

Sculpture was largely relegated to portraits of public figures and monuments to state and church until the twentieth century, when the medium experienced the break from traditionalism that had revolutionized painting in the nineteenth century. With the advent of Modernism, drawing took on a larger role for sculptors. Throughout history, sculptors had made drawings as studies for their three-dimensional work, but they now created them as works of art unto themselves (whether they were studies for specific sculptures or independent pieces) rather than merely as support material for a "higher" art form.

The human body, which had been a central focus for sculpture since ancient Greek art, continued to interest sculptors in the twentieth century, but they gave the subject new meaning. No longer used to communicate ideas through allegory and personification, the nude became a vehicle for personal expression and formal structure or style.

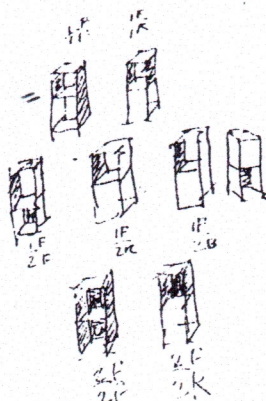
In the early twentieth century, sculptors pioneered new ways to look at the nude figure, first turning to realism and then moving toward abstraction. Rodin's charming drawings of 1903 of the young girl Jean Simpson, made at the time that he was carving her mother's portrait, are characterized by the same naturalism and direct observation that he used to break down traditional sculptural conventions.

Sculptors also began to use the female figure and the structure of the human body to examine formal relationships rather than to search for character or communicate ideas. The process of distillation that ultimately led to abstraction of the human body

can be seen in William Zorach's *Kneeling Nude* of 1917, Gaston Lachaise's *Back of a Nude* of 1929, Isamu Noguchi's *Bending Figure* of 1933, and Louise Nevelson's studies from the model from the later 1930s. Although none of these drawings are studies for specific works, each embodies observations that were further abstracted, simplified, and formalized in the artist's three-dimensional work of the period.

By the 1950s, certain drawings for sculpture had become totally abstract, suggesting a kind of drawing in space. David Smith's oil on paper captures the gestures and color of his painted metal sculpture of the period, and the meandering geometric structure of Ibram Lassaw's drawing of 1958, entitled *Drawing for a Sculpture*, appears to be a direct study for his linear sculptures of the time.

Structure of Space
and the possibility of form within 1967



1 - volume 2 - Reach 3 - motion
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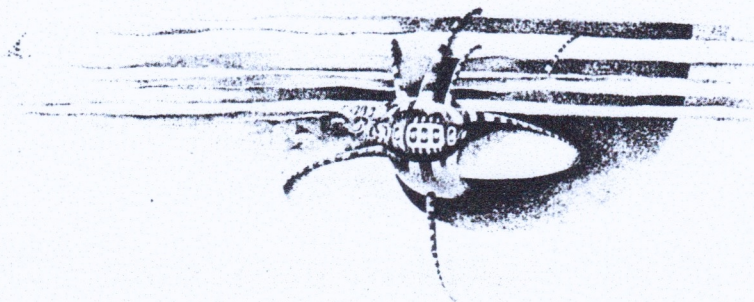
S. Lewitt

Sol Lewitt, *Untitled*, 1967



Magdalena Abakanowicz, *Untitled (Head)*, 1984

Since the 1960s, as new sculptural forms have proliferated, sculptors have provided us with fully realized drawings to describe them. Robert Smithson's *Mirror Thicket* of 1967 served as a record of a temporary project. *La Petite Clef* of 1972–74, Mark di Suvero's early conception of one of his gigantic sculptures of large metal beams with which he draws in space, helps to explain how he developed his ideas. Dennis Oppenheim's proposal drawing of 1981 for the installation of one of his huge fantastic machines sprawls out over two sheets of paper in the same way that his sculpture seems to grow. Alan Saret's hairy clusters of colored wires of 1984 are best understood in what appear to be rapidly scribbled drawings. Deborah Masters's life-size charcoal drawing of 1991 was made before a large sculpture of the same subject, although she often makes her powerful drawings after her own sculpture. Richard Serra's drawing entitled *Bochum Forge I* captures on paper the mass and density of a five-ton piece of steel sculpture that he watched being forged last summer.



Lee Bontecou, *Untitled*, 1973

Scale has become a more important issue in recent years as sculptors' ideas have become increasingly grandiose. Drawings have sometimes substituted for works too large to be built in three dimensions: the titles of Robert Stackhouse's monumental watercolor, *Sighting for the Brooklyn Bridge Project* of 1983, and of Alice Aycock's *Representation of the Second World* of 1984 speak for themselves. In his *Star Drawing* of 1985, Chris Macdonald looks down from the heavens on the giant toy vehicles that are the subjects of his sculpture, while in *Nine Studies for Sculpture: Border Drawings*, the Israeli artist Jaacov Hefetz meditates on the border between Israel and Lebanon where his kibbutz is situated.

In recognition of the interdependence of contemporary sculpture and drawings, a group of sculptures in the collection either directly related to the drawings or by the same artists has been included in the exhibition. At the same time, the drawings of twentieth-century sculptors clearly constitute a unique and independent genre, and offer sources for new concepts that will further expand the horizons of modern sculpture into the twenty-first century.

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