THE INDIAN'S PONY

FROM BONES TO BRONZE

THE INDIAN'S PONY

THE EPIC JOURNEY OF A SCULPTURE IN CLAY
WITH NOTES HERE AND THERE

GERALD ANTHONY SHIPPEN

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Gerald A. Shippen in his studio

CONTENTS

FRONTIS

8 Acknowledgments
9 Preface
10 Foreward: Peter H. Hassrick

PART ONE

14 The Écorché Process
15 The Platform and Armature
16 The Sculpture Platform
20 The Tools and Clay
22 The Clay Sculpture
24 Forming the Muscles and Skin
26 Adding the Human Figure
27 The Completed Clay Sculpture

PART TWO

29 The Mold Process
30 The Mother Mold
33 The Completed Wax Pattern
34 The Lost Wax Bronze Casting Process
42 Bronze Assembly Process
44 The Patina
46 The Completed Bronze

VIGNETTES

13 The Horses of Chauvet
17 The Vogleherd Horse
19 The Dawn of the Horse
21 Finding a Home on the Range
22 Around the World in 15 Million Years
25 Domestication and the Botai Horse
29 From Milk and Meat to Military Might
30 The Iberian Horse
32 Christopher Columbus and the Horse Return to the Americas
35 The Mapuche: the First Americas Horse Vulture
36 Harry Jackson "Human Skull Study"
40 The Beginnings of the Plains Horse Culture
43 "Buffalo Shield" Medallion
45 "Born to Run"

THE CATALOG ÉCORCHÉ

49 "Captive Warrior"
50 "Sentinel of the Plains"
52 "Great Plains Warrior"
54 "Spirit of the Dance"
56 "Mountain Crow Warrior"
57 "Canyon Echoes"
58 "After the Crazy Dance"
60 "Wild Turkeys in Virginia"
62 Painted Moccasins
64 "All in a Day's Work"
64 "Cloud Pryor Mountain Mustang"
65 "The Nigh Leader"
66 "The Lady Polo Player"
67 "Nordic Ski Pony"

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The artist and the model. Charlie was a majestic Percheron draft horse that came to model during my tenure at Lyme Academy of Fine Art, Old Lyme, Connecticut.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who contributed to the making of this book: Summerfield K. Johnston III, who took an interest in the book early on, and provided invaluable support, encouragement and guidance; my wife, Donna, for her many hours of research, writing and editing of the pages herein; Peter H. Hassrick, who graciously undertook the task of writing the book's foreward shortly before his untimely passing; Renée Tafoya for her exceptional book design skills; and the friends and colleagues who enthusiastically contributed information and written vignettes, including Matthew Jackson and John Washakie. Lastly, to all those along the way who contributed in so many ways … the pursuit of art is an awesome task.

PREFACE

The origin of this book lies not in the realm of great epiphanies drawn from historical archives nor did it spring from countless hours spent working in the studio. Instead it came from a simple question asked time and again by people I've met along the way: "How is a bronze sculpture made?"

In the pages that follow, the reader will discover what may be the oldest known three-dimensional equine sculpture, the "Vogelherd horse." Similarly, herein lay stunning images drawn and painted by prehistoric man some 28,000 years ago on the walls of caves in what is now France: "the horses of Chauvet." It has been speculated that these images were teaching aids used to train artists in a genre that would last ten thousand years. It is my desire that this book may serve in the same manner to inspire the uniquely human pursuit of creating art.

Like many artists before me, I have been fascinated by the horse as subject matter for most of my forty-five-year career. "The Indian's Pony" sculpture was inspired by my life-long interest and study of North American Plains horse culture. In this book, I hope to share my appreciation for this culture as well as educate the reader about the sculpture process.

In creating "The Indian's Pony," I employ the "écorché" technique of sculpting the anatomical form. First the armature is constructed, then individual bones are shaped in clay to replicate the horse's skeleton. Next, more clay is applied to the skeleton in succeeding layers to define the horse's musculature. Finally, a clay "skin" is laid over the anatomical form. What began as a couple of pounds of clay, a few simple tools, a bit of aluminum wire secured to a board with household plumbing parts, has now been transformed into "The Indian's Pony." To see the sculpture completed in the end…that is the defining moment in the journey from Bones to Bronze.

Foreword (Need Hi-rez Proctor's The Indian Warrior image. This is low rez :)

FOREWARD BY PETER HASSRICK

Gerald Shippen, who serves today as a leading figure in sculpture in Wyoming, has brilliantly succeeded in concert with his distinguished patron and art collector, Summerfield K. Johnston III, in creating a signature work of art celebrating the Native people of the Northern Plains. Titled The Indian's Pony, it embraces modern perceptions, historical themes and time-honored techniques.

For the past forty-five years, Shippen has contributed to the art scene in Wyoming and across America with impressive works that have come to rest in art museums in the state and beyond. Through his mastery of traditional methods and his vision of art as, in part at least, an expression of historical analogue, Shippen has effectively drawn from the past to create symbolic works that uncannily resonate with modern tastes, perceptions and expectations.

Connecting Shippen with former American creative masters is revealing. The sculptor Alexander Phimister Proctor comes to mind when searching for antecedents to The Indian's Pony. Proctor was mentored by the greatest of our nation's sculptors, Augustus Saint-Gaudens, who asked his young protégé to produce the horses for two of his most highly regarded tributes, the General John Logan Monument in Chicago and the General Philip Sheridan Monument in New York City. Proctor's The Indian Warrior, first produced in 1898 in Paris, followed on those successes. It garnered international acclaim for its expression of nobility and monumentality as a genuine homage to the Native people of the Northern Plains. It was exhibited at the Paris Salon in 1898 and again at the Paris Exposition in 1900 where it won a gold medal. Saint-Gaudens had taught Proctor to approach his work with nobility, dignity and simplicity in mind. The Indian Warrior embodied those tenets and guided the sculptor throughout his career. Saint-Gaudens' mantra has carried over these many generations to Shippen whose portrayal of a mounted Indian warrior, The Indian's Pony, reflects the character of the master's words as filtered through the manifest nobility of Proctor's sculpture of the same theme.

In order to provide credibility and timeliness to The Indian Warrior, Proctor spent weeks studying the physiognomy and physique of the Blackfeet Indian horsemen in Montana. Shippen, who was raised on a cattle ranch on the Shoshone and Arapaho Reservation and attended school with his Native neighbors, was unsurprisingly empathetic with Indian people and especially Native horsemen. The connection between man and horse, a proud and enduring legacy for Indians of the western mountains and plains, came naturally to Shippen as he conceived The Indian's Pony. And for Shippen, being a long-time admirer of Saint-Gaudens' work and viewpoint, supplying that sense of dignity and simplicity to his mounted figure was a logical philosophical construct to impose on his rider.

In conceiving his bronze, however, Shippen has drawn on lessons that reach much further back than Saint-Gaudens. Shippen's techniques include a form of conceiving and constructing sculptures that had its origins in the Italian Renaissance. Known as écorché, a method traced back to Leonardo da Vinci, it involves a layering of the clay in stages to reveal the underlying musculature of the subjects before adding the overlying, visible skin. Shippen not only uses this method but has taught students in esteemed locations such as the Lyme Academy of Fine Art to employ it as well.

Shippen has also elected to paint his bronze sculpture, a technique that would have been abhorrent to Proctor and Saint-Gaudens but was accepted practice by 5th century Greek sculptors from whom modern figurative, three-dimensional sculpture has evolved. Even so, Shippen derives as much from lessons taught him by the late Harry Jackson (with whom he studied in Italy in the mid-

1970s) as from Praxiteles and his Athenian cronies.

One of the reasons Shippen chose to paint the bronze is that he elected to portray a particularly rare type of horse used by Northern Plains Indian riders. Known as "Medicine Hat" ponies, they were distinguished by their coloration that presented itself as all white except for black ears and forelock as well as a shield-shaped dark patch on the chest. Such horses were especially prized, and Shippen wanted his horse to be as distinctive as the rider is spectacular. Back in 1898, when Proctor was selecting his horse for The Indian Warrior, he went to the riding stables in New York City's Central Park. There a friend named Dixon let him sketch a model of one of his favorite riding horses, one that the artist described as "not a thoroughbred," but a fine specimen, nonetheless. Shippen's choice seems more natural, and he prides himself in knowing that the renowned Montana artist Charles Russell painted several works that featured "Medicine Hat" ponies. In Shippen's words, "The horse became a mystical creature to the tribes of the Great Plains. Horses enabled them to travel huge distances gathering food and wielding power – a mobile platform from which they skillfully killed buffalo and enhanced their nomadic lifestyles." As Shippen's majestic "Medicine Hat" pony and his rider move from conceptualization to realization, from an artist's dream to a veritable work of art in painted bronze, the art world is graced with a heartfelt, elegant and historically evocative work that warmly embraces the past while boldly invigorating the present.

Peter H. Hassrick
Director Emeritus and Senior Scholar
Buffalo Bill Center of the West
May 22, 2019

Sadly, Peter Hassrick passed away October 25, 2019.

vignette

The Horses of Chauvet

Thirty-two thousand years ago artists created these horse figures on the walls of Chauvet Cave, at Vallon-Pont-d'Arc, France. As an artist, in these drawings I see images drawn from models. Formed first by sketching an outline, then after shading the interior, scraping was used to sharpen and highlight the edges. All depict horses with eyes closed and soft tissue sunken around the noses. These highly accurate renditions, no doubt were drawn from animal models that had been killed for food.
— Donna G. Shippen

PART ONE:
THE PROCESS

ÉCORCHÉ SCULPTING

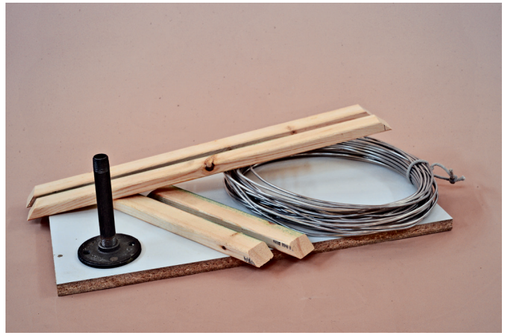
This book outlines the process of écorché (pronounced ākôr·SHā). Meaning "flayed" in French, the écorché process of sculpture refers to building a sculpture from the inner musculature to the skin.

Historically, artists have created quick sketches to capture their ideas for two- and three-dimensional works. The drawing below is a sketch of my initial concept for the "The Indian's Pony" sculpture. It was rendered spontaneously using conté crayon on buff newsprint paper. It is a work in progress.

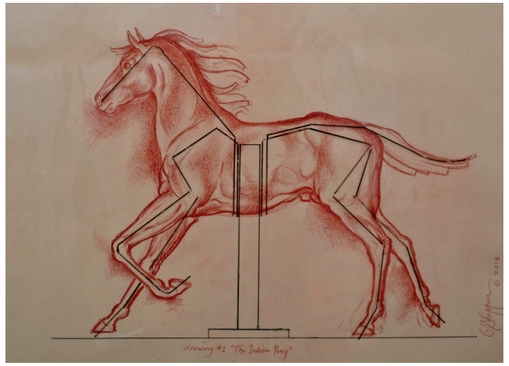
THE PLATFORM AND ARMATURE

Armatures for clay need not be complex however they need to be made correctly at the onset. In the this photo very simple supplies: aluminum wire, pipe and flange, plywood and small riser strips to be assembled with glue, nails and bolts.

Perhaps, the fundamental necessity in the sculpting process lies in the construction of a armature on which to form the clay. Its primary outline must follow the sketch very closely and accurately. Here a drawing for the armature is shown on an overlay representing where the wire will be formed with stand pipe and base.

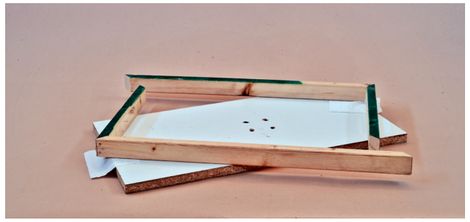


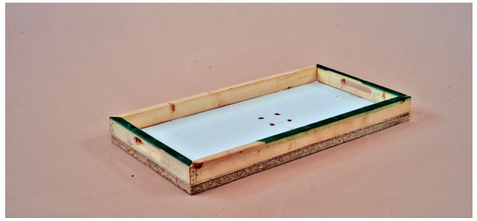
Armature Materials

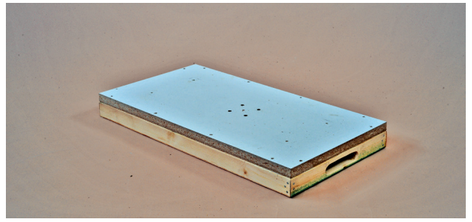


Imagining The Armature

THE SCULPTURE PLATFORM







Completed sculpting platform.

Every clay sculpture needs a base or platform to support the work in progress. Materials are quite simple: a coated MDF board and 1x2 frame. I prefer mitered edges. Holes are drilled into the board where the armature will be positioned. Drilled hand holds are necessary for safely moving the sculpture.

1″ x ¾″ strips of wood were cut with 45-degree corners, ready for assembly.

The platform was first glued and clamped, then nailed together

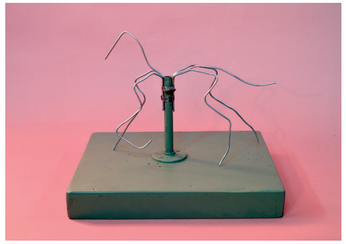
The importance of a sculpture platform will become evident as the sculpting process moves along. This platform was later painted the same color as the clay to aid in the sculpting process. All visual distractions having been removed, the artist is free to concentrate on the making of the image in clay.

vignette

Volgelherd Horse

Some 30,000 years ago, an unknown artist from the Upper Paleolithic Aurignacian culture selected a pinky finger-length piece of mammoth ivory and expertly carved it into an image of a horse, creating the earliest known equine sculpture. With its long arching neck, bowed head and laid back ears, the Vogelherd horse, named for the German cave where it was discovered, appears to prance and snort like a spirited stallion, even though the figure's legs have long since broken off. Looking at this small but exquisite sculpture, one can't help but think that its Stone Age creator shared our appreciation of the horse as a creature of beauty and a source of artistic inspiration.

THE COMPLETED PLATFORM AND ARMATURE



The Armature

An artist friend once said: "The armature must sing the song of the finished work in clay."

I have always thought about the importance of his words each time I shape a wire armature. Each part--bones, spinal column, pelvic dimensions--must be accurately sized and shaped in the armature wire.

Shaping the Armature

vignette

The Dawn of the Horse

Eohippus, the ancestral "dawn horse," more correctly known as Hyracotherium, appeared during the early Eocene Epoch approximately 55 million years ago. The first horse stood a mere 10 inches tall with an arched back and raised hindquarters supported by slender legs. Like its evolutionary cousin, the tapir, Eohippus possessed an odd number of hoofed toes--four on the front feet, three on the hind. With its diminutive size and splayed feet, the first horse was well-suited for browsing the leaves of low shrubs in the muddy, humid forests of North America and Europe. Although Eohippus fossils have been found on both continents, subsequent evolution of the horse occurred primarily in North America, with several dispersions to Europe, Asia, Africa and South America. — Donna G. Shippen

Exquisite and rare in its completeness, this Eohippus fossil was discovered in the Green River formation near Kemmerer, Wyoming by a local fossil hunter in 2003. Now part of the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History collection, the 50-million-year-old little horse was excavated from a quarry on the Lewis Horse Ranch, which has since been dubbed "the oldest horse ranch in the world."
Photo: James E. Tynsky collection / U.S. National Park Service

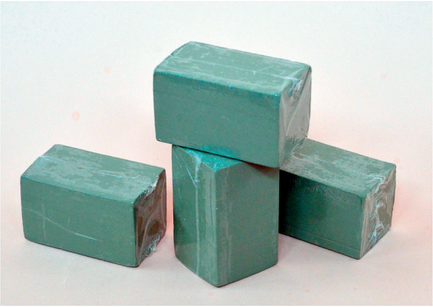
THE TOOLS AND THE CLAY

Sculpture tools traditionally have been made of wood. Some machined from steel and aluminum may also be obtained. In general, it is not unusual to see home-made or custom tools fashioned according to the needs of the sculptor.

Modeling clay is available in many varieties of hardness, color, and chemical makeup. There are two basic categories of clay: water-based and oil-based. Water-based clay has been used by man for thousands of years, while oil-based clay was not developed until the Italian Renaissance. Some oil clay varieties also include wax as a component to change the material's physical properties.

Oil-based clay is made in two varieties: one containing sulfur and the other sulfur-free. Clays that contain sulfur will pose a problem in mold making, as sulfur inhibits the cure of many mold-making compounds. In short, the sculptor should only use tried and true materials to ensure successful images.

Wood and wood loop tools



vignette

Finding A Home On The Range

For the first 30 million years of its evolution, the horse remained a small, woodland browser as forests dominated the world's vegetation. Not until the earth's climate began to cool and become drier, ushering in the Miocene Epoch, would the ancestral horse evolve into a grazer of the plains.

As temperatures dropped and polar ice caps grew, locking up more of the planet's moisture, North America's forests declined. Better adapted to dry conditions, grass species flourished, giving rise to the grasslands of the Great Plains and an evolutionary explosion of grazing species.

It was during this early Miocene period, about 20 million years ago, that Parahippus, the "almost horse," emerged on the scene. Considered the evolutionary link between forest and grassland-dwelling horses, Parahippus had teeth adapted for grinding coarse grass blades and a longer face that could more easily reach the ground. The "almost horse" stood approximately three feet tall on legs with more developed musculature for forward striding and feet supported by an elongated middle toe.

Three-toed Transitional Horse (Parahippus leonensis). Photo: Florida Museum of Natural History

vignette

Around The World In 15 Million Years.

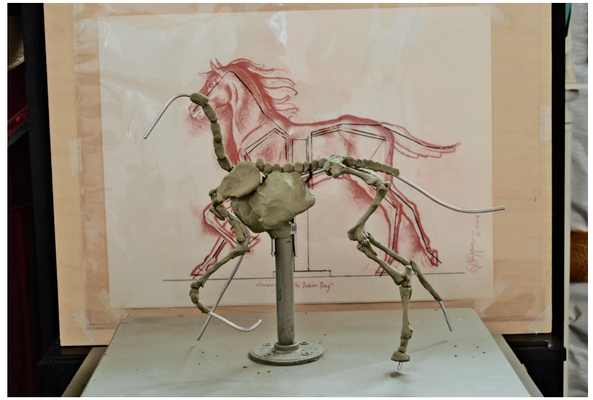
As grass species evolved and diversified, and grasslands expanded around the globe, so too did Equidae, the horse family. By the end of the Miocene 5 million years ago, fourteen distinct genera of horses are represented in the fossil record across five continents, North America, South America, Europe, Asia and Africa. Horses of all shapes and sizes roamed North America, from the tiny 90-pound three-toed Calippus to the 6-foot tall, 1000-pound single-toed Pliohippus. But this flowering of equine diversity would not last.

Only one branch of the Equidae family tree would survive—the Equus genus, which evolved during the Pliocene approximately 4 million years ago. Like its forebear Pliohippus, Equus had a single hoofed toe on each foot. Strong ligament attachments to the leg and ankle bones created a spring mechanism that propelled the foot forward. Equus flourished through the Pliocene and into the Pleistocene, spreading from North America to South America and across the Bering land bridge to Asia, Europe and Africa.

But then a shift happened. Having occupied North America for its 50 million-year evolution, the horse suddenly disappeared from the Americas 8000-10,000 years ago. Equus continued to thrive in Europe, Asia and Africa, eventually giving rise to zebras, asses, and the modern horse, Equus caballus. As temperatures warmed and sea levels rose at the end of the Pleistocene, the Bering Strait became submerged, preventing reintroduction of the horse from Europe. Not until Columbus' second voyage in 1493, would horses return to the Americas.

THE CLAY SCULPTURE

After the armature is assembled and shaped, one must make a start; applying clay. The drawing is used to reference the horse's anatomy and dimensions. With each addition of rudimentary shapes of clay, the skeletal form emerges. Through persistent effort, refinement



Applying clay

The clay skeleton

I have detailed the skeleton to the extent that all major bones take form and are proportionately sized for the musculature that will lay over the top.

Forming the muscles

The refined skeleton, now ready for muscles. Still very much a work in progress.

THE MUSCLES AND SKIN

The musculature as viewed from the rear.

Upon completion of the musculature, with all dimensions established, the skin is formed and spread over the surface. Care should be taken in joining sections to create a seamless transition over the surface of the sculpture.

With the clay sculpture now mostly complete, all proportions should be assessed and changed if necessary. Then the surface treatment may begin.

Applying the skin

vignette

Domestication, And The Botai Horse

Horses were first domesticated as a food source around 3500 BC by the Botai people, who occupied the western Eurasian steppe in what is now Kazakhstan. Archaeological evidence shows Botai horses were both milked and butchered, and selectively bred. Signs of bit wear on ancient tooth samples suggests some horses were harnessed. DNA studies indicate the Botai horses gave rise to today's Przewalski's horse.

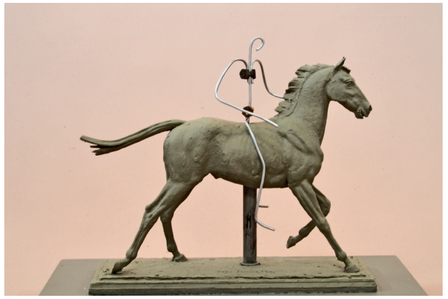
This little Botai Horse bolo tie was made to informalize the formal gatherings that artists attend.

NOTE TO AUTHOR: PLEASE EXPAND DESCRIPTION. WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY "FORMAL GATHERINGS THAT ARTISTS ATTEND"? WHEN, WHERE?

ADDING THE HUMAN FIGURE

While completing the Pony sculpture, I thought more about the concept of the Indian's Pony as a working animal and decided to add a rider to the sculpture.

The human figure was created in the same manner as the horse: first the skeleton, then muscles, and finally skin.



THE COMPLETED CLAY SCULPTURE

At this point it is important to secure a complete set of photographs to document the sculpture for future reference.

vignette

From milk and meat to military might

Approximately 1500 years after domesticating the horse, the peoples of the Eurasian steppe made another important contribution--the first horse-drawn chariots. Chariots with spoked wheels have been excavated from Sintasha culture burial sites dating back to 2000 BC in the southern Ural Mountains. The spoked-wheel chariot was an improvement upon the Sumerians' earlier, heavier solid-wheeled war carts, which were pulled by wild asses. The development of the chariot coincided with that of the composite bow, which allowed chariot-borne archers to fire faster and farther.

Horse-drawn chariots spread to the Middle East and beyond to China, India and Europe, becoming the dominant military technology for the next 1000 years. Chariots typically employed two-man teams consisting of a driver and an archer. The advent of the chariot not only changed warfare, it changed man's relationship to the horse. Horses became esteemed for their military value, rather than regarded as a food source.

By 800 BC, mounted cavalries began to join chariots on the battlefield. The Assyrians, who controlled Mesopotamia, Syria, Palestine and Egypt at the height of their power, are credited with the first organized cavalry. Bas-relief Assyrian sculptures from the 9th century B.C. show cavalry soldiers riding bareback and adapting the chariot's two-man team concept. One soldier, armed with a spear, holds the reins of the other soldier, an archer, as he aims his bow. A century later, the Assyrian cavalry began using the first saddle—actually a stirrup-less cloth saddle pad. As improvements in seating and horsemanship gave rise to greater speed and agility, cavalry forces gradually replaced chariots as the primary method of warfare.

PART TWO: THE MOLD PROCESS

MAKING THE WAX MOLD

The sculpture is prepared for the mold-making process by removing appendages to establish the parting line for the mold. Once removed, the parts are then molded separately. RTV (room temperature vulcanizing) rubber is painted on the surface to capture texture and detail.

Painting the RTV rubber.

vignette

The Iberian Horse

The horse reintroduced to the Americas by Columbus and the Spanish Conquistadors who followed him was the Iberian horse, forebear of the modern Andalusian and Lusitano breeds. Long prized as a warhorse, the Iberian horse developed over centuries marked by successive conquests of the Iberian Peninsula by the Celts, Carthaginians, Romans, Visigoths and Muslims. With each invading cavalry, more horses and new bloodlines were introduced to the peninsula. Under Roman rule, stud farms were established to provide horses for Roman cavalries in the empire's northern and western provinces. Several centuries later, the Iberian horse would incorporate characteristics of the Barb horse, introduced from North Africa during the 8th century Muslim conquest.

THE MOTHER MOLD

Waxed paper shims cut and formed from paper cups are taped to pins pushed into the rubber-covered clay. The shims form the mold parting line. Pre-made rubber squares taped to each shim serve to key the two sides of the mold together. These keys have rubber already poured into them which adheres to the succeeding layers of rubber.

Creating the parting line

Rubber painting completed

The sculpture and shims, now brushed with rubber to approximately ¼ inch thick is ready for application of the plaster mother-mold.

Plastering the mother mold

Sections of plaster are applied to create plugs in the low areas. Then a final plaster jacket is applied over the entire surface of the rubber mold to create the mother mold.

vignette

Christopher Columbus And The Horse Return To The Americas

In September 1493, just six months after returning from his first voyage to the Americas, Christopher Columbus embarked on his second voyage. While Columbus' first transatlantic crossing had been a voyage of discovery, modestly equipped with a fleet of three ships, the mission of this second voyage was much grander—to settle the newly discovered "Indies" and establish an empire for Spain in the New World. Commanding a fleet of seventeen ships, Columbus set sail from Cadiz, Spain with more than a thousand passengers and an assortment of livestock: pigs, sheep, goats, 3 mules, and 34 horses. And so, after an absence of 10,000 years, Equus returned to the Americas.

With the plaster now complete, the rubber has secured the surface details and the plaster holds the overall shape. The mold can be opened by separating each plaster section from the other. Then the two halves of the rubber are separated at the parting line and removed from the clay sculpture.

Melted wax was poured into the mother mold cavity, then allowed to cool and solidify to create a hollow wax pattern.

Completed plaster mother mold.

THE COMPLETED WAX PATTERN

The wax pattern

LOST WAX BRONZE CASTING

Dipping the wax in ceramic shell

The wax pattern has been sectioned with sprues and sprue cup attached. The sprues and cup will serve as a channels for entry of the molten bronze.

The liquid ceramic shell compound consists of water-based silica held in suspension by a colloidal fluid.

Creating the ceramic shell mold

vignette

The Mapuche: the first Americas horse culture

The first indigenous peoples in the Americas to adopt the horse for combat were the Mapuche who occupied the southern cone of South America. Living in scattered villages, the Mapuche, which means "people of the land," subsisted on hunting, fishing, and the cultivation of corn, beans, squash, potatoes and other vegetables. Spanish conquistadors and their horses reached what is now Chile in the 1530s. Not long after--more than a century before North American Plains Indians incorporated the horse into their culture--the Mapuche succeeded in acquiring Spanish horses and weapons and adopted the invaders' warfare techniques. Forging alliances between their dispersed settlements, the Mapuche organized a highly sophisticated cavalry and infantry that successfully resisted Spanish conquest for the next 300 years—the only native culture in the Americas to do so.

vignette

Harry Jackson's "Human Skull Study"

This sculpture sat high upon a shelf in my Dad's studio and I always had to look at it, if not pause and stare. I first remember it from around the age of five so there were many magical things in the world, but this stood out. I didn't quite understand what was going on, but I knew it had to do with figuring out how something worked. To this day learning how things work, taking them apart and putting them back together gets me going." – Matt Jackson, 2019.

Note to Gerald. explain why this is meaningful to you.

.

The wet wax pattern is dipped into a bed of silica sand suspended by air pressure to build the stucco mold.

The ceramic shell is built up on the sprued wax patterns through a layered stucco process of alternating dips in slurry and silica sand until an approximate thickness of ¼ inch is achieved.

Once completed and dry, the patterns are placed into a gas-fired furnace. The wax melts out and the particles of silica sand fuse together to create the ceramic shell mold.

The stucco process

Waxes with ceramic shell application in process.

BRONZE CASTING

The crucible removed from the melt furnace

Gerald, this page needs more text. This part of the process needs further explanation.

At left: the preheated ceramic shell molds placed on the rack for pouring.

Above: molten bronze poured into molds at about 2,000F degrees

vignette

The beginnings of the plains horse culture

Unlike the Mapuche of South America, North American indigenous cultures were slow to adopt the horse. Although horses were introduced to the North American continent by Spanish explorations of Florida and the American Southwest in the 16th century, as well as British, Dutch, and French settlements along the Atlantic coast in the early 17th century, they were not appropriated by indigenous cultures. Horses would not have been beneficial for hunting, transportation or warfare in the thick forests inhabited by Eastern woodland tribes. Pueblo villages under the control of the first permanent Spanish settlement in the Southwest at Santa Fe, were forbidden to possess horses.

All that changed with the 1680 Pueblo Revolt. Rising up against decades of occupation, the Pueblos killed hundreds of Spanish settlers and forced the remainder to flee. Left behind were hundreds of horses on the many Spanish colonial rancheros occupying the Rio Grande valley. As settled, agricultural communities, the Pueblos did not have much use for the horse, but rather began trading horses to surrounding nomadic Plains tribes. The Comanche are thought to be the first Plains tribe to adopt the horse for hunting and warfare. By the middle of the 18th century, horses had spread to most other Plains tribes.

REMOVING THE CERAMIC SHELL

Upon cooling the now solid bronze contracts and in doing so, breaks the ceramic shell mold. All shell material is carefully removed first by chipping and then by sand blasting. The cast is then evaluated for technical quality, sprues are cut off, then cleanup and assembly may begin.

Breaking out the ceramic mold

BRONZE ASSEMBLY PROCESS

Bronze assembly requires many hours of clean up utilizing pneumatic grinding tools prior to welding, Many, parts are cast separately, refitted and welded with all welds ground and sanded. Often surface textures must be replicated and restored.

The now assembled bronze is given a light sand blasting to prepare it for patina.

The assembled bronze

vignette

"Buffalo Shield" Medallion

While abstract in its imagery, my "Buffalo Shield" medallion represents endless buffalo tracks; signs on the land that predict prosperity and good times ahead. In the design a complete circle is broken into four quarter circles, each representing one-half of the buffaloes cloven-hoof. Four small squares make become dew claws. This design also appears on the Sentinel's moccasins.

note to Gerald. need Medallion photo

THE PATINA

The coloration on the surface of a bronze sculpture is referred to as the "patina." It exists on the surface of all sculpture both through natural processes and by artificial application. Today we, control the patina by artificially applying chemicals and colorants through the use of cold and hot applications. All patinas are water-based mixtures comprised of specific chemical compounds that have been proven to produce color on the surface of bronze sculpture. In the above photo two chemicals: ferric nitrate and cupric nitrate, were applied with heat through an evaporative process. Caution should be taken in the application of patinas through the use of protective equipment: i.e., breathing apparatus, eye protection and waterproof gloves.

vignette

"Born to Run" bronze

"Born to Run" was created in many different patina colors. Some bronzes were made as gray dapple colorations, others were all-black and some were even made as paint horses — I enjoyed doing all those patinas myself!

THE COMPLETED BRONZE

PART THREE:
THE CATALOG

THE ÉCORCHÉ CATALOG

The following pages contain an assortment of my works in which they hold one thing in common: they were created fully through the use of the écorché sculpting process. Perhaps the earliest work in the group: "Captive Warrior" dates to 1980 when I first employed this method of sculpture. Upon my return from Italy in 1977, my primary modus operandi was to bring methods used during the Italian Renaissance to the American West. Most notably the use of the conté sketch as a preliminary drawing for sculpture and to employ écorché as a method of operation.

"Captive Warrior"

"SENTINEL OF THE PLAINS"

This page : the Bradford Brinton museum ... Note to Gerald: we need a paragraph about this commission and it's process.

Installing "Sentinel of the Plains" at the Brinton Museum

"Great Plains Warrior"

"Spirit of the Dance"

Low rez photo.

"Mountain Crow Warrior"

"Canyon Echoes"

"After the
Crazy Dance"

"WILD TURKEYS IN VIRGINIA"

The bronze "Wild Turkeys" at their new home awaiting individual concrete bases. Ultimately, they were separated and spread around a spacious setting in the fields of an historic Virginia plantation.

photo to come

PAINTED MOCCASINS

The painted moccasins series includes eight bronzes, each a unique composition and a painted to replicate the patterns and designs created on the original historical item.

"Ceremonial Moccasins" painted bronze

"Crow Quill" painted bronze

"All in a Day's Work" bronze

In what has become a symbol of the American West and an enduring icon of culture in the United States, the cowboy has long held the freedom of an independent lifestyle.

"Cloud Pryor Mountain Mustang"

Cloud was the world-famous stallion from the Pryor Mountains in Montana. He was a flashy palomino whose visual markings can be seen in the herd today.

low rez photo

"The Nigh Leader"

The Nigh Leader bronze came along from the Lyme Academy model sessions with Charlie the majestic Belgian draft horse. He was so gentle, but his kinetic energy was always evident as he stood in the classroom.

low rez photo

low rez photo

"The Lady Polo Player"

Polo was a natural draw for me. A spectator sport that involved horses! Many years ago, I began taking in the polo games at the Flyinh H Polo grounds in Sheridan, Wyoming. Somewhat like the horse races in Kentucky, polo holds greater drama; the animals become athletes working in perfect unison with the rider

"Nordic Ski Pony"

The Nordic Ski Pony was a sixty-minute bronze made as a demonstration at the Buffalo Bill Museum of the West.

"THE PURSUIT OF ART IS AN AWESOME TASK"

Gerald Anthony Shippen was born in Lander, Wyoming, February 18, 1955. After a childhood rich with experience from the family cattle ranch on the Wind River Reservation, Shippen traveled to the Tuscany region of northern Italy to study art. Inspired by the master artists of the Italian Renaissance, Shippen embarked on a life-long study of the figure and the creation of iconic sculptures which celebrate the beauty, culture and history of the American West. He earned a Master of Fine Arts in studio art from the University of Wyoming in 1984, and has taught art at Central Wyoming College, Northwest College, and the Lyme Academy of Fine Art in Old Lyme Connecticut. Shippen is a dual citizen of the United States and New Zealand.

My studio is located here.
Photo: NASA/NOAA/GSFC/Suomi NPP/VIIRS/
Norman Kuring