



## ROLE OF SCULPTURES IN TEACHING HISTORY

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### ABSTRACT

*Sculpture has its history and stylistic development is those of western culture. Also known as the "plastic art" for the shaping process or plasticity. Sculpture is only branch of visual arts that is specifically concerned with expressive three – dimensional form. Three dimensional art began with pre-historic sculpture. There are different types of sculpture. There are different types of sculpture like the clay, stone and bronze. Models of personalities then of armours weapons , models of human dwellings ornaments, utensils, costumes etc. models of places which are sites of events are of greatest importance like the kurukshetra and the battle of panipat. so, sculptures have proved to be of help to the teacher while teaching history. Therefore without sculptures history would have been untold completely*

**Keywords:** *Antiquity, Monumental, Three Dimensional etc.*



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### What is Sculpture?

The most enduring and, arguably, the greatest form of fine art known to man, sculpture has played a major role in the evolution of Western culture. Its history and stylistic development are those of Western art itself. It is a key indicator of the cultural achievements of Classical Antiquity, and became an important influence on the development of Renaissance art in Italy. Together with architecture, it was the principal form of monumental religious art which for centuries (c.400-1800) was the driving force of Europeancivilization. Even today, although continuously evolving, sculpture is still the leading method of expressing and commemorating both historical figures and events.

During its history, it has attracted some of the world's greatest artists, including classical sculptors like Phidias, Myron of Eleutherae, Polyklitos, Skopas, Lysippos, Praxiteles and Leochares, as well as Donatello (1386-1466), Michelangelo (1475-1654), Giambologna (1529-1608), the great Bernini (1598-1680), Auguste Rodin (1840-1917), Henry Moore (1898-1986), Picasso (1881-1973), Constantin Brancusi (1876-1957), and Damien Hirst (b.1965).

Supreme examples of this long-established form of public art can be found in many of the best art museums.

Also known as "plastic art", for the shaping process or "plasticity" it involves, sculpture should be fairly simple to define, but unfortunately it's not.

### **Ever-Expanding Art Form**

This is because the definition or meaning of sculpture has widened a great deal during the 20th century. With the development of new sculptural tools and technology, contemporary works now employ such a huge variety of new materials, techniques and spatial schemes of reference, that "sculpture" is no longer a fixed term which refers to a fixed category of objects or creative activities, but rather an ever-expanding art form that is constantly evolving and redefining itself.

### **Definition of Traditional Sculpture**

Traditional sculpture prior to the 20th century had four main defining characteristics. First, it was the only three dimensional art form. Second, it was representational. Third, it was viewed as an art of solid form. Any empty spaces involved were essentially secondary to its bulk or mass. Moreover, as a solid form it had no movement. Fourth, traditional sculptors used only two main techniques: carving or modelling. That is, they either carved directly from their chosen material (eg. stone, wood), or they built up the sculpture from the inside, so to speak, using clay, plaster, wax and the like. The models for traditional sculpting derive from Greek and Roman Sculpture of Classical Antiquity.

### **Definition and Meaning of Sculpture Today**

The sheer diversity of 21st century plastic art has left us with only one defining characteristic: three dimensionality. Thus the current definition of sculpture is something like this:

"Sculpture is the only branch of the visual arts that is specifically concerned with expressive three-dimension form."

### **The History of Sculpture**

Three-dimensional art begins with prehistoric sculpture. The earliest known works of the Stone Age are *The Venus of Berekhat Ram* and *The Venus of Tan-Tan*, both primitive effigies dating to 230,000 BCE or earlier. Thereafter, sculptors have been active in all ancient civilizations, and all major art movements up to the present. After Egyptian Sculpture, the principal Golden Ages in the evolution of sculpture have been: (1) Classical Antiquity (500-27 BCE); (2) The Gothic Era (c.1150-1300); (3) The Italian Renaissance (c.1400-1600); and

(4) Baroque Sculpture (1600-1700). For a detailed chronology of the origins and development of 3-D art,

### **The Theory of Sculpture**

Because of its three-dimensional nature and the fact it can be displayed in many more different types of location than (say) painting, there are a number of important concepts, and theoretical issues which govern the design and production of sculpture. Here is a brief sample.

### **Elements of Sculptural Design**

The two principal elements of sculpture are **mass** and **space**. Mass refers to the sculpture's bulk, the solid bit contained within its surfaces. Space is the air around the solid sculpture, and reacts with the latter in several ways: first, it defines the edges of the sculpture; second, it can be enclosed by part of the sculpture, forming hollows or areas of emptiness; third, it can link separate parts of the sculpture which thus relate to one another across space. Works of sculpture can be assessed and differentiated according to their treatment of these two elements. For instance, some sculptors focus on the solid component(s) of their sculpture, while others are more concerned with how it relates to the space in which it sits (eg. how it "moves through" space or how it encloses it). Compare Egyptian sculpture with the works of Alexander Calder (1898-1976) and Naum Gabo (1890-1977) and you'll see what I mean

### **Principles of Sculptural Design**

These regulate the approach of sculptors to such matters as **orientation, proportion, scale, articulation** and **balance**.

#### **Orientation:-**

To create a sense of harmony (or disharmony) in the sculpture itself, or between parts of it, or between the sculpture and the viewer, or between the sculpture and its surroundings, the sculptor usually works to a particular spatial plan or scheme of reference. Such a plan, often based on a system of axes and planes, is essential to maintain linear proportion amongst other things. Thus for instance, the poses of human figures are typically calculated and created with reference to the four cardinal planes, namely: the the principle of axuality (eg. anatomical movement), the principle of frontality (predominant in the kouros standing figures of Greek Archaic sculpture), **contrapposto** - the dynamic pose in which one part of the body twists or turns away from another part, exemplified in works by Michelangelo (1475-1564) and Giambologna (1529-1608) - and the **chiastic** stance (the pose in which the weight of the body

rests mainly on one leg, a typical characteristic of Greek figurative sculpture of the High Classical period).

### **Proportion**

How sculptors handle proportionality varies considerably. Some (eg. Egyptian sculptors) observed hierarchic non-naturalistic canons of proportion (eg. Gods the largest, Pharaohs next largest, citizens smallest etc). Other sculptors have followed more naturalistic but equally iconometric rules of proportion. By comparison, many tribal cultures employ systems which - for religious or cultural reasons - accord greater size to certain parts of the body (eg. the head). In addition, the specific siting of a sculpture may require a special approach to proportionality. For example, a human statue mounted on the top of a tall structure may require a larger upper body to balance the effects of foreshortening when viewed from ground level. (The great rococo painter Tiepolo was a master at counteracting this effect when creating his ceiling frescos)

### **Scale**

This refers, for example, to the need to create a sculpture in tune with the scale of its surroundings.

### **Articulation**

This describes how sculptural figures (and other forms) are jointed;

### **Balance**

In freestanding figurative sculpture, balance involves two principal matters. First, the sculptural body must be physically stable - easy enough to achieve in a crawling or reclining figure, less easy in a standing statue, especially if leaning forwards or backwards.

### **Materials**

Almost any material capable of being shaped in three dimensions can be used in sculpting. But some materials like stone - especially hard limestone (marble) - wood, clay, metal (eg. bronze), ivory and plaster have exceptional "plastic" attributes and have therefore proved most popular to sculptors from prehistoric times onward. As a result, for most of its history, sculpture has been created using four basic methods: stone carving, wood carving, bronze casting and clay firing. A rare type was chryselephantine sculpture, reserved exclusively for major cult statues.

### **Stone Sculpture**

Stone sculpture, probably the earliest form of monumental sculpture as well as the best medium for monumental works, was common to many eras of the Paleolithic Stone Age.

Prototype works of prehistoric stone sculpture include the basaltic figurine known as *The Venus of Berekhat Ram* (c.230,000 BCE or earlier) and quartzite figurine known as *The Venus of Tan-Tan* (c.200,000 BCE or earlier). Since then, probably the largest body of stone sculpture was the series of column statues and reliefs produced for the great European Gothic cathedrals of Chartres, Notre Dame de Paris, Amiens, Reims, Cologne, among many others, during the period 1150-1300

### **Jade Sculpture**

The best-known form of hardstone sculpture, jade carving has been a speciality of Chinese master craftsmen ever since Neolithic times. Nephrite and Jadeite are the two most common types of jade stone, although bowenite (a form of serpentine) is also used.

### **Wood Sculpture**

Wood carving is the oldest and most continuous type of sculpture. Especially convenient for small works, wood carving was widely practised during the Prehistoric age, and later during the era of Early Christian sculpture

### **Bronze Sculpture**

Sculpting in bronze is a complicated process which was developed independently in China, South America and Egypt. Bronze casting requires the modelling of a form in clay, plaster or wax, which is later removed after the molten bronze has been poured. The lost-wax method was a common technique during the Renaissance era.

### **Clay Sculpture**

Sculpting in clay dates from the Paleolithic era of the Stone Age. Known (when fired) as terracotta sculpture, it is the most plastic of all sculpting methods, versatile, light, inexpensive and durable. However, the most famous example of clay sculpture must be the Chinese Qin Dynasty Terracotta Army (the 'Terracotta Warriors'), a collection of 8,000 clay warriors and horses unearthed in 1974 in Shaanxi province, China

## **USE OF SCULPTURES WHILE TEACHING HISTORY**

Sculptures come in the category of teaching aids. Sometime models maybe the shortest and easiest way of representing certain concepts to pupils.

For example in explaining the peculiarities of Gandharva sculpture observing a single work of the age may be far more educative than verbal description of the type of sculpture.

Models can invest history with the sense of reality things which were the stories to the pupils might appear as true if have models to support our verbal exposition.

Models can help teachers to teach according to the source method. Models of sources may be considered as sources for all practical purposes. For example: a lesson on “postal system through the ages” may be taught by the source method with the help of models. The use of models is especially useful in primary and junior secondary classes.

**Types of models** :- A variety of models can be used for illustrating history (i) Models of personalities who have made their contributions in history in specific fields – political, religious, social and economic and cultural. Such models help pupils to identify themselves with personalities and then thus every event connected with them becomes more meaningful and interesting. Models of personalities are useful in junior classes.

(ii) Models of armours and weapons of different ages directly convey historical information. They can be used for class dramatization and exhibitions besides ordinary history teaching.

(iii) Models of human dwellings, utensils, ornaments, costumes etc. in different ages are useful in teaching history.

(iv) Models of pillars and rock inscriptions add to the effectiveness of history lessons.

(v) Models of places which are sites of events of the greatest importance, for example Kurukshetra and the battlefields of Panipat.

**\*Principles of use**

**a.** models can be used in class in an interesting manner. Anecdotes and interesting historical sidelights will add to the effectiveness.

**b.** can be more challenging if they are properly used.

**c.** everyone in the class must be preferably the entire class should see it at the same time. Closer examination or individual study may follow.

**d.** models should be used in conjunction with the other learning materials such as texts, films, dramatization, resource persons etc.

**e.** Students should be encouraged to examine the models, ask questions and make generalizations.

**f.** Unrelated objects, specimens or models should be kept out of sight so that they do not divide the attention of the pupils. After the model has been used, it should be put away for future use.

**g.** students should be encouraged to produce models to illustrate many of the objects, concepts or ideas.

- **Qualities of Good Models**

1. Accuracy : – a model must be accurate. Crude representation may be permitted in the art room but they have no place in the teaching of history. The aim of the historical model is to impress upon the pupils mind thorough the medium of sight. It is of little value to expose the pupils to inaccuracy in essentials
2. Simplicity : - The model should not be obscure or complicated
3. Utility :- The model must have great historical significance
4. Interesting :- the model must be interesting to enable to motivate the pupils and sustain their interest

Therefore sculpture or models play an important role in the field of arts , Sculpture can become memories of famous of identities too.

Sculpture have been a great help to the teachers to explain and make students understand the basic of the history lessons clearly. It reduces memorizing. As the concepts are more clear using sculptures therefore without sculptures history would have been untold completely

**Summary:**

Teaching aids through to be helpful to the student to make the concept clear while learning history. So are sculptures which is the easiest way of representing certain concept to the pupils.

During its history it has attracted some of the world’s greatest artists including classical sculptors. It also known as the “Plastic Art“. Sculpture is the only branch of the visual arts that is specifically concerns with expressive three dimensions from. There are numbers of important concepts and theoretical issues which govern the design. It create the sense of harmony between the sculptor and the viewer. The sculpture can be of any material like stone – especially marble, wood, clay, metal (bronze), ivory and plaster. Can be more challenging if properly used. Sculpture are used to elastrator personalities who have made contribution in history in fields of political, religious, social, economical and cultural. But quality should also be maintained for a good model. With specific points like accuracy, simplicity, utility and interesting. Therefore without sculptures history would have been untold completely.

**Conclusion :**

Sculptures or models play an important role in the field of arts, Sculptures can become memories of famous identities too. It reduces memorizing as the concept taught become clear. They have been useful from primary to secondary and higher secondary students. Therefore without Sculptures history would have been untold completely.

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