

The period 1961-1975 was an intensively creative one for Murray Marlowe. It saw not only the creation of a very large body of completed works but also the formation and subsequent extensive evolution of refinement of his sculptural technique and intellectual intent.

The one hundred works of art included in this book were executed during this period. They are sculpted out of wood, using the subtractive method, and they represent experiments in several different and related styles; intense naturalism, stylized lyricism, abstraction, geometric or modular abstraction and architectonic constructivism.

The subtractive process of sculpture contrasts with modelling, which is essentially an additive technique. Subtraction or carving requires that the artist first visualize the final form of his work in the raw block of material he is using; he must then work to free this form from the material. This process is especially demanding since it requires a certainty about the end form of work, considerable technical skill and an artisan's knowledge of the limits and potential of the material in which he is working.

Marlowe had some training in drawing and architectural design at New York University during the 1930's. He was forced to abandon his early artistic direction out of economic necessity. He then went on to pursue a career in the chemical industry. His business career has spanned more than three decades. For the past 28 years he has been president of a chemical corporation in New York.

The experimentation with a number of woods - African and Central American Mahogany, Lignum Vitae, Rosewood, Zebra Wood, American Walnut and Oak becomes the basis for the varying styles in sculptural approaches. The type of wood used for a particular work is based in great part on its grain, and hence, eventual surface qualities and upon its structural qualities. However, the size of the raw log and the diminishing availability of tropical woods also play an important part in the selection process.

Marlowe always begins with the raw log. Then, using power tools, he reduces the log to the rough shape the work is to take. Once this has been accomplished, he begins the finer sculptural process using mallet and chisel.

Murray Marlowe's concerns in sculpture are directly related to the central focus of the sculptural process itself. Unlike painting, which is essentially the depiction of an object in the representation of space, sculpture is the creation of an object in real space and, once completed, the work exists as independently in space as any natural object. A successful work of sculpture not only exists harmoniously in the real world space it occupies but it also redefines that space by the force and integrity of its aesthetic existence. It is to this end that Marlowe works to balance the demands of a work's intellectual intent with the demands of integrity of form and problems of technique.

Some significant aspects of his work should be cited. Among them are; his attention to the rigorous representation of detail, which results in a work which can be seen to be a thoroughly logical whole, regardless of the angle from which it is viewed; his attention to the surface qualities of grain, texture and coloration, all of which are realized when the completed work is oiled and polished; the forceful construction of masses and the balancing of contrasting volumes, which is made possible by a virtuosity of sculptural technique; and lastly, the strong emotive qualities and essential humanism of his subjects.

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