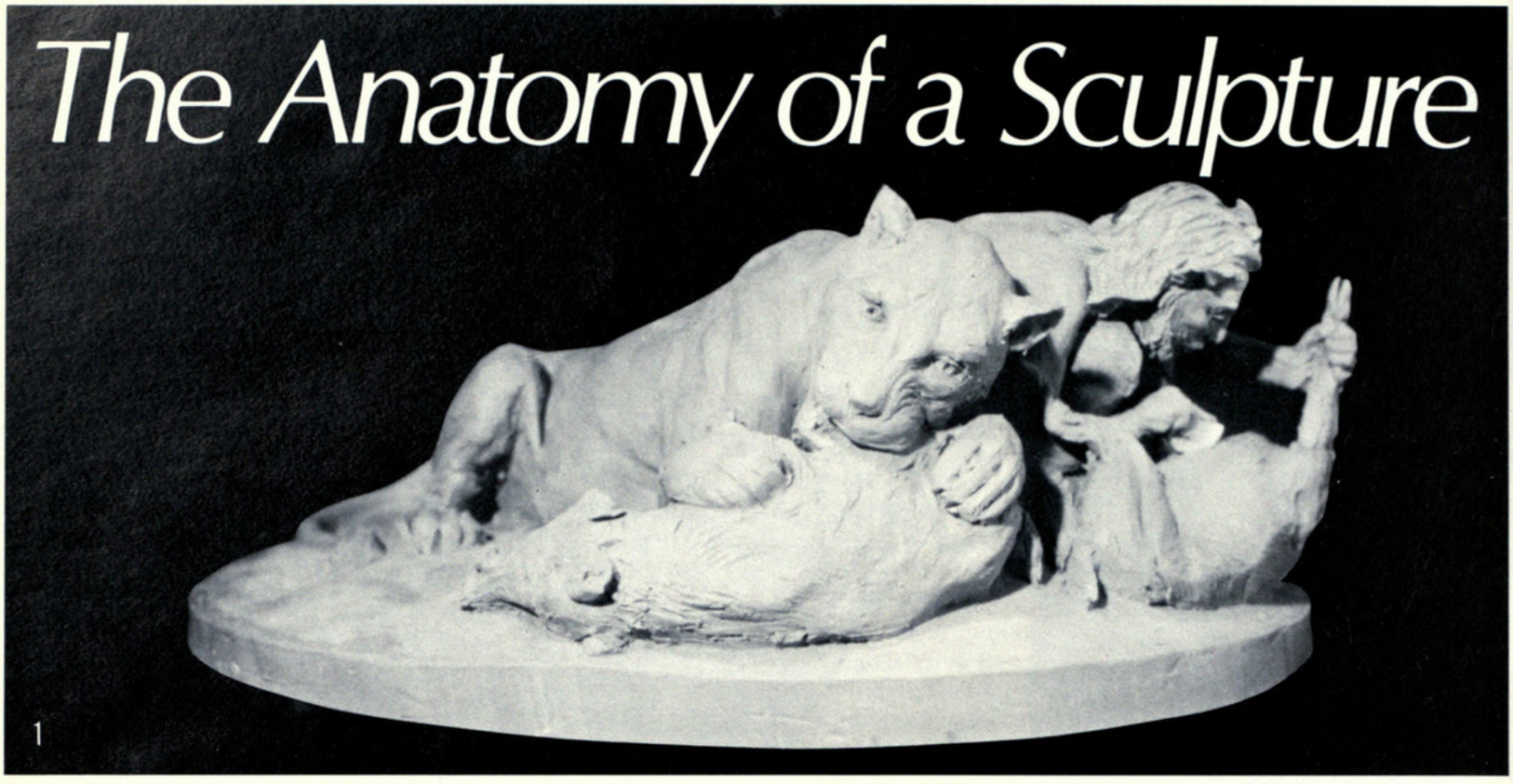
The Anatomy of a Sculpture



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By William Pasek

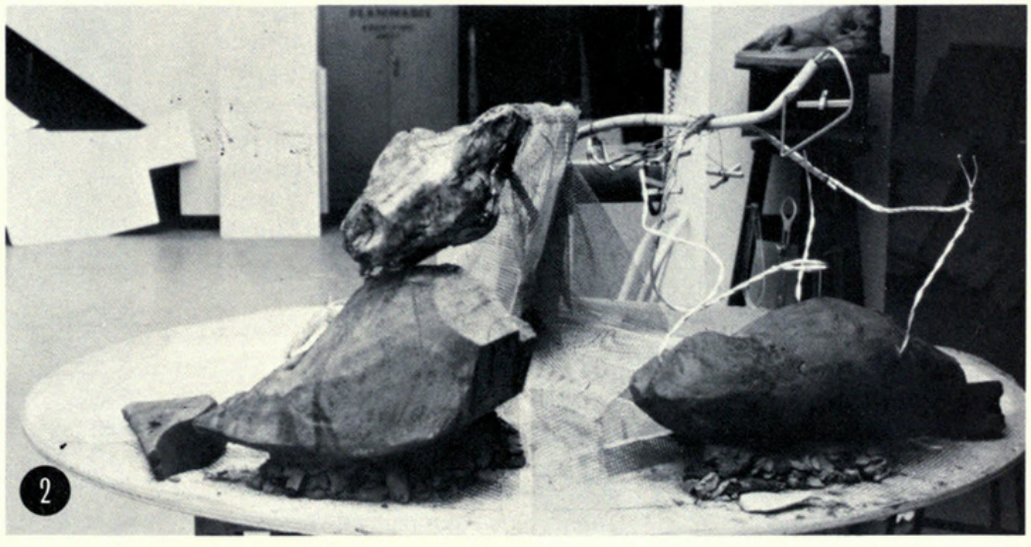
The curious thing about even the most simple work of art is that it belies the complexity of its creation. The original sculpture in the Man in His Environment exhibit is a good example.

Early in the development of the exhibit design, we decided that a dramatic sculpture would be the medium to introduce man, the unique animal. The sculpture would occupy a prominent place in the critical transition area where the focus of the exhibit shifts from natural systems to man and his relationship to the world around him. The important concept we wanted to illustrate is that, although man is not independent of the natural laws that govern all life, his culture distinguishes him from other animals.

To exemplify this concept we advanced the idea of showing a man and an animal engaged in the same activity. The project was assigned to Martin Wanserski, Field Museum preparations sculptor (now a member of the art department faculty at the University of South Dakota). Wanserski developed the idea into alternate approaches and sculpted three preliminary models of the subject in clay.

The chosen version, shown above, depicts a lion and a primitive man tackling the universal problem of getting food. The lion is using its teeth to tear the flesh of a wild pig, while at its side, the man is cutting the carcass of another pig with a crude stone tool. The torsos of the man and lion are joined, illustrating their common origins, while the ways they are attacking their food illustrate their differences.

One result of man's special abilities is represented here in the various steps taken to create this sculpture. The life-size figures were first sculpted in clay by Wanserski, and finally rendered into polyester resin with the aid of John Cannon, acting chief preparator, and Kevin Williams, preparator.



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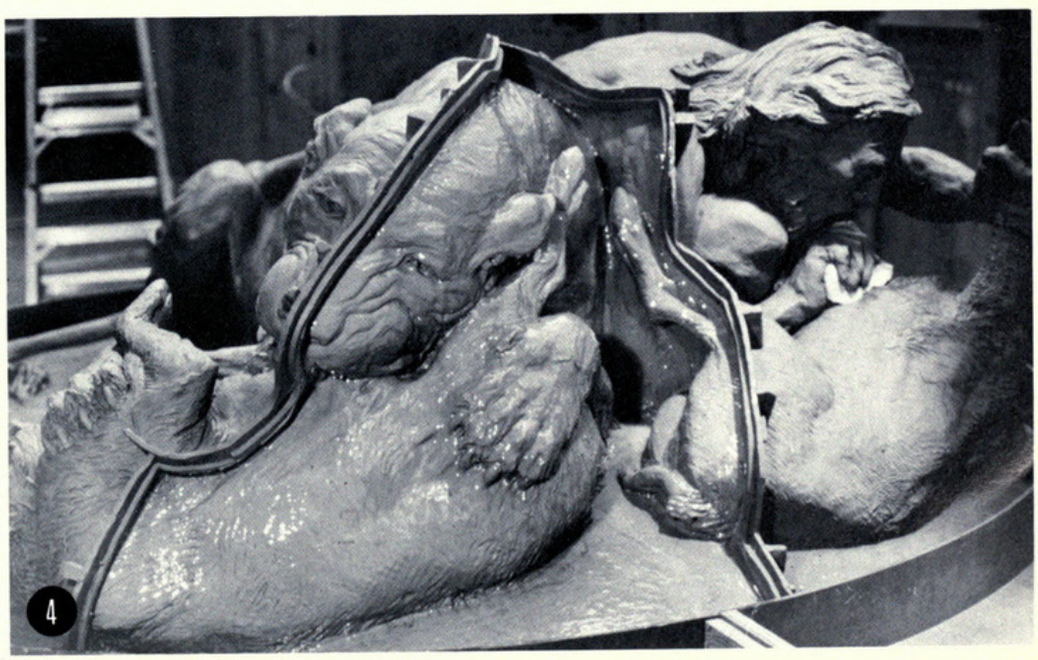
William Pasek is acting chairman of the Department of Exhibition.



(1) *Preparatory to executing life-size sculpture, Marty Wanserski makes ¼-size clay maquette, or model.* (2) *Armature, or metal spine, supports clay of full-size sculpture.* (3) *Finished clay sculpture.* (4) *Rubber molding compound is brushed onto clay form in sections.* (Con't on p. 8)

(5) Wanserski applies fiber glass jacket over rubber mold. (6) After fiber glass has set, it is removed in sections, leaving rubber mold. (7) Rubber mold, bearing detailed impressions from clay base, is peeled away from clay. Clay base is discarded. (8) Rubber mold sections are fitted back into corresponding sections of fiber glass. (9) The latter sections provide support as several coats of polyester resin are applied to inner surface of rubber mold. (10) The reinforced sections of polyester resin are assembled. (11) Fiber glass jacket is removed and rubber molding peeled away, leaving polyester resin casting. (12) Surfaces are sanded and finished. (13) Color is applied. (14) The finished sculpture.

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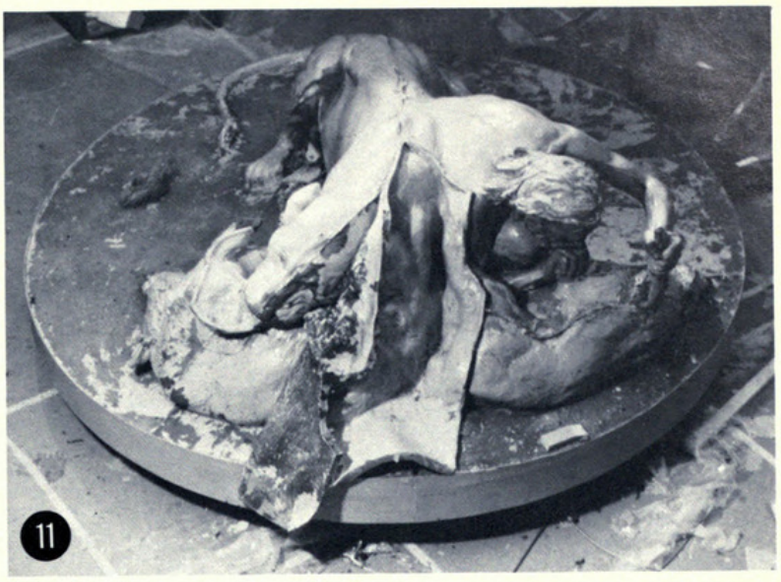

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