

The Museum of Modern Art

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THE SCULPTURE OF RICHARD HUNT ON VIEW AT THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

The first major museum retrospective of the work of Richard Hunt will be on view at The Museum of Modern Art from March 25 through June 7, 1971. The exhibition of 50 sculptures and a selection of drawings and prints by the 35 year old artist, covers the development of his work during the past 15 years -- from the early "found-object" pieces, through the more linear "drawings-in-space", to the denser, more monolithic, enclosed forms of the late 1960's and includes studies for a recent architectural commission. William S. Lieberman, the Museum's Director of Painting and Sculpture, is the director of the show. After the New York showing, the exhibition will be at the Art Institute in Chicago where Hunt lives.

Hunt's use of materials in metal (as opposed to plaster, stone and wood) has been consistent throughout his astonishingly short career. A seminal influence was the welded sculpture of the Spanish sculptor Julio Gonzalez which he first saw in 1953. The artist's decision to construct, to weld his sculpture from the trophies of the junkyard, was not so much a result of the fact that it was a way to obtain materials inexpensively but, more importantly, this method offered him a direct, conceptually clean means of manipulating forms in space. Although abstract, reference to the human figure and to plant and animal shapes is implicit throughout Hunt's work.

During the early 1960's, concurrent with an ongoing exploration of botanical and zoological forms he was also developing linear-spatial themes, a kind of drawing in space reminiscent of work by Gonzalez and David Smith, but unmistakably marked by Hunt's unique imagery and vitality. Among the examples of Hunt's three-dimensional "space drawings"

The Sculpture of Richard Hunt by William S. Lieberman with chronology compiled by Carolyn Lancher. 24 pages; 17 black and white illustrations; \$1.75.

(more)

from this period are: Organic Construction (1962), a dramatic branching, thrusting welded steel sculpture, about five feet in length, and the first version of The Chase (1965), a larger welded steel sculpture of great energy. In the later 1960's Hunt's work became less calligraphic and increasingly monolithic and enclosed, expressing a growing interest in rock formations and geology.

Recently Hunt's sculpture has increased in scale and is evolving into a more architectural style. Models for several large commissions are in the exhibition, including three studies for Play, a work executed for the Madden Health Clinic in Hines, Illinois, in Cor-ten steel, a material which takes on orange and bluish hues as it weathers. One of the most recent sculptures in the show is a study for an image of the Cross commissioned by St. Mathew's Church in Chicago.

The Museum of Modern Art first acquired a sculpture by Hunt in 1957. Other museums lending to the exhibition are: The Albright-Knox Gallery, Buffalo; the Cleveland Museum of Art; the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; the New Jersey State Museum, Trenton; and the William Rockhill Nelson Gallery of Art, Atkins Museum of Fine Arts, Kansas City.

Additional material, including black and white photographs, available from Joan Wallace, Coordinator of Press Services, and Elizabeth Shaw, Director, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53 St., New York, NY 10019. Phone: (212) 956-7297; -7501.

WALL LABEL

THE SCULPTURE OF RICHARD HUNT

This exhibition traces the career of one of America's leading sculptors, Richard Hunt. His career has been short as well as astonishingly productive.

The sculptures in the exhibition might be conveniently described as abstract, however, they also have affinities to surrealism. In addition, reference to the human figure, and to plant and animal shapes is almost always implicit in Hunt's works.

Hunt does not model or carve. His use of metal as opposed to plaster, stone and wood has been consistent. Until recently his sculpture has been welded and hammered.

His materials are not raw, they are discarded and broken machine-made parts, the metal garbage of an industrial age. Most of Hunt's sculpture has been concerned with the metamorphosis of such shapes, conceived originally for other uses.

Hunt has usually composed in series, sometimes several concurrently. Many of the sculptures in this exhibition, therefore, fall into three groups: first, sculptures whose subjects derive from classical themes; second, a series somewhat more open and fused in space which Hunt calls "hybrid figures"; and, third, linear-spatial configurations which could be considered drawings in metal.

Toward the end of the 1960's, Hunt began to work in a less calligraphic way. His forms became monolithic, monumental and enclosed. Shapes were solid and, therefore, more dense, providing new weight for linear elements. Recently, Hunt has also begun to cast in aluminum and steel, a technique of sculpture he had not explored since his student days in Italy when he cast in bronze.

Today, Richard Hunt is an artist in mid-career. He is only thirty-five. His future is to be awaited with anticipation.

A catalogue of the exhibition may be purchased in the Museum's bookstore. After the exhibition closes in New York on June 7, it will be seen at The Art Institute of