

## Introduction: Trajectories in Sculpture

**Rebecca Peabody**

THOUGH OCCASIONED BY THE J. PAUL GETTY TRUST AND MUSEUM'S acquisition of the Fran and Ray Stark Sculpture Collection, the symposium that led to this publication dealt with a much wider range of artists and sculptures than are reflected in the collection. The goal was to gather a number of scholarly inquiries that were inspired by British or American artists, artworks, or art markets, while also attending to the ways in which art and ideas circulated between the two countries—through physical travel across the Atlantic, or less directly, on the currents of postwar cultural exchange. The symposium and publication address an art historical oversight—namely, that British and American histories of sculpture are often recounted separately, with artists and artworks contextualized nationally. This artificial division results in fragmented narratives, as the years between 1945 and 1975 saw a particularly vibrant transatlantic exchange of ideas, individuals, and aesthetic influences. Artists, artworks, curators, exhibitions, publications, and movements all traveled between the two cultures—in physical form, or in representations—transferring ideas and inspiration, and sometimes anxiety and antagonism. Troubling the national boundaries of postwar sculptural history requires a conception of place that is at once local and cosmopolitan, rooted and well traveled.

Conceiving of place in this way—as constituted through movement and transference as well as through fixity—is a challenge that the contributors to this volume took up in different, yet thematically related, ways. John C. Welchman provides an important historical framework; his overview of Anglo-American relations between 1945 and 1975 focuses on economic, political, and cultural cooperation and how it has influenced sculptural practice. Underscoring the importance of cultural internationalism, he traces debates and developments concerning sculpture's relationship to realism, abstraction, pop, and formalism, as well as the push-and-pull that brought about an international reconsideration of sculpture's basic materials and properties. He concludes with a look back at this period from the present through the work of a contemporary artist who creates post-minimalist sculpture that is reimagined through such twenty-first-century tools as digital, virtual, and electronic technologies.

Essays by Pauline Rose, Jennifer Wulffson Bedford, Robert Slifkin, and Jo Applin focus on the influence of English sculptor Henry Moore—in both

Great Britain and America, across multiple generations of artists, and as both an artist and a highly marketable persona. Rose reveals how Moore was exported, via journalistic and photographic representations, to American audiences. Analysis of these representations reveals that Moore had achieved international celebrity years before such was the norm for artists, and that his persona was used in specific, strategic ways during the Cold War era. Wulffson Bedford considers Moore's American reception by way of the criticism of Los Angeles-based journalist and critic Henry Seldis. Unlike some critics of avant-garde art, such as Clement Greenberg and Rosalind Krauss, Seldis supported Moore's work; Wulffson Bedford's analysis of his criticism sheds new light both on Seldis's career and on Moore's reception. Slifkin takes up Bruce Nauman's sculptural tribute to Moore and his implicit critique of a younger generation of artists who were dismissive of Moore's work. He argues for a reconsideration of Nauman's engagement with the historical past, and an expanded understanding of figuration in Nauman's work—one that moves beyond the visual to include the rhetorical. Applin also reflects on the ways in which younger artists responded to aesthetic heritage—in particular, by comparing Bruce McLean's engagement with Henry Moore's legacy to McLean's response to the more contemporaneous practices of his American counterparts Walter De Maria and Robert Morris.

If Moore's influence was formidable, so too was the impact of what became the canonical modernism of the postwar era—particularly associated, on the American side, with the critic Clement Greenberg, and on the British side, with the sculptor and teacher Anthony Caro. Their thinking about modernist sculpture is taken up by Sarah Hamill, David J. Getsy, and Courtney J. Martin. Hamill explores how David Smith and Anthony Caro, both of whom were championed by Greenberg, nevertheless defied his aesthetic preferences by painting their sculptures. While Greenberg thought paint nonessential to the medium of sculpture, Hamill argues that Smith's and Caro's experiments with color revealed its importance. Getsy directs attention to the antagonistic exchanges between Greenberg and English critic Herbert Read, each of whom stridently championed different artists, and supported different ways of encountering sculpture. At stake, Getsy argues, was more than critical disagreement; it was which version of modernism would be memorialized. Courtney Martin investigates Pakistan-born, London-based artist Rasheed Araeen's initial embrace, then rejection, of Greenberg and Caro—on both aesthetic and political grounds. Martin argues that Araeen conflated Britain's past and America's mid-twentieth-century present into an imaginary "West," a construction he opposed in his conceptual art and minimalist sculpture in order to express radicalism, political awareness, and solidarity among those oppressed by colonialism.

The importance of distance—whether historical, national, or interplanetary—to the formulation of sculptural practices and the land art movement is taken up by Alistair Rider, Joy Sleeman, and Timothy D. Martin. Rider compares American minimalist sculptor Carl Andre with English land artist Richard Long to show how both use prehistory in their sculpture. Rider also investigates how these two artists used ancient English sites in ways that differed from an earlier generation of British artists. Sleeman posits that the development of land art in Europe, Britain, and the United States was the result of a transatlantic network of travels, encounters, exchanges, and exhibitions. She argues that the Apollo moon landings had a significant impact—in 1969 and into the

present—on the ways in which artists engaged with the surface of the earth. Tim Martin proposes a reconsideration of the relationship between American land art and the British picturesque park by way of Robert Smithson. Martin's reading of Smithson suggests that the artist invoked seventeenth- and eighteenth-century British garden philosophy in order to propose that twentieth-century land art, and the land artist, should play essential roles in working out some of the conflicts inherent to a democratic society.

From artists to critics to journalists, and from stone and welded steel to conceptual and performance art, these essays consider postwar sculptural practices broadly, yet with sustained attention to the importance of an international perspective. Together they offer an intriguing corrective to the problem of nationally oriented histories of sculpture, and an opening onto a rich field of study.