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## From Statues to Sculpture: Selections from the Collection of the Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery and Sculpture Garden

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# *FROM STATUES TO SCULPTURE:*



Unknown American, 19th Century, HORSE, n.d., wood, 27 1/2 x 26 x 6 in.

SELECTIONS FROM THE COLLECTION OF  
THE SHELDON MEMORIAL ART GALLERY  
AND SCULPTURE GARDEN  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln  
EIGHTH ANNUAL SHELDON STATEWIDE EXHIBITION, 1994-95

Unknown American  
19th Century  
HORSE  
n.d., wood  
27 1/2 x 26 x 6 in.  
Nebraska Art  
Association Collection  
1957.N-100



Carved from wood by an unknown American artisan in the 19th century, this stylized horse may have been an advertising device for a saddler or harness maker. Work of this type, termed folk art, was fashioned for practical use by people with little training save the art of making things by hand, an art that declined rapidly with the progress of the machine age. Discovered in upper New York state where it was displayed outdoors, our *Horse* has outlasted several coats of paint, a saddle, bridle and a tail, but retains the grace and firmness of form imbued by the carver. Notice the ears. From what material do you think they are made?



Alexander Archipenko  
1887-1964  
SARCOPHAGUS OF  
ANGELICA  
1925, bronze, gold  
patina, black marble  
base  
12 1/8 x 12 1/8 x 5 1/4  
in.  
UNL-Olga N. Sheldon  
Acquisition Trust  
1985.U-3882

A native of Kiev in the Ukraine, Alexander Archipenko grew up in an area rich with diverse art of all epochs, including intricately chiseled mammoth tusks from the Stone Age. Influenced by this ancient art, Archipenko's early works were nonrepresentational, geometrically composed forms. From this beginning it was a natural step to his then revolutionary sculpture based broadly on Cubism, developed when the artist worked in Paris. As one of the leaders of the modern movement, Archipenko's exceptional energy and innovative exploration of new forms and ideas earned him an international reputation. *Sarcophagus of Angelica*, a bronze casting enhanced with gold patina, memorializes Archipenko's first wife, German sculptress Angelica Bruno-Schmitz.

Tony Berlant  
1941-  
LILY AFTER DARK  
NO. 58  
1990, collage: found  
metal on plywood  
with steel brads  
8 3/16 x 8 1/8 x 6 7/8  
in.  
UNL-F.M. Hall  
Collection  
1991.H-2968



Tony Berlant studied painting as an art student at UCLA, but soon turned to the medium of collage. Still an undergraduate, he discovered in a soon-to-be demolished grocery store a heap of metal advertising signs, a material that would determine the direction of his work. Berlant began recycling words and images from commercial signs, nailing metal shapes to wood. The artist thinks of the patterns of brads (nails) as brushstrokes, "the hand of the absent maker made visible." *Lily After Dark* is an example of Berlant's little houses, a series of metal structures with narrative imagery on studded patchwork surfaces with bright, hard finishes.



Alexander Calder  
1898-1976  
SNAKE ON ARCH  
1943-44, bronze  
44 x 28 x 18 in.  
UNL-F.M. Hall  
Collection  
1945.H-258

Generally recognized as the first artist to make sculpture that moves, Alexander Calder held strong ties to abstraction while retaining a basic love of the natural and realistic. *Snake on Arch*, a "stabile" or standing mobile, requires precise balance to create simple movement. The equilibrium of the two pieces imparts a graceful dignity as the bronze snake swings from the arch. Although Calder achieved international fame as the creator of the mobile, his fertile imagination led him to many other means of expression that form a remarkably versatile body of work.

Mark di Suvero  
1933-  
T'ANG  
1977, steel  
14 13/16 x 12 15/16 x  
5/8 in. (variable)  
NAA-Gift of John  
Berggruen  
1984.N-651



Reminiscent of a Chinese puzzle, the intricately formed components of *T'ang* evoke the artist's birthplace, Shanghai. The five curvilinear shapes may be arranged in various configurations to produce intriguing combinations of form and space. The Sculpture Garden of Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery on the UN-L City Campus includes a monumental public work by di Suvero, whose sculpture is installed in other outdoor spaces around the world. The artist describes his large sculptures as "painting in three dimensions with the crane as my paintbrush."



Daniel Chester French  
1850-1931  
ABRAHAM  
LINCOLN  
1909-12, bronze  
38 x 10 x 12 in.  
UNL-F.M. Hall  
Collection  
1928.H-2918

This powerfully moving figure with bowed head is a smaller version of the statue of Abraham Lincoln standing at the west entrance of the Nebraska State Capitol. French's *Lincoln*, a realistic portrait of one of America's heroic personalities, is modeled with the traditional techniques he employed to produce numerous public monuments, most notable the seated *Abraham Lincoln* in the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. Initially self-taught, the artist studied in Boston with John Quincy Adams Ward, whose work is included in this exhibition, but also in Paris and Italy.

## FROM STATUES TO SCULPTURE

The title of this exhibition, *From Statues to Sculpture*, suggests the evolution of three-dimensional art, from 19th-century statues that inspire moral fortitude, celebrate historic events and invoke spiritual enlightenment, to sculpture that questions those verities and poses new definitions of reality. *From Statues to Sculpture* comprises 20 works dating from 1860 to 1988. This selection from the permanent collection of the Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery represents a diversity of issues and developments in American sculptural history, from historic monuments to abstract figuration, from images of landscape to architectural forms.

Sculpture is one of the oldest visual art media. It is found in all ancient cultures as both utilitarian and sacred objects. During the Renaissance sculpture was often intrinsic to architecture, incorporated with the structure to articulate the symbolic import of a cathedral or government building. In the United States, these traditions were reinforced by American art students who typically studied in Germany, Italy or France until the early 20th century. They emulated European styles of public art and by the mid 1800s, as a result of the Industrial Revolution and the burgeoning middle class, began to apply the techniques of monumental works to small-scale sculpture. John Quincy Adams Ward's *The Indian Hunter*, 1860, typifies the work of an American sculptor who was trained in Paris and returned to the United States to create small-scale bronze works for middle-class homes. Similarly, Daniel Chester French's *Abraham Lincoln*, a diminutive version of the monument at Nebraska's capitol, while executed five decades later, retains the traditional standards of veracity and authority found in 19th-century public sculpture.

By 1900, with modernism becoming a universal influence, sculpture was perceived as an art that could have intrinsic motivations, and need not always edify or commemorate. Though Americans such as Hoffman and Calder continued to study in Europe and especially in Paris, they combined traditional techniques with progressive styles, making dramatic advances by virtue of their proximity to the Impressionists, Fauvists, and Cubists. The Armory Show of 1913 in New York, which traveled to Chicago and Boston, included a wealth of American and European sculpture. This one exhibition helped to determine the independent course of American sculpture, providing sculptors with new references that would lead them to an indigenous imagery and a distinct version of modernism. Americans Man Ray, John Storrs and Alexander Archipenko set a new pace for sculptural innovations, bringing Dada, and abstraction into the forefront of the New York art world. Since the 1950s, Americans have made major contributions to international sculpture. Artists such as Donald Judd, Robert Rauschenberg and Mark di Suvero helped determine the course of 20th-century sculpture, making American artists the mentors for several generations of younger sculptors, like Joel Shapiro and Tony Berlant. Also included are folk art works. The 19th-century *Horse* by an unknown sculptor, and *Two Bird Totem* by Homer Green bracket more than a century of American works by untrained sculptors whose intuitive works are as compelling as those by their more sophisticated peers. Within the Hispanic-American folk tradition is George Lopez's *Saint Raphael*, a carved santos figure that indicates the breadth of influences found in the history of American sculpture.

Sheldon Statewide succeeds in large part due to the continuing support of the Nebraska Art Association, a non profit organization dedicated to the advancement of the visual arts in Nebraska through educational and cultural enrichment opportunities. Of particular importance is the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's support of the Community Programs Coordinator position. Equally invaluable are the many local sponsors who support the exhibition in their respective communities. Their appreciation of both the immediate and long-range goals of Sheldon Statewide is especially meaningful. Their generosity has enabled tens of thousands of fellow citizens to encounter works of art of the highest quality.

Perhaps the most important component of this collaborative venture is the dauntless effort of the many volunteer docents at each venue. Their willingness to receive new and often complex information and disseminate it to the school children and adults of Nebraska is the vital link that binds together the Sheldon staff, the supporters, and viewers of each Sheldon Statewide exhibition.

Daphne Anderson Deeds, Curator/Assistant Director

George W. Neubert, Director

Bessie Potter Vonnoh  
1872-1955  
MINUET  
1897, bronze  
14 3/8 x 12 x 8 1/4 in.  
UNL-F.M. Hall  
Collection  
1928.H-2925



John Quincy  
Adams Ward  
1830-1910  
THE INDIAN  
HUNTER  
1860, bronze  
16 x 8 3/4 x 15 in.  
UNL-F.M. Hall  
Collection  
1970.H-1543

At a time when sculpture was often grandiose in theme and size, Bessie Potter Vonnoh's diminutive statuettes, often celebrating motherhood and childhood, portrayed a quick spontaneous impression. Eight years of the artist's childhood were spent as an invalid, perhaps as a result of hysterical trauma brought on by her father's death in an accident. As her health improved, she attended school and had her first experience with modeling, finding herself "enchanted" by the feel of clay. Vonnoh studied at The Art Institute of Chicago, and by age nineteen she was exhibiting and selling her work in Chicago shows. *Minuet* characterizes a young woman dressed in clothing typical of the late 19th-century, gracefully poised to begin the dance.

*Indian Hunter*, critically acclaimed for its naturalism, brought fame to the artist when the work was exhibited in New York. Ward traveled to the Dakotas to observe Indian life before working on a full-scale *Indian Hunter* to be installed in Central Park in New York. The popular statuettes were produced in multiple edition. This version (without a bow in the hunter's hand) shows the young Indian restraining his snarling dog. One can easily imagine the presence of their prey. The truly American subject reflects the mid-19th-century concern for the imminent disappearance of the native people from their land, and the artist's responsibility to preserve information about their appearance and habits for future generations.

Homer Green  
1910-  
**TWO BIRD TOTEM**  
1988, pine and acrylic  
67 7/8 x 43 x 14 in.  
UNL-F.M. Hall  
Collection  
1993.H-3012



Homer Green, characterized as a "mountain man supreme," is now retired from a varied career as carpenter, farmer, blacksmith, dairyman, factory worker and utility lineman. To pass the time at his home near Brodyville, Tennessee, Green began carving small objects in cedar before deciding to create animal sculptures from logs, using a chain saw. *Two Bird Totem* is decorated with polka dots of color, a painting style admired by the artist's wife, but also reflecting what Green might see in the dappled shade of the sassafras tree. Can you identify the kinds of birds portrayed in this fanciful sculpture?



David Hare  
1917-1992  
**CATCH**  
1947, bronze  
9 13/16 x 14 3/4 x 9  
in.  
UNL-Olga N. Sheldon  
Acquisition Trust  
1985.U-3781

David Hare's interest in chemistry and medicine nearly led him to become a doctor. Then a fascination with photography resulted in his photographing operations in hospitals for several years. Experimenting with an abstract new photographic technique, he came in contact with leading Surrealists, eventually exhibiting his photographs with the most prominent international artists identified with the movement. By 1944, he began to work with sculpture, a medium that allowed a greater range of creative expression and brought him almost instantaneous success. *Catch*, cast in bronze using the lost wax method, displays Hare's intention to avoid copying nature while keeping a strong connection with reality.

Malvina Hoffman  
1887-1966  
**EGYPTIAN  
DANCER, NYOTA  
INYOKA**  
1932, gilt-bronze  
12 x 14 1/2 x 5 3/8 in.  
UNL-Extended loan  
from anonymous  
donor  
1990.L-20-90



This gilt-bronze model depicting an exotic dancer reflects Malvina Hoffman's greatest achievement. In 1930, she secured a commission for the creation of a sculptural Hall of Man at the Field Museum of Chicago. Completion of the one-hundred bronzes comprising the "Races of Man" led Hoffman to the remote corners of the globe in search of racial types. Early in her career, under Rodin's influence in Paris, the artist learned the importance of sculptural technique, knowledge of anatomy and foundry work. Of equal importance in Hoffman's work was a fascination with dance inspired by her friend, Russian prima ballerina Anna Pavlova.



Donald Judd  
1928-1994  
**UNTITLED**  
1971, stainless steel  
and brown acrylic  
sheet  
27 x 23 x 4 in.  
UNL-F.M. Hall  
Collection  
1990.H-2942

Sleek cubic and rectilinear "boxes," adamantly untitled and unnumbered, characterize Donald Judd's principle that works exist in and of themselves, without reference to anything else. A major figure in the Minimal Art movement, Judd insisted that explorations of space, scale and materials could be ends in themselves. After serving in the army in Korea, Judd studied in New York, earning a degree in philosophy from Columbia University at night while studying painting in day classes at the Art Students League. Continuing to paint and exhibit, he returned to Columbia to study art history and began writing art reviews for various publications before making the crucial transition from painter to sculptor in 1961-62. Donald Judd died February 13, 1994.

Edward Kienholz  
1927-1994  
**THE OPTI-CAN  
ROYALE**  
1977, mixed media  
12 1/4 x 8 7/8 x 9 in.  
UNL-F.M. Hall  
Collection  
1985.H-2740



Reared in rural Washington state with the expectation of becoming a rancher, Edward Kienholz was a self-taught artist whose work evolved from abstract paintings to three-dimensional constructions utilizing found objects, sometimes expanded to a theatrical, walk-in scale. Kienholz had a passion for social commentary, often with a dark view of the human condition. *Opti-Can Royale*, produced with a set of six interchangeable photographs, is one of several editions of televisions fabricated by Kienholz as an ironic commentary on the potential of that medium to influence thought and mesmerize the viewer. Kienholz died in June of 1994.



Ibram Lassaw  
1913-  
**INTERSECTING  
RECTANGLES**  
1940, steel and lucite  
27 3/8 x 19 1/2 x  
19 1/4 in.  
UNL-Olga N. Sheldon  
Acquisition Trust  
1986.U-3883

Like a drawing in space, the intersecting planes of this sculpture represent geometric abstraction and the influence of the new materials and processes of industrial technology. One of the first American artists to create abstract pieces, Ibram Lassaw was stimulated by Alexander Calder's kinetic art before deciding to turn his energies in the direction of open space densities and volume relationships. As he observed the work of Calder and other modernist artists, Lassaw's transition to an abstract style was swift and complete. Born in Alexandria, Egypt, Lassaw immigrated to this country when he was eight years old. His family settled in Brooklyn where he began to study art, learning traditional sculpting techniques.

George Lopez  
1900-1993  
SAINT RAPHAEL  
(SAN RAFAEL)  
n.d., wood  
15 1/8 x 7 x 5 1/2 in.  
UNL-Gift of John  
Norton  
1970.U-672



George Lopez is one in a lineage of generations of northern New Mexican *santeros*, or saintmakers, who carved holy images (*santos*) from wood. Continuing the tradition of chip carving created by his father, Lopez developed his own style, achieving a sense of color in his figures with a combination of different woods rather than paint. He has gained a national reputation for his carvings, which are described as having a quiet dignity, seeming to "glow with an inner spirituality." In this sculpture, the fish shown in St. Raphael's hand are a reference to the Bible, in which Raphael instructed Tobias to heal his father's blindness with the ashes of burned fish.



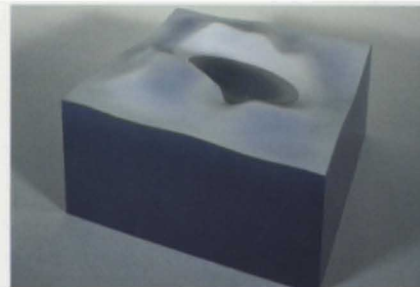
Man Ray  
1890-1976  
CADEAU  
1974, cast iron  
and nails  
6 1/2 x 3 3/4 x  
3 1/2 in.  
UNL-F.M. Hall  
Collection  
1987.H-2860

The artist known as Man Ray was born Emmanuel Radnitsky in Philadelphia. Throughout a long career in this country and abroad, he experimented with every conceivable medium to create new and startling art work, making major contributions to painting, sculpture and photography. Associated with the Dadaists and Surrealists in Paris, Man Ray earned an international reputation. Like his good friend Marcel Duchamp, he delighted in assemblages of found and incongruously combined elements. *Cadeau* (Gift) was an impromptu creation made for the avant-garde composer Eric Satie, to be included in a Paris exhibition. *Cadeau* mysteriously disappeared after the first day. However, the artist was not concerned; he simply made replicas.

Robert Rauschenberg  
1925-  
R.F.D.  
1972, ceramic  
18 1/8 x 23 x 5 1/4 in.  
UNL-Extended loan  
from anonymous  
donor  
1990.L-21-90



This influential artist has been described as reacting against the "high seriousness and solemn introspection of Abstract Expressionism," and in the process he has raised some fundamental questions about art and its relationship to life. Constantly exploring the use of different techniques, Rauschenberg is an eclectic and prolific artist. *R.F.D.* exemplifies the artist's fascination with the thrown-away junk of an industrial society. He has recreated in clay a castoff corrugated packing box complete with printing, shipping labels and binding tapes to create a convincing illusion.



Sam Richardson  
1934-  
LAKE IN THE  
MOUNTAINS IS  
FROZEN AFTER  
THE SNOW  
1968, fiberglass, plas-  
tic, lacquer  
12 x 13 x 13 in.  
NAA-Gift of Mr. and  
Mrs. Louis Sosland  
1968.N-346

California artist and teacher Sam Richardson gained a national reputation with his finely-polished painted landscape sculptures made from a variety of plastic materials. Departing from his earliest work as a landscape painter, Richardson began to explore the new technology of plastics in the 1960s. In sculpting the landscape, traditionally regarded as a painting subject, the artist relies on the viewer's active imagination and individual interpretation. *Lake in the Mountains is Frozen After the Snow* seems to resemble a square plug taken from the earth - "a landscape hovering in space."

Joel Shapiro  
1941-  
UNTITLED  
1984, bronze  
11 1/8 x 6 1/2 x 11 in.  
UNL-Olga N. Sheldon  
Acquisition Trust  
1985.U-3780



The critically acclaimed sculptures of Joel Shapiro appear abstract when viewed from some vantage points and figurative when viewed from others. Rectangular forms relate to the human body - "form becomes a metaphor for human experience." The artist says he works with wood because, "I can chop it up, build it, form it. If I need something...I can glue it up." Once the form is realized from wood blocks, without joints or modeling, Shapiro casts it in bronze. He prefers not to use titles for his work, believing that art is a purely visual experience. *Untitled* is intended to be placed on the floor, where it shares the same space with the viewer.



John Storrs  
1885-1956  
FIGURATIVE  
ABSTRACTION  
c. 1919, marble  
20 x 13 x 6 in.  
UNL-Olga N. Sheldon  
Acquisition Trust  
1984.U-3590

John Storrs' *Figurative Abstraction* seems to address the theme of love, conveying the unity of two figures. With a focus on the back of each figure, and no distinguishing facial features, the artist conveys a message through line and form. As a favored student of Rodin, Storrs developed his own eclectic style, exploring Cubism as well as the relationship between sculpture and architecture. Described as a true cosmopolitan, Storrs worked both in his native Chicago and Paris. He was detained in France during World War II, enduring bombings, poverty, and imprisonment by the Nazis.

# FROM STATUES TO SCULPTURE: SELECTIONS FROM THE COLLECTION OF THE SHELDON MEMORIAL ART GALLERY AND SCULPTURE GARDEN

## Sheldon Statewide Program Schedule, 1994-95

<b>York</b>	<b>September, 1994: The First National Bank of York</b> Local Sponsor: The First National Bank of York
<b>Grand Island</b>	<b>October, 1994: The Grand Island Public Library</b> Local Sponsors: Home Federal Savings and Loan, Grand Island Public School District
<b>North Platte</b>	<b>November, 1994: The Mall</b> Local Sponsors: First National Bank, North Platte Telegraph, North Platte National Bank, United Nebraska Bank
<b>McCook</b>	<b>December, 1994: Museum of the High Plains</b> Local Sponsors: First National Bank, McCook National Bank, AmFirst Bank, Cornbelt Chemical Company, Howard Kool Motors, Inc., Marr Insurance-Ohio National Life Insurance Agency, Xi Beta Alpha, Alpha Delta, Alpha Zeta, Dr. G. P. Michaelis
<b>Holdrege</b>	<b>January, 1995: Phelps County Museum</b> Local Sponsor: Dr. & Mrs. Stuart Embury, Dr. & Mrs. Wayne Quincy, Dr. & Mrs. Doak Doolittle, First National Bank of Holdrege, Holdrege School Foundation, National Art Honor Society, Holdrege Chapter
<b>Aurora</b>	<b>February, 1995: Plainsman Museum</b> Local Sponsor: Hamilton County Foundation, Inc.
<b>Beatrice</b>	<b>March, 1995: Gage County Historical Museum</b> Local Sponsor: Beatrice National Bank
<b>Columbus</b>	<b>April, 1995: Columbus Art Gallery</b> Local Sponsors: Columbus Art Gallery, Columbus Public Schools
<b>Fremont</b>	<b>May, 1995: Fremont Area Art Association</b> Local Sponsors: American National Bank, First State Bank, FirstTier Bank, N.A., Fremont National Bank & Trust
<b>Cozad</b>	<b>June, 1995: Robert Henri Museum</b> Local Sponsors: Monroe Auto Equipment Company, Cozad Arts Council
<b>Cambridge</b>	<b>July, 1995: Cambridge Museum</b> Local Sponsor: Cambridge Museum Foundation, Inc.

The Sheldon Statewide Program is managed by Nancy Dawson, Sheldon Gallery Community Programs Coordinator.  
For additional information about the Sheldon Statewide Touring Exhibition contact (402) 472-2461.



The Nebraska Arts Council, a state agency, has supported all the year's programs of the Nebraska Art Association through its matching grants program funded by the Nebraska Legislature and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.

