

Click Relander

June 5, 1965

Some information and recommendations on bronze casting.

On a long-weekend, off work, I took advantage of the time to add a couple of my bonus days so extra contacts could be made and some technical information gained.

My trip was projected for only Spokane, Bonner's Ferry and then perhaps north a little ways to Glacier Park (Canada). However I determined to continue to West Glacier, Browning and Helena, Mont.

I found the bronze problem, and that of a durable, non-casting material for small figures (dioramas) is the same with several artists and we all appear to be working along the same lines to solve the problems.

At Spokane I found the Davenport Hotel has a display of wood carvings, Indian faces, by Blake of West Glacier. I suspect the exhibit will remain there for the rest of the season. I would suggest someone from the PUD look it over on a trip to Spokane. The reason: Blake lived at Wenatchee many years before going to West Glacier. He has never been "recognized" at Wenatchee, I doubt if they know of him. He is a top carver and would be a potential ~~exhibitor~~ exhibitor in a Vista House and would bring good publicity if handled right. Since this would not be a "selling" matter for him, some shipping, insurance expense would probably be necessary.

At Browning, where the Indian museum is not yet opened and I was not too interested in that, because of its commercial and typical presentation aspects, I tracked down Bob Scriver, sculptor.

He has been compelled to develop his own bronze founding after several years, but casts only small figures, does not have equipment, time etc. for larger works--Charles Russel type. Scriver, would, as a favor to me, cast small figures, smaller than the 18 inches, if the occasion demanded.

He is an expert diorama man, lighting effects, taxidermits etc. To give you some idea of the value of bronzes, and their potential to the PUD:

His small bronzes, Indians chasing buffalo, not over 10 inches high and two feet across, sell for \$2,500. He was finishing up several small pieces to send to Texas in that class. A 20 inch bronze figure, standing Indian, sells for \$625, this cheap because he has a mold made; 15 inch figures around \$500. A 39 x 40 inch pack string sells for \$4,500, a 17 1/2 x 20, three figures, sells for \$2,500; 14 inch high horse and rider, \$2,000; 22 1/2 inch 22 long caribou, \$2,750; 12 inch high deer, \$1,500; 20 inch buffalo, \$3,000 etc. and I saw several orders from New York, California, Texas etc. He had a good writeup, illustrations etc. in the American Artist which I still show, also his catalogue.

Russel bronzes, copies, sell from \$400 for 4 inch horse to \$18,000 for 15 inch x 30 inch.

Found Scriver has developed no non-casting material for dioramas, has developed his own technique in waste casting from plaster molds for small, fragile things and amazes other artists that he can do this.

Found he works with models, his own horses for horse figures, Indians for his Indians etc. Has alive eagle in his studio patio which he uses, also usually have little bob cats etc. running around. Had a baby fox in his studio when I was there and someone had brought in a wounded sparrow hawk which he was admiring for its shape, coloring etc. (it kicked the bucket when I was there).

Scriver, like others, very wary to show thoughts in production but soon as he found out I wasn't scouting showed me contemplated works. Like others, said sometimes people came around, obtained copies and then went into production. Emphasized necessity of copyrighting works such as Medicine Singer, Fish Fountain, Last Drummer and possibly fisherman. Found none of the artists working in fish forms or portraits of Indians, except Blake the wood carver and his "portraits" not true portraits and not life size, miniature wall hangings, "plaques."



At both Spokane and Helena I met Dick Flood, one of this country's top art dealers and operator of big studio at Jackson, Wyo. He usually goes around with \$10,000 to \$20,000 worth of Russel bronzes (all small) and a few paintings, letters etc. in his car, also some Ace Powell paintings.

Ace Powell was highly rated western painter and sculptor, gone a little alcoholic, no more sculpture now because of that condition etc. and lives in poor circumstances at Kailashspell. While his works are selling high in the trade he is very unproductive and undependable so I didn't track him down.

Flood has several artists like Eggenhofer working in his studio at Jackson, travels throughout country, is an expert on Russel, Remington, Gouse, all Western artists, would like to get Quigley material but Quigley apparently prefers to work alone.

Flood told me of loading up a car with some Russel waxes, uncast, other western models, taking them to Roman Bronze but it took them two years to finish some of the work. Emphasized giving the bronze foundry plenty of time and to get understanding on completion without taxing them. Was acquainted with Papaleo, the craftsman of bronze expert from the studio I have established contact with. Said he came to them from Roman Bronze and turns out top material, knows art and how to finish it.

I am becoming convinced that the founder, who is working to get established, has given a very low estimate on the fish fountain and package deal, and recommend \$1000 due allowance be made in case he has underfigured. In other words, if authorization is obtained it should include "maximum" which could be resorted to in case founder finds self in trouble, but he would not know we had this to fall back on. Found too that no bronze caster can give accurate estimate until he actually sees work and determines how many pieces required for the mold.



Some of the small horse and figure bronzes I inspected were from 10 and 12 piece molds or more. As near as I can estimate from my knowledge of casting the fish fountain will require a 20 to 30 piece mold.

Would recommend that someone from the PUD make trip, in time to Helena, which would be about 450 miles from Ephrata, to inspect the dioramas, also the audio plug-in system they have. They rent phones at desk for ~~\$1.00~~ 50 cents or a dollar and these are taken from exhibit to exhibit and plugged in and tape recording gives background on the scene.

And as you know the Russel gallery there is worth inspection again and again. Another look at it, and other bronzes like those of Scriber would indicate that bronzes for PUD would have long-range potential of value, in case it was ever desired to dispose of them, or a copyright. This holds true for bronzes, not plaster casts.

Talked with Mike Kennedy, director, who is very much of a businessman and has sold over 3/4 million worth of Russel and other western material. Also talked with him about a subject I had broached to him several years ago, about a Quigley exhibit at the Montana display. He wants to do that next summer. This then would suggest the possibility that in our conversation with Quigley this could be broached, Quigley could then work up a better show for the PUD "opening" and take it on over to Montana. Its very showing there would help put the Quigley mural in an enviable position for museums etc.

That Flood and Kennedy already have respect for Quigley's work and rate it indicates it will go sky high in later years, or should.

None of the places visited have portraits like the PUD is obtaining, and least of all, nothing like the fish fountain. Scriber, Blake, Flood and Kennedy were all impressed by the photographs of them, liked them, etc. I even found I was in a position to help a little in some answers to some technical problems.

Found out that Ward, the sculptor who made the bison falling over the cliff and other dioramas at Helena, has gone to Smithsonian.

Kennedy at first thought I was "scouting" for a sculptor and told me how difficult it was to obtain anyone for any sum within reason, and then I went into my picture folder and he concluded we didn't need one. (He had known me only as a writer).

Found out that Ward did the big diorama, figures about 25 inches high, the Lewis and Clark scene with a man who is now at Missoula in the University there, head of that art dept. Talked to him in Missoula on a get acquainted basis

Found Ward is just starting to experiment and work in some of the materials for small figures I have material on hand but have not yet tried out, and one kind of material I have literature on but have not yet ordered because of plenty of other things to do and because working "kiln" starts at \$25.

Trip also provided water studies, cataracts and effect of water going over falls. Sriver asked about my water treatment on the fountain, had bumped into the water problem.

~~Not~~ Made several stops in various areas and returned with 11 specimens of rock that by roadside or field mallet and chisel tests indicate possible adaptability to base carvings. I am not satisfied with wood base for Medicine Singer or vascular basalt for Tommy Thompson, although when I go through Oregon en route or from California to foundry, basaltic volcanic fields there may provide suitable size and shape block for finish carving.

I found the two extra days spent on the trip worth while for solving technical problems, contacts and future potentialities. What little mileage and stay over expense I anticipated I will note at the proper time and point it out so it may be disallowed if desired, but it will not be much for that which was obtained.



I am preparing a "package" estimate for the proposed bronzes so attention can be given to this as soon as practicable.

I would suggest that this be expedited, especially as to the timing for delivery date, as soon as that can be roughly estimated. This will then enable me to work toward a deadline for turning the material over to the founder and giving him plenty of time to do a good job on the production. Of course this would not be done until the works were viewed or accepted.

I think it wise to obtain authorization and know which way we are headed in the near future, even though the authorization is not exercised until the proper time.

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Attached is a news clipping, which may have come to your attention.

The matter of the marine display at Astoria was mentioned originally in this undertaking. It is looking more and more like something worth looking into after construction is under way and thought is given to future planning. I think a contact here would be worthwhile and might produce some material desirable at Wanapum, or at least work toward a "loan" display from that source.

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Saw mighty little in the gun line at the museums except the material, all quite rare I presume, at the Montana Historical Society. Guns, good quality it seems, are growing mighty scarce, although I wasn't counting for guns.

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Found that research for diorama has been quite complete and there is nothing, obvious in places I visited, that has not been covered in earlier contacts, and material sent to Quigley.