the latter, as in *Black Elk*, the visionary poet gazes directly upwards, shielding his eyes from a blinding creative light. Like *Black Elk*’s, this is no demure skyward glance, but one in which the neck and head are thrown back perpendicular to the axis of the body. The pose is emblematic of the sculptor’s spiritually charged figures, whether they are shown giving thanks to a supreme deity or imploring inspiration from on high.

Another critical attribute of Fredericks’s ardent characterizations is the phenomenon of flight or levitation that his effigies manifest. As he described the visual and liberating effect of his floating beings:

I tried to take the male and female figures and free them from the earth....these people—us, do not have to be limited to the earth, to the ground. We can free ourselves.³

Invariably, Fredericks links his notions of spirituality to feelings of yearning, liberation, or aspiration that cut across sectarian doctrine or dogma. His is an inclusive rather than exclusive definition of spirituality, not “either-or” but “both-and.” He seems bent on inspiring a viewer regardless of specific beliefs or orthodoxies. His vaguely religious (but inveterately spiritual) aim is to animate a sacred interior core that he assumes is universally reachable. The mid-century American abstract painter John McLaughlin described this proclivity as “the viewer’s natural desire for contemplation *without* [my italics] the benefit of a guiding principle.”⁴

Yet Fredericks could rise as well to the challenge of embodying specific religious personas, notably Eve and the crucified Christ. The majestic *Christ on the Cross* (1959) that towers above the midpoint of his career is fifty-five feet in height—the figure alone is twenty-eight feet tall—and looms over an open-air, evergreen-surrounded sanctuary at Indian River, Michigan (see fig. 11 and cat. nos. 40 and 41). Determined to feature a living redeemer rather than the conventional lifeless, thorn-crowned martyr, the artist sought permission from Rome for his alternative conception, resolving “to eliminate the suffering and agony for the observer and give the face an expression of great peace and

strength."⁵ As the artist maintained in an undated manuscript:

I believe that to be great a work of art must be more than just an exercise or experiment in some material or medium. It must be above mere selfish satisfaction or desire for attention and must have a true spiritual and emotional content that has a constructive meaning for others.⁶

Indeed, at this juncture and throughout his career, the sculptor sailed blithely past the reigning aesthetics of the art world. Neither the abstract—expressionist or constructivist—sculpture of the 1950s—Theodore Roszak, David Smith—nor the minimalist idiom of the 1960s—Donald Judd, Larry Bell—affected his designs. Indeed, the 1950s and 1960s, when this shift was underway, represent the period of Fredericks's signal monuments, many of which are rife with spiritual overtones, including *Youth in the Hands of God* (1956), *The Spirit of Detroit* (1958), *Man and the Expanding Universe Fountain* (1964), *Freedom of the Human Spirit* (1964), and *Wings of the Morning* (1969) (see figs. 4, 6, and 7).

Another of Fredericks's specific religious figures is *Eve*. Conceived in 1937, the comely, nude Eve simultaneously contemplates and proffers a shiny apple (see cat. nos. 31–32). Her firm, smoothly modeled torso is countered by her awkward stance and feet pressed flat against the surface of the round, fluted pedestal. When, in 1942, Eve was scaled up to life size, coupled with a small child, and the apple deleted from her hand, as in *Two Sisters (Mother and Child)*, the stiffly posed original figure was transformed into a touching, naturalistic mother. The duo became the charming centerpiece of a sparkling fountain and instead of proffering an apple the mother's open palm introduces her young daughter to passersby.



Figure 9. *God on the Rainbow*, Nacka Strand, Stockholm (photo: ca. 1995).

In contrast, the spiky, long-legged *Seven Saints and Sinners* from two years later (1939) offers an ensemble of lean, idiosyncratic characters, whether viewed lined up in a row at pedestal scale (thirty-three inches high) or enlarged to ten feet and configured in a circle in a round basined fountain (1976; see fig. 10 and cat. nos. 36 and 37). Four saints and three sinners comprise the cast. Of the three males and four females, two of the men are saints and one is evil, while of the four women, two are saints, one a sinner, and the fourth—who represents “Eve/Knowledge of Good and Evil”—may be either, or both. Their elongated, columnar forms are reminiscent of the processional statuary one encounters traversing the portals of a Gothic cathedral. Arrayed in a circular fountain, however, their fully three-dimensional, sharply etched forms and halos stand out in cinematic relief against the sky.

The male and female (eighteen and fifteen inches tall, respectively) that comprise *Celestial Fountain* (1938) were, as it happens, never sized up to adorn a fountain or plaza (see cat. nos. 33–35). Seated on spheres or orbs, a leitmotif in Fredericks's art that may alternatively imply the universe, the globe/earth, or star-studded heavens, both hold miniature Saturns that they seem about to launch into space. A related but later (1964) Herculean male astride an orb (figure and sphere rise

twenty-six feet in height) dominates the kinetic *Man and the Expanding Universe Fountain*. The huge, loincloth-clad superman is, according to the artist, “intended to symbolize the vitality, order, and mystery of the universe.”⁷

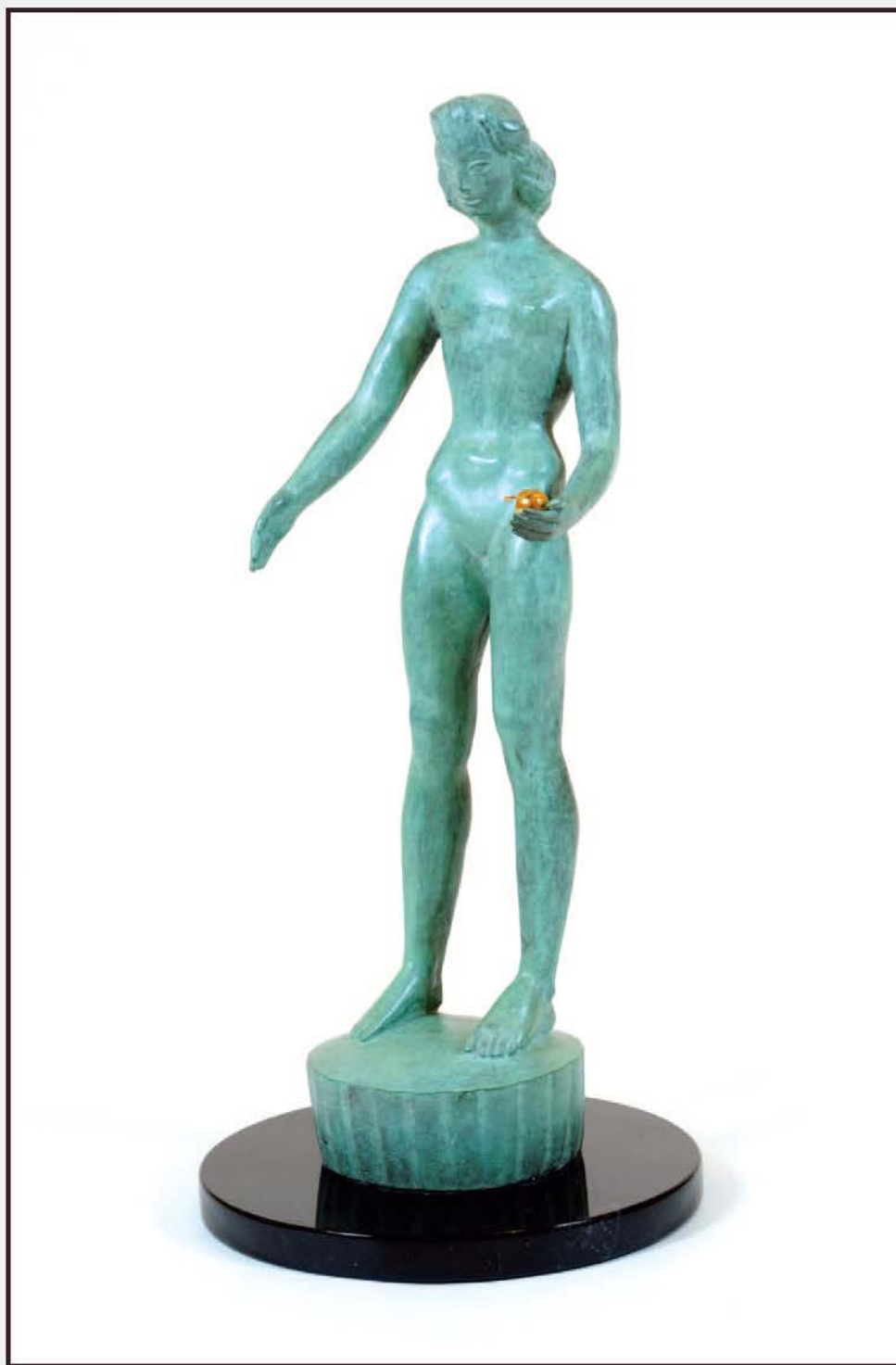
Never tiring of addressing the mystery of the universe or, for that matter, the contest between good and evil; the spirit of a city, state, or region; the relationship of humans and their creator, deity, or Great Spirit; the exhilarating pursuit of freedom or inspiration; Don Quixotian quests; or the yearning for transcendence, Fredericks’s steady, sustained vision stood him in good stead over the course of a fortuitously long and prolific career that encompassed most of the twentieth century. He faced down the century’s spiritual anomie and alienation, its skepticism, ambiguity and irony, its existential malaise, postmodern deconstruction and semiotics, even structuralism and post-structuralism in an unwaveringly affirmative voice.

Endnotes

1. Charles M. Blow, “Paranormal Flexibility,” *New York Times*, December 12, 2009.
2. John G. Neihardt, *Black Elk Speaks* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1961), p. 43.
3. Fredericks on *Freedom of the Human Spirit*, from a 1987 videotaped interview “Marshall Fredericks: Spirit in Sculpture,” MFSM Archives.
4. Roberta Smith, “John McLaughlin,” *New York Times*, December 29, 2010.
5. Marshall M. Fredericks, quoted in “A 55-Foot Crucifix Is Erected on Hill,” *New York Times*, August 2, 1959.
6. Marshall M. Fredericks, “The Opportunity in Ecclesiastical Art,” undated manuscript, MFSM Archives.
7. Marshall M. Fredericks, “Man and the Expanding Universe Fountain,” undated manuscript, MFSM Archives.



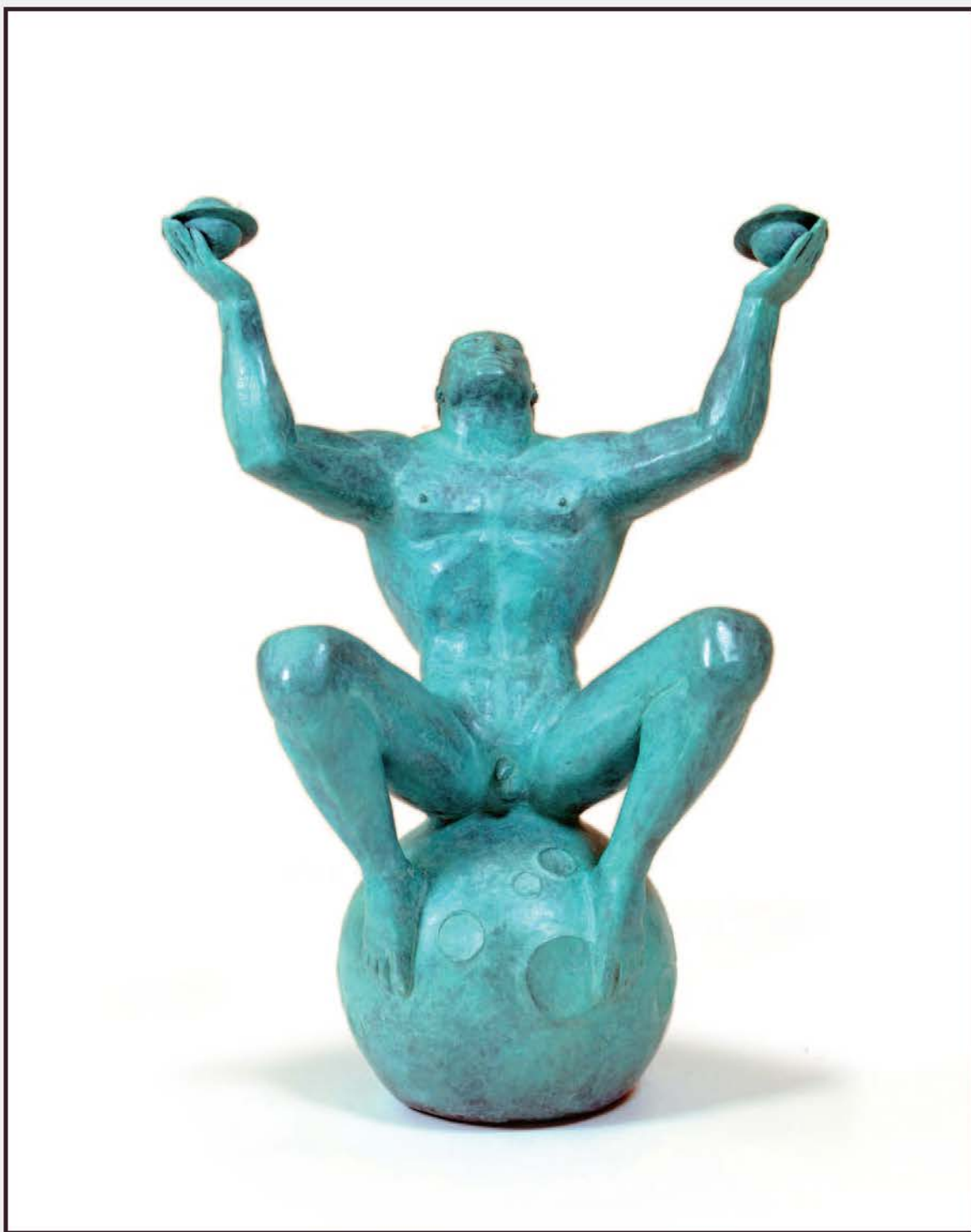
Cat. no. 31 - Sketch for *Eve*, ca. 1937
Pencil on yellow drawing paper, 8 ¼ x 5 ½ in.



Cat. no. 32 - *Eve*, 1937
Bronze, h: 19 in.



Cat. no. 33 - Sketch for *Celestial Fountain*, ca. 1938
 Pencil and ink on tracing paper, 11 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 18 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.



Cat. no. 34 - Study for *Celestial Fountain* (male), 1938
Bronze, cast 1988, 18 x 12 ½ x 8 ¼ in.



Cat. no. 35 - Study for *Celestial Fountain* (female), 1938
Bronze, cast 1988, 15 x 8 ¼ x 9 ¼ in.





Cat. no. 36 - Sketch for *Saints and Sinners*, ca. 1939
Pencil on yellow drawing paper, 8 ¼ x 5 ¼ in.



Cat. no. 37 - *Seven Saints and Sinners*, 1939
Bronze, cast 1976, h: 33 in.



Round base topped by
Sacred Hoop of the Lakota
Nation -
peace pipe on lap - Stem
up

Cat. no. 38 - Sketch for *Black Elk: Homage to the Great Spirit*, n.d.
Ink on paper, 8 x 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.



Cat. no. 39 - Study for *Black Elk: Homage to the Great Spirit*, 1980
Bronze, 16 ½ x 14 ½ x 7 in.

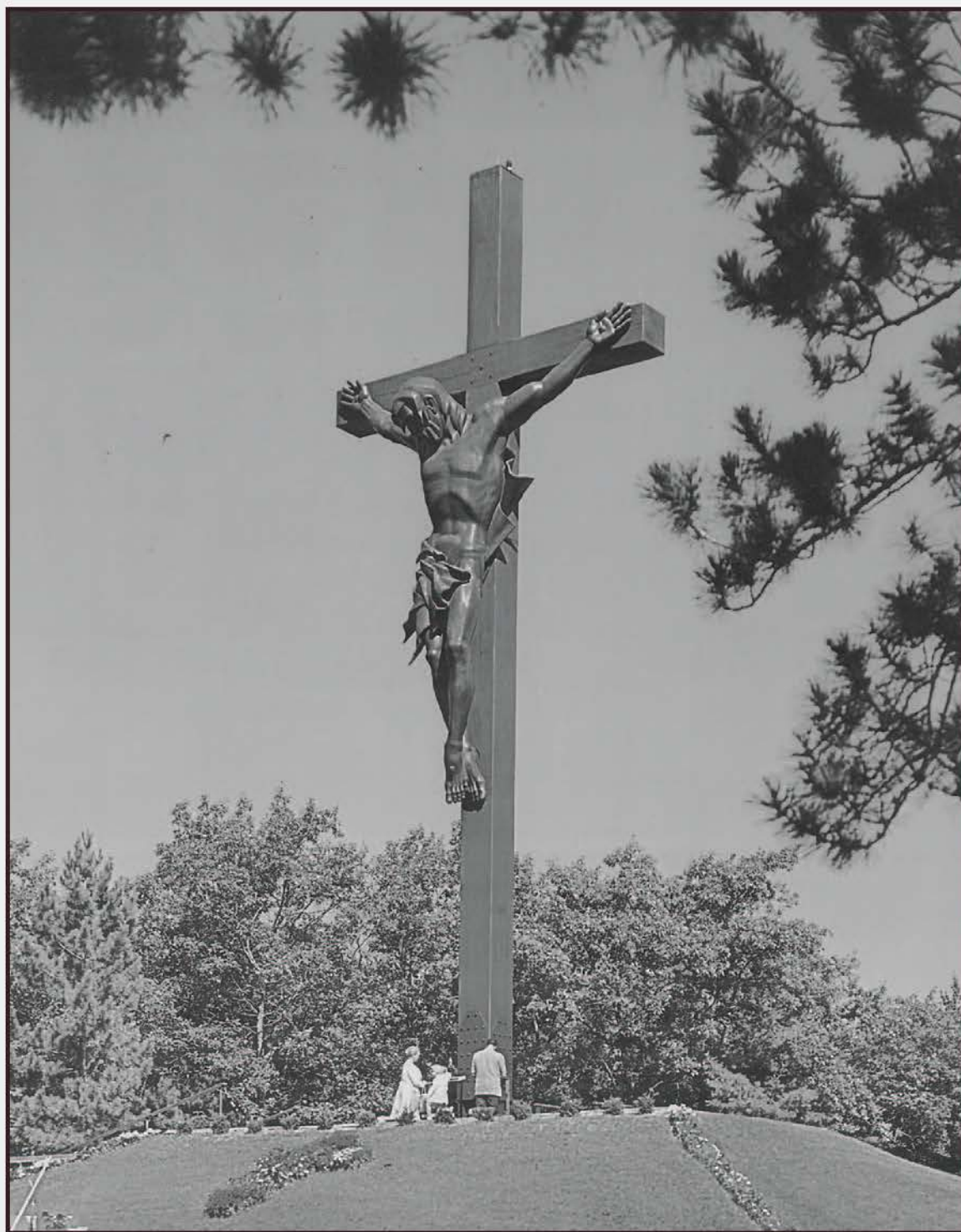


Figure 11. *Christ on the Cross*, Indian River, Michigan (photo: ca. 1959).



Cat. no. 40 - Presentation drawing for *Christ on the Cross*, ca. 1951
Oil pencil on construction paper, 10 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 9 in.



Cat. no. 41 - Study for *Christ on the Cross*, 1959
Bronze, 86 x 34 x 12 in.

“Lions and Clowns and Bears”: The Whimsical Sculpture of Marshall Fredericks

Joseph Antenucci Becherer

Each day dozens, if not hundreds, of children find great delight in the sculptures of Marshall Fredericks. In a world where such pleasure usually requires sound and lights and video screens, this is no small feat. Fredericks’s whimsical works require no electricity or batteries, nor do they move or make noise, but they speak enchantingly to the child in all of us. The sculptor addresses us properly, with kindness and respect, acknowledging that we are thinking and creative individuals. Like the legendary E. B. White, author of such classics as *Charlotte’s Web*, Fredericks never spoke down to his audiences no matter how youthful they might be.

Fredericks’s beloved clowns and dragons, lions and apes, can be found in a variety of malls and museums, on college campuses and in children’s gardens. Whatever the forum, the artist’s honest commitment to public sculpture is always evident in works that are always new, always open to fresh sensations.

Although Fredericks’s whimsical sculptures are highly diverse in terms of subject matter and date, they reveal two important layers of respect. Extrinsically, these sculptures respect the viewer. They effectively tap into a seemingly universal enjoyment of animals and entertainers from the vantage point of children. They are imaginative without being fantastical and express genuine sentiment without being saccharine. Intrinsically, they respect the artist’s finely crafted oeuvre. Forms are elegantly abstracted, line and volume coexist in careful balance, and the echoes of an Art Deco classicism are keenly and consistently felt over the decades. Central to the success of Fredericks’s more whimsical sculptures is the insight and esteem he held for his audiences within the parameters of his own, established visual language. His imagery speaks to us and never panders.

Take, for example, the *Acrobat Clown*, *Juggler Clown*, and *Lovesick Clown* (1938) (see fig. 12 and cat. nos. 42–46). Audiences today have a more muted appreciation of clowns than earlier in the twentieth century, and perhaps Fredericks’s works resonate because they are less involved with their Ringling Brothers circus and cartoon counterparts and more closely aligned with classic illustrations from the theater and opera.¹ A child might not appreciate such heady precedents, but they know these costumed individuals are special and have a defining energy. Each of the three shares a meticulous articulation of mass countered by poignant, hard-edged lines and planes. They speak cogently of the master’s style. Fredericks trusted his audiences and was honest with his own visual language.

A parallel case is the amiable *The Boy and Bear* (see cat. nos. 51–53). The work was originally commissioned by the J. L. Hudson Company for the Northland Shopping Center in suburban Detroit in 1951. Although there is no documented connection to Rudyard Kipling’s young hero Mowgli and his sidekick bear Baloo, it seems plausible that Fredericks had them in mind. Most adult audiences today know the story from the Disney retelling rather than the Kipling original. Young audiences may likely know neither, but they still respond positively to the Fredericks sculpture. They understand that the boy is small and frail, but courageous and mighty in adventure, and sense that the hulking creature is a friend not a foe. That the sculptor was able to move beyond a direct literary reference and offer a foundational story line that children can develop themselves is telling of his trust in his audiences and their creative powers.

The Lion and Mouse was conceived a few years following *The Boy and Bear*, and like Fredericks’s other sculptures commissioned for shopping malls, it was designed to be climbed upon by children. Unlike its predecessor, this work does have a direct literary connection, in this case to one of Aesop’s Fables.² Although Aesop’s tales have been retold innumerable times over the centuries, their message is so simple and profound as to find relevance within

every generation. Like the stories of Aesop, Fredericks's work has an ability to connect with audiences on global and timeless terms. In this work he captures both the physical timidity and gargantuan wisdom of the mouse as well as a moment of weakness shown by the most powerful of all creatures—the lion (see cat. nos. 59–60). In the heady days of the hippie-influenced 1960s and 1970s, the unwieldy coiffure and languorous body of the lion may have registered differently but the straightforwardness of the narrative remains relevant. The human characteristics displayed by this leonine character may be the furthest Fredericks ever ventured in anthropomorphizing an animal, but he was comfortable in finding the emotional and intellectual connections humans shared with their animal cousins.

Two capricious works immediately come to mind. The first is *Baboon Playing a Mandolin* (1939)³ and the second is the much-celebrated *The Thinker* (1939), in which a chimpanzee replaces the heroic figure of the French sculptor Rodin's original (see cat. nos. 47–50). The former work displays a decided connection to the actual performing creatures one sees in a myriad of circuses and theme parks even today, while the latter suggests the intellectual capacity of its subject. Although not intended as a pair, the two works can easily be seen as the quintessential expressions of the active and the contemplative life.

Whimsy is most decidedly a part of our intellectual and creative life. It is a universal trait shared across continents and the centuries. Marshall Fredericks's sculptures, while based in the realities of animal and human form, acknowledged this fact, while giving flight to an array of thoughts and emotions of which whimsy is but one. Across the breadth and depth of his repertoire, children, or perhaps the inner child of adult viewers, are introduced to more complex subjects and situations than a first glance at the fanciful forms might suggest. No wonder so many stop daily before his sculptures and smile.

Endnotes

1. *The Lovesick Clown* is often called the Pagliacci clown, in reference to the opera of the same name.
2. In 1949, Fredericks used Aesop as the symbol of European culture in his relief sculptures for the University of Michigan's Literature, Science and Arts Building.
3. Fredericks had a lifelong fascination with baboons, an animal that first appeared in his work in a large-scale project for the 1939 New York World's Fair. The sculpture was later destroyed.



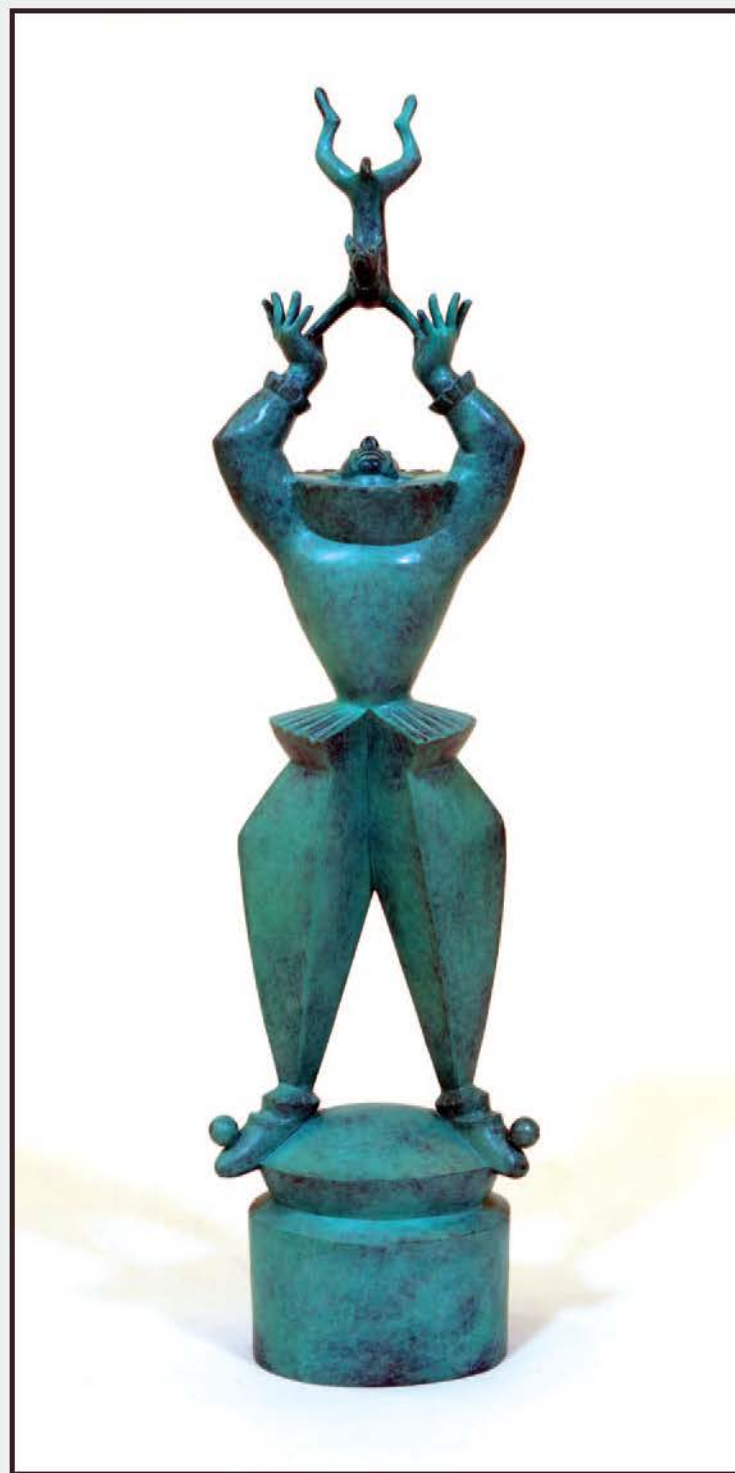
60 Figure 12. *Clowns*, Campus of Saginaw Valley State University, University Center, Michigan (photo: 2010).



Cat. no. 42 - Sketch for **Clowns**, n.d.
Pencil on steno pad paper, 9 x 5 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.



Cat. no. 43 - Sketch for *Clowns*, n.d.
62 Pencil on yellow drawing paper, 8 1/2 x 4 3/4 in.



Cat. no. 44 - Study for *Acrobat Clown*, 1938
Bronze, cast 1988, h: 29 1/2 in.



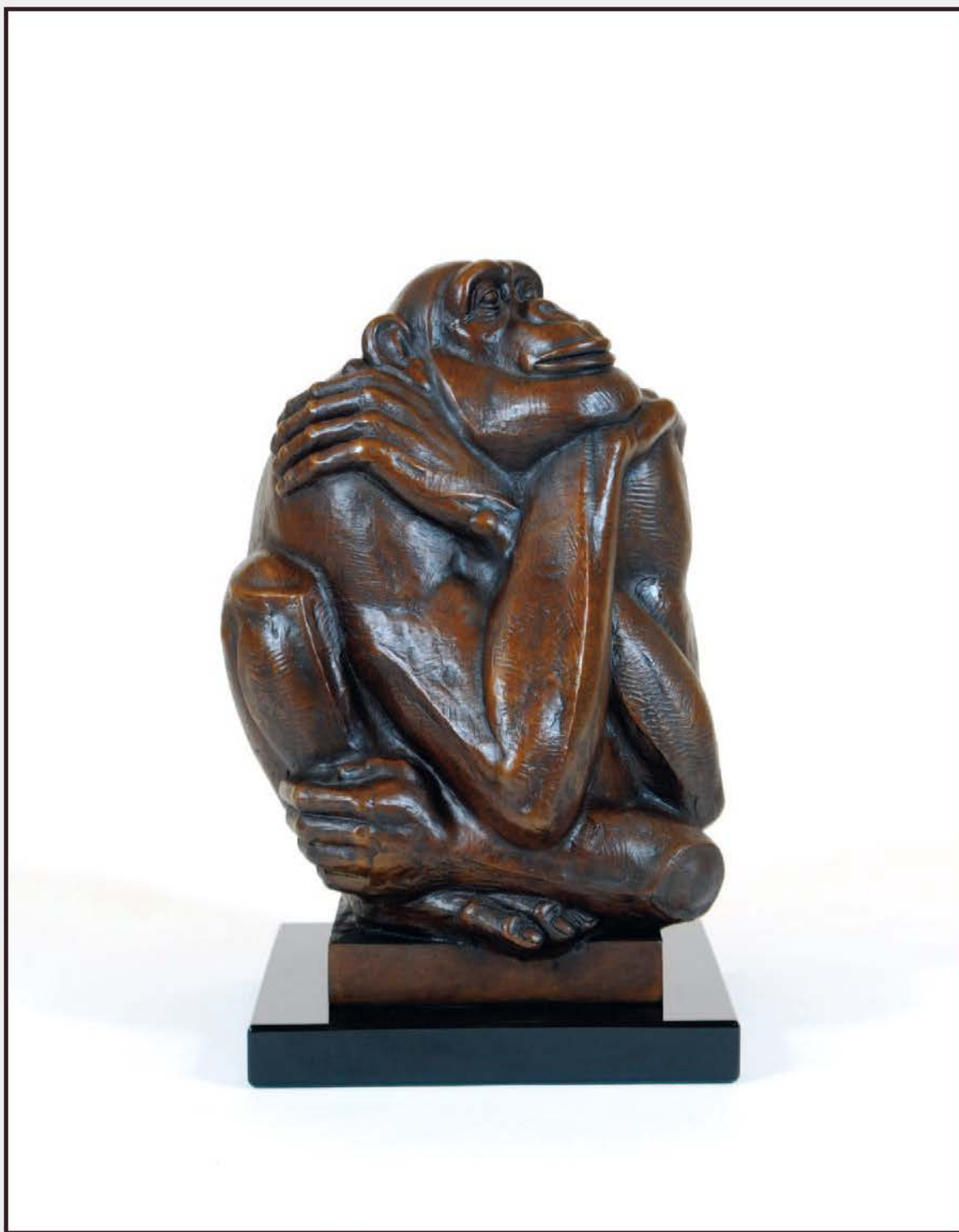
Cat. no. 45 - Study for *Juggler Clown*, 1938
Bronze, cast 1988, h: 38 in.



Cat. no. 46 - Study for *Lovesick Clown*, 1938
Bronze, cast 1988, h: 29 in.



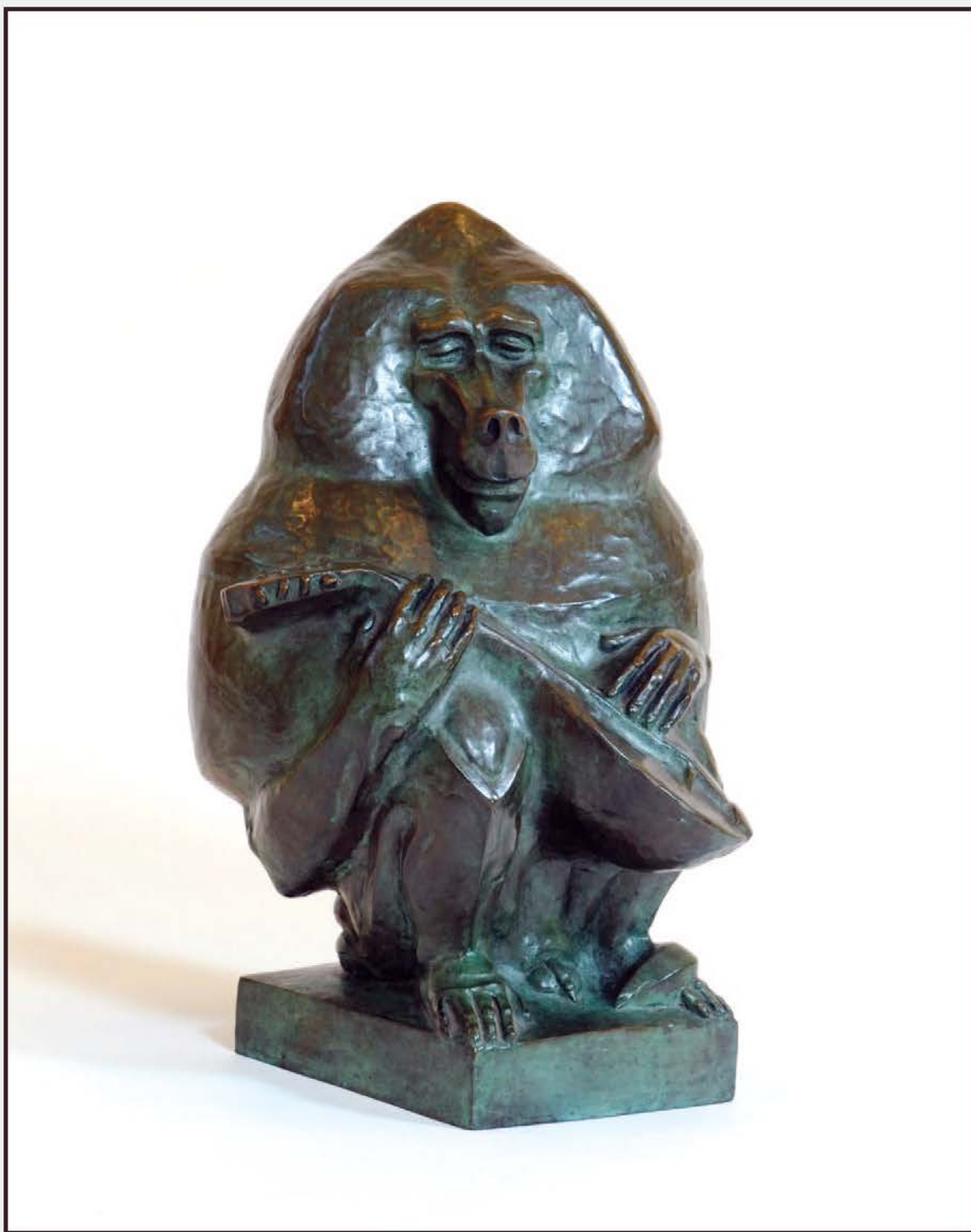
Cat. no. 47 - Study for *The Thinker*, ca. 1938
Charcoal on paper, 18 x 12 in.



Cat. no. 48 - *The Thinker*, 1938
Bronze, cast 2000–2002, 13 x 13 x 9 in.



Cat. no. 49 - Sketch for *Baboon Playing a Mandolin*, n.d.
Pencil on tracing paper, 24 x 18 ½ in.



Cat. no. 50 - Study for *Baboon Playing a Mandolin*, 1939
Bronze, 14 ½ x 9 ½ x 9 in.



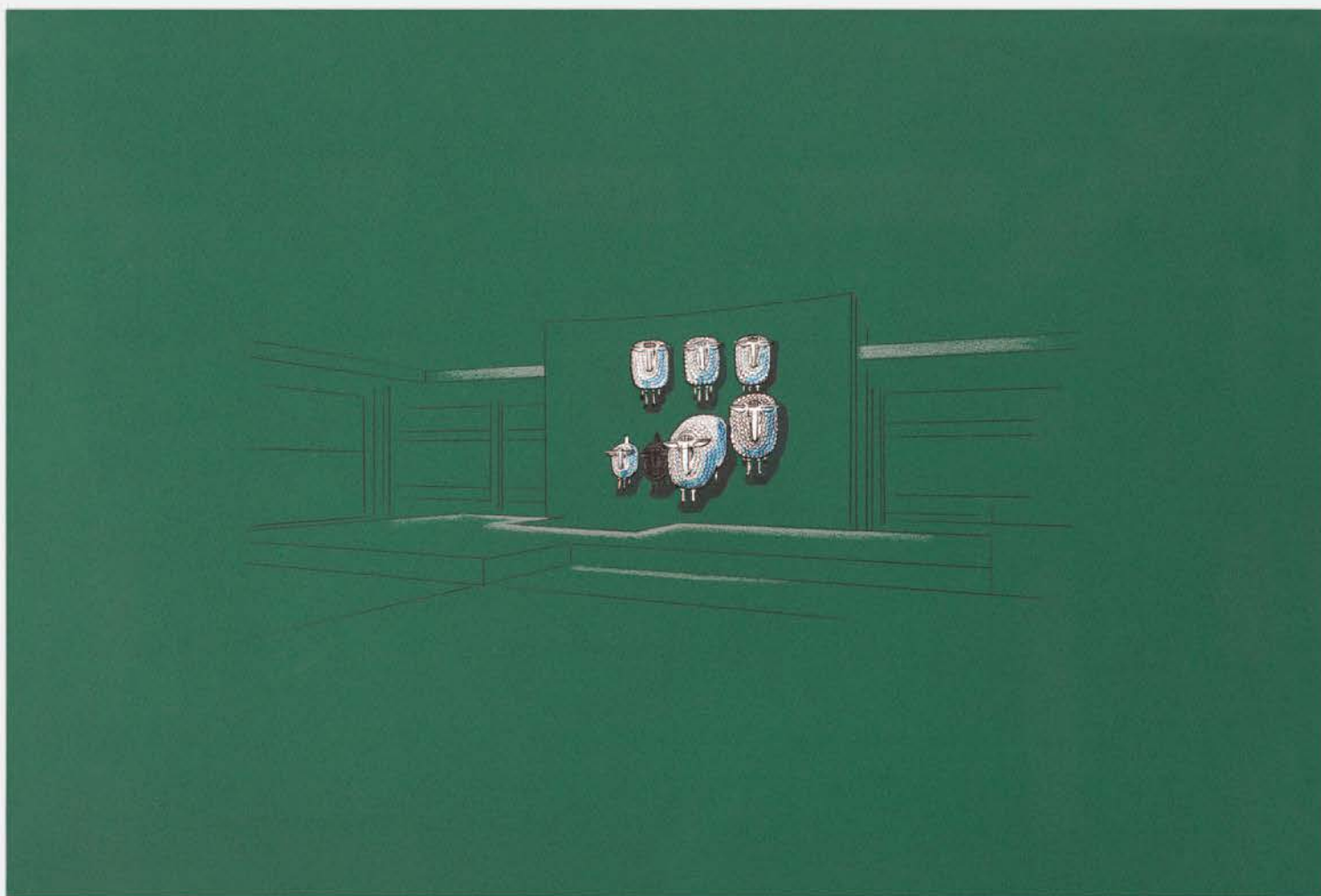
Cat. no. 51 - Sketch for **The Boy and Bear**, ca. 1954
Pencil on tracing paper, 6 x 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.



Cat. no. 52 - Study for *The Boy and Bear*, ca. 1954
Pencil on tracing paper, 9 x 11 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.



Cat. no. 53 - *The Boy and Bear*, 1954
Bronze, cast 2000–2002, 11 x 11 x 5 ½ in.



Cat. no. 54 - Presentation drawing for *Sheep (The Guests Have Arrived)*, ca. 1955
Gouache and ink on board, 18 ½ x 27 ½ in.



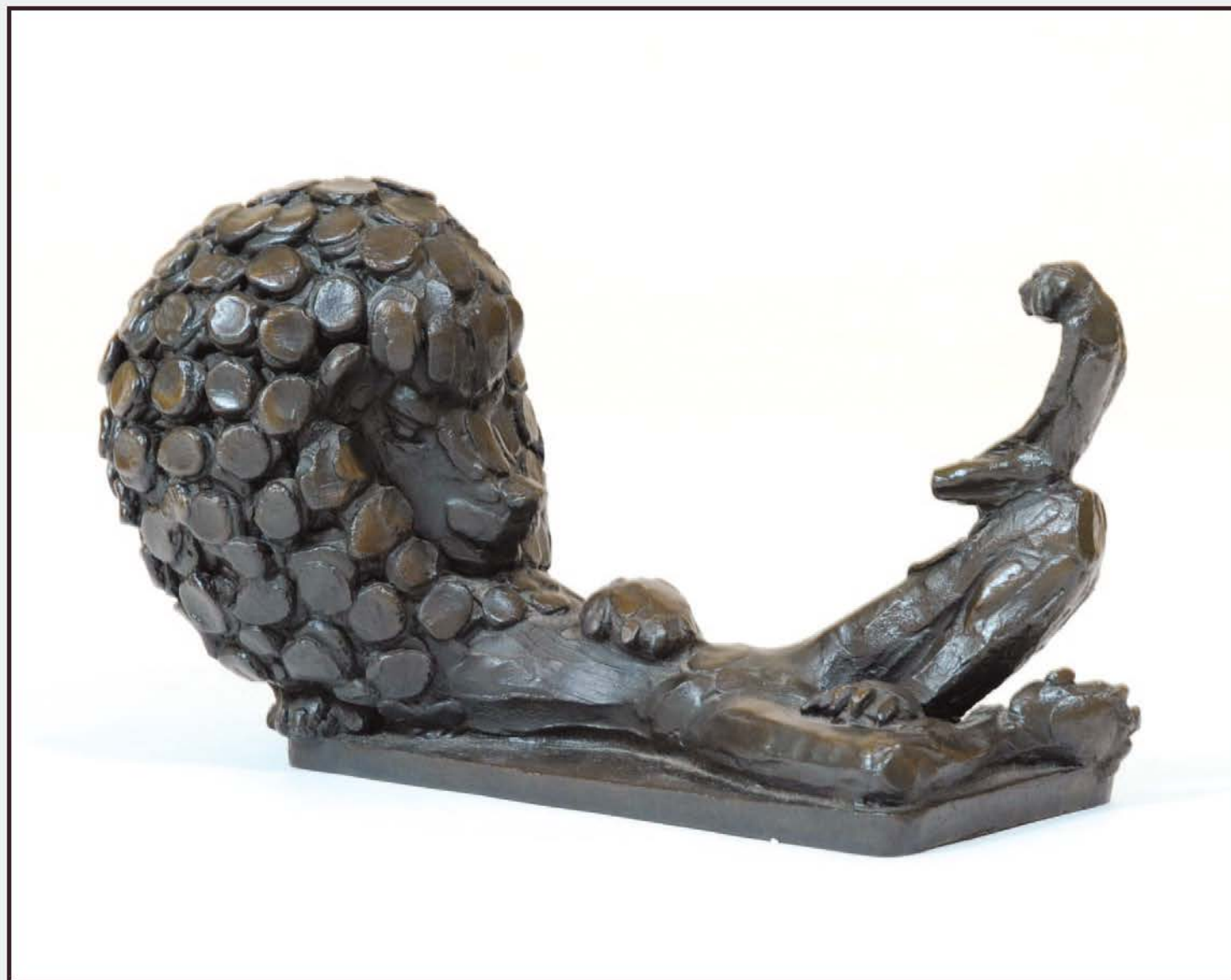
Cat. no. 55 - *Sheep (The Guests Have Arrived)*, 1955
Bronze, 10 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 8 x 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.



Cat. no. 56 - *Sheep* from *Christ the Good Shepherd* relief, ca. 1963
Gilt bronze, 30 ft x 13 in. x 5 in.



Cat. no. 57 - Sketch for **Lion and Monkey**, ca. 1957
Pencil on steno pad paper, 9 x 5 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.



Cat. no. 58 - Study for *Lion and Monkey*, 1957
Bronze, 6 ½ x 11 x 5 in.



Cat. no. 59 - **Reclining Lion**, project drawing for **The Lion and Mouse**, 1957
Pencil on board, 18 ½ x 24 in.



Cat. no. 60 - *Mouse* from *The Lion and Mouse*, 1957
Bronze, cast 2000–2002, 5 ¼ x 6 ¼ x 3 ½ in.



78 Figure 13. ***Friendly Dragon***, Frederik Meijer Gardens and Sculpture Park, Grand Rapids, Michigan (photo: 2004).



Cat. no. 61 - Sketch for **Friendly Dragon**, ca. 1960
 Pencil and ink on steno pad paper, 8 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.



Cat. no. 62 - Study for *Friendly Dragon*, 1979
Bronze, cast 1988, 5 x 11 ½ x 5 in.

Brief Chronology

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| <p>1908 Born Marshall Maynard Fredericks on January 31 to Frank Arthur Fredericks and Frances Margaret Bragg, in Rock Island, Illinois.</p> <p>1924 Attends John Huntington Polytechnic Institute in Cleveland, Ohio.</p> <p>1930 Graduates from the Cleveland School of Art and is awarded the Herman Matzen Traveling Scholarship in Sculpture. Travels to Scandinavia and meets Swedish sculptor Carl Milles.</p> <p>1932–42 Assists Carl Milles in his Cranbrook Academy of Art studio and teaches sculpture, wood carving, and ceramics at Cranbrook School, Kingswood School, and the Cranbrook Academy of Art.</p> <p>1942 Volunteers for the U.S. armed services and is assigned to the Army Corps of Engineers in Arizona.</p> <p>1943 Marries Rosalind Bell Cooke.</p> <p>1944 Serves with the Intelligence Section of the Twentieth Bombing Squad in the India-Burma theater.</p> <p>1945 Awarded rank of lieutenant colonel and discharged honorably from the service, returns to Michigan and establishes a studio in Royal Oak.</p> <p>1950 Establishes working studios in New York City and Norway to accommodate monumental castings. Introduces and exports Norwegian granites to the United States.</p> <p>1952 Receives the Fine Arts Medal from the American Institute of Architects.</p> <p>1958 <i>The Spirit of Detroit</i> is installed in front of the City-County Building (now the Coleman A. Young Municipal Center) in Detroit.</p> <p>1964 <i>The Expanding Universe Fountain</i> is installed and dedicated at the U.S. Department of State Building in Washington, D.C.; <i>Freedom of the Human Spirit</i>, commissioned by the city of New York, is installed at the 1964 New York World's Fair; the <i>Cleveland War Memorial: Fountain of Eternal Life</i> is dedicated on Memorial Day.</p> | <p>1965 Establishes the Disabled Americans Denmark Meeting, an exchange program between Denmark and the U.S. for disabled young adults, in cooperation with Urban Hansen, the Lord Mayor of Copenhagen, and with the patronage of Princess Benedikte of Denmark.</p> <p>1968–98 Begins serving as acting Danish Consul for the State of Michigan.</p> <p>1968–98 Serves as Royal Danish Consul for the State of Michigan, appointed by the Danish king, Frederik IX.</p> <p>1974–98 Serves on the Board of Trustees of Brookgreen Gardens, Pawleys Island, South Carolina.</p> <p>1975 Appointed by Michigan Governor William G. Milliken to serve on the Special Commission on Art in State Buildings.</p> <p>1984 Receives the Michigan Academy Award from the Michigan Academy of Science, Arts and Letters.</p> <p>1988 The Marshall M. Fredericks Sculpture Gallery (name later changed to Marshall M. Fredericks Sculpture Museum) is dedicated on May 15 at Saginaw Valley State University.</p> <p>1988 Named chairman of the Art Committee at Brookgreen Gardens.</p> <p>1993 Invited by James Blanchard, U.S. Ambassador to Canada, to participate in the Art in Embassies program, which places art in overseas embassies.</p> <p>1995 More than two dozen of Fredericks's sculptures are displayed in the newly opened Frederik Meijer Gardens and Sculpture Park in Grand Rapids, Michigan.</p> <p>1995 Receives a request from the foundation in charge of Millesgården to enlarge a 1930s sketch model by Carl Milles into a bronze sculpture to be placed over the Nacka Strand, across the fjord from Millesgården.</p> <p>1996 <i>Torso of a Dancer</i> is selected for exhibition in the permanent collection of the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C.</p> <p>1998 Completes the full-scale clay model of his last monumental work, <i>Lord Byron</i>.</p> <p>1998 Dies on April 4, at his home in Birmingham, Michigan.</p> |
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Marshall M. Fredericks in his Royal Oak studio (photo: ca 1990s).

Marshall M. Fredericks was one of the few artists of his generation to revel in the challenge of making art for public spaces. His sculptures are a testament to his belief that art could and should have meaning for the ordinary viewer and that a sense of engagement between viewer and sculpture would bring greater meaning to the space surrounding the work.

- **MaryAnn Wilkinson**, *Lecturer in Art History, University of Michigan-Dearborn, and former Curator of European Modern Art, Detroit Institute of Arts*

Invariably, Fredericks links his notions of spirituality to feelings of yearning, liberation, or aspiration that cut across sectarian doctrine or dogma. His is an inclusive rather than exclusive definition of spirituality, not "either-or" but "both-and." He seems bent on inspiring a viewer regardless of specific beliefs or orthodoxies. His vaguely religious (but inveterately spiritual) aim is to animate a sacred interior core that he assumes is universally reachable.

- **Dennis A. Nawrocki**, *art historian, author of Art in Detroit Public Places, and Adjunct Instructor of Art History, College for Creative Studies and Wayne State University*

Marshall Fredericks gave form to his ideas first through sketches on paper, usually making multiple images which he studied, redrew, and simplified until the images conveyed his intentions clearly. Often, he then shaped clay sketches on a scale he could hold in his hands.

- **Michael W. Panhorst, Ph.D**, *Curator of Art, Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts*

In the public domain, sculpture has commonly taken the form of the monument, an anchor for collective memory, particularly of a significant place, person, or event. A key part of Marshall Fredericks's oeuvre is his commemorative sculpture executed in honor of individuals, dating from his first public commission in 1936 to the last large-scale work completed before his death just over sixty years later.

- **Vince Carducci**, *art critic and Adjunct Faculty, College for Creative Studies*

Expressed or contemplated, whimsy is most decidedly a part of our intellectual and creative life. It is a universal trait shared across continents and centuries. Marshall Fredericks's sculptures, while based in the realities of animal and human form, acknowledged this fact, while giving flight to an array of thoughts and emotions of which whimsy is but one.

- **Joseph Antenucci Becherer, Ph.D**, *Chief Curator and Vice President, Frederik Meijer Gardens and Sculpture Park, and Lena Meijer Professor in the History of Art, Aquinas College*

This catalogue is published in conjunction with the exhibition *Sketches to Sculptures, Rendered Reality: Sixty Years with Marshall M. Fredericks* organized by the Marshall M. Fredericks Sculpture Museum.



Marshall M. Fredericks
SCULPTURE MUSEUM

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