

FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THE ARTIST AND HIS WORK

by

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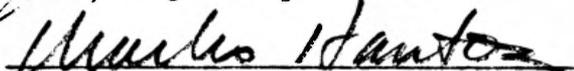
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P378
Ur 2

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Each individual is influenced by his environment, education, professional experience and associations.

I have lived in Bozeman, Montana since childhood. This area is noted for its hunting, fishing, and other outdoor activities. This environment thus directed my interests to many physical and visual experiences in the outdoors, especially the hunting and observing of animals and birds.

I attended elementary and secondary schools in Bozeman, and received the Bachelor of Science degree from Montana State College. While attending college, I directed my work toward a commercial art option, with the desire to become an illustrator of wildlife.

Upon graduation, I accepted employment with the college as their first visual-aids specialist. I worked with the Publications Department, Experiment Station, and the Extension Service. The job consisted of illustrating pamphlets, lettering graphs and charts, cartooning and designing.

I resigned from this job after two years to accept a position with the United States Army (upon their request), and worked as an administrative assistant (clerk typist) in the Pentagon for two years.

After my discharge, I returned to Bozeman and worked as an estimator for a construction company. Although the job had very good potential, the thought of sitting in an office and looking at blue prints for the rest of my life was very disheartening.

My interest in art, and my desire to remain in Bozeman led to the decision to open a sign shop. I felt this would give me the opportunity to create new designs for advertising. This thinking was short lived, for as the business grew, so did the bookkeeping and other paper work. After eight years, I sold the business. This venture was a valuable experience, as it involved many associations with a variety of people. These associations included employment of university students as part time help. Their interest in learning new things and their willingness to accept responsibility was very gratifying.

The enjoyment of working with these students, and my continued interest in the field of art, prompted my decision to return to school. I directed my studies toward a teaching certification and Master of Applied Art degree.

I received my secondary certification in art (broad-field), and then applied for graduate school. I was accepted provisionally and began work in two areas, sculpture and painting. After two quarters, I was given full graduate standing.

Although I enjoy painting, it has become secondary to sculpture. This choice is due mainly to the physical activity necessary in working three-dimensionally.

There is a variety of media with which to work in sculpture: wood, plaster, stone, plastics, clay, cast metal, concrete, and welded metal.

I prefer welded metal for my work because of its many possibilities. The strength of metal is its major asset. Large masses can be supported by slender legs or a single shaft.

Welded metal offers the artist visual contact with his work at all times. It can be cut off or added to. The seams can be ground smooth leaving no evidence of the weld.

There are two types of welders I use in my work. The arc welder (electric) and the oxy-acetylene (gas). I prefer the arc welder because of the high temperature it creates. This enables the artist to weld thicker metals together and at a faster speed. The oxy-acetylene welder is better suited for cutting metal and also used when working with light gauge metal.

The work I have completed has included experimenting with various textured metals pre-fabricated for other purposes. These together with variations of heat and speed with both the arc welder and oxy-acetylene welder have given me many textures with which to work.

Another possibility with metal is color variations by welding different metals together, painting, bronzing, or the use of chemicals and heat which cause a patina or color change on metal.

Welded metal is an exciting and challenging medium, but I have not discounted the many other materials with which to work.

I have started working with cast metal. This medium can produce qualities which would be impossible or impractical by welding. In this regard, combining the two would offer greater flexibility in image development.

In developing concepts for my work, I usually begin with sketches. These aid in visualizing the elements I plan to incorporate in the image. The actual work in metal will vary from the sketches as it evolves.

On the following pages are photographs of several sculptural works. In order to have a better understanding of my approach to these, I have made brief comments concerning concept and technique as it pertains to each individual work.



This work, I have attempted to set the rhino free rather than showing their strength and power as
RHINO - My idea for rendering this rhinoceros was to exaggerate the armor plate typical of the rhino. The expanded metal (mesh material) was used to indicate the weaker or more vulnerable parts of his anatomy. This animal, although awkward in appearance, is quite agile. This I have shown by supporting the entire body on one leg.

The textures were created by a high temperature setting on the arc welder, and then dragging the welding rod over the metal at a fast rate. The faster the rod is moved the smaller the beads become.



BISON - This interpretation of the bison evolved from my interest in the animals of Montana. In this work, I have attempted to let the bison live rather than showing their slaughter and abuse by man.

Using the arc welder at a low heat and moving the rod in a slow circular (both clockwise and counter clockwise) motion, the desired texture was achieved for the head, back, and front legs.

The hindquarters and stomach are 17 gauge sheet metal folded and shaped by hammering, giving it a hard, yet subtle muscle quality contrasting with the matted hair texture of the front quarters.



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MALLARD - In developing this image, my experiences while hunting were major factors in its concept. The mallard when frightened, will rise vertically from the water. I have attempted to capture this moment when he explodes from the river, seeking refuge in the sky.

In this work, the material controls the texture. Grinding off the welded areas has left a smooth metal surface. The metal bands which form the breast were overlapped, repeating the texture of the wing feathers.



HAIRY ANIMALS - Junk yards offer the artist many possibilities for new ideas.

These animals are a result of one such trip. This "hair" was part of a metal disc used for sweeping streets.

I spray-painted the black animal, but the brown one is rust that covered the material when found. The horns are $\frac{1}{4}$ inch rod sprayed black and white.





CRANE - The crane developed because of my interest in finding the best way to bend a cylindrical shape in different directions. I solved this problem by bending three $3/8$ " metal rods into the desired curves and then welding them together to form the neck. I filled in the shape by texturing the surface with the arc welder set at a medium heat and moving the rod fairly slow, following the contours of the form.

The breast was formed by using a fabricated mesh hammered into the required shape and then bronzing the material. I repeated the color by bronzing the bill and eyes.



SENTINEL - In the vocabulary of goose hunters, "sentinel" is the goose that keeps a watchful eye for intruders while the other geese feed. This sentinel has just sounded the alarm, and has started to stride away.

The heavier bead of metal on the breast was created by the arc welder, using a medium heat and a slow movement of the welding rod.

CONCLUSION

Each individual is influenced by his environment, education, professional background, and associations. The degree to which he has been influenced reflects in his work.

My background has been one of physical activity both in employment and recreation. The associations I have made are with individuals involved in these same areas.

The sculptures I have developed are direct statements which may or may not be accepted by everyone.

The artist creates for his own satisfaction. If he acquires an appreciative audience he is stimulated toward greater achievement.

Although this is only the starting point in my work, it has been an exciting and rewarding experience. I am looking forward to new and challenging projects in sculpture.





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