



Ceri Richards

MOTIF 12



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4 BRITISH SCULPTORS

Richmond

Stocker

Sheppard

Hatwell

by MAURICE DE SAUSMAREZ

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A. Richmond. *Sea God*. Cement fondu. 1962. 59 in. high. photo Brompton Studio. B. Stocker. *Hermaphrodite*. Plaster. photo Graham Kirk. C. Sheppard. *The Conjuror*. Bronze. 1963. 36 in. high. Collection: Digswell Arts Trust, Welwyn Garden City. D. Hatwell. *The Tree of Knowledge*. Elm. 1961.

The four sculptors presented here have been chosen not because they share a common aesthetic or way of working but rather because their differing attitudes to sculpture represent certain facets of sculpture today in this country. The only common factor is that they have all, at one time or another, worked as assistants to Henry Moore



Clive Sheppard

14. Clive Sheppard. Northern Ark. Plaster. 60 in. long
photo Donald Smith

Clive Sheppard first studied architecture and building and was engaged in exhibition design until 1949. Coming back from his period of National Service in 1950 to a part-time job at the Natural History Museum, he studied sculpture as a part-time student at St Martin's School of Art principally under Caro and Martin. About 1955, moving to the Abbey Art Centre, he had a studio for the first time and could work independently, at first attempting painted constructions and then small reliefs in metal.

In 1957 a concentrated interest in the theme of heads was the starting point for his first abstract sculpture and this subject continued to be a central interest until the end of 1961. It was approached not with the intention of retaining the integrity of the descriptive reference but of allowing parallel experiences and the working peculiarities of the medium to evoke in their own ways the sense of 'head-form'. For example, among many other interfused experiences, the shattered broken forms seen in car crash photographs, the characteristic vertical/horizontal movements of wooden constructions and the assembling of sheets of wax, paralleled the fascination with heads. Heads became concertinaed, crashed, cradled, split vertically and horizontally. In the latter case a growing concern with the spaces between the units of form



13. Clive Sheppard. Fallen Saint. Bronze. 1962. Collection Mr and Mrs Colin Patterson, London
photo Donald Smith

15. Clive Sheppard. Spar head. Painted wood. 1963. 72 in. wide



16. Opposite page: Clive Sheppard. The rain makers. Bronze. 1962. 24 in. high. Collection: Mr and Mr George Strauss, London. photo Donald Smith
17. Above: Clive Sheppard. After the flood. Bronze. 1962. 14 in. wide. Collection: Mr Harry Abrahams, New York
18. Below: Clive Sheppard. The Gate. Bronze. 1963. 24 in. high



CLIVE SHEPPARD

led on to ideas for a reclining double figure, and a number of sculptures on this theme followed. 'Northern Ark' came out of this development and was also related to an Eskimo carved wooden pipe seen in the Ohly Collection. More recently this same motif has emerged in more abstract terms, and again, through re-working a partially destroyed version of an earlier piece, 'Fallen Saint' resulted. And so this process of formal revision and invention, the infiltration and the interweaving of fresh inspirational stimuli from the most divergent and random experiences presents a creative situation of extreme fluidity and gives the resulting sculpture its multi-referential character. An interest in reproductions of paintings by artists of the past has been added to the sources or departure points for sculpture—Hieronymus Bosch was much in mind during the making of some recent pieces, 'After the Flood' for example. Newspaper and magazine photographs with their fragment-abstractions assembling into identifiable objects of the real world; monotypes in which chance and intention are brought together; free drawings made and re-made over pages of printers' type, the type arrangement influencing the initial marks made; earlier sculpture partially destroyed, the destruction revealing new images and the possibility of new formal invention; all these serve as spring-boards for new departures. It is the interweaving of fragment-signs, of ciphers for strands of experi-

ence, into a form which is charged with a feeling for the world of objective reality and yet is not explicitly descriptive of it.

Sheppard is primarily concerned with the image. 'Surface and material are incidental to the image. I avoid any excessive technical display. The use of *objets trouvés*, natural or man-made, destroys the sense of wholeness and reduces the sculpture to an assemblage of parts. I find wax a convenient material; it cloaks my ideas with substance quickly and directly, eliminating the need for armature or searching in the block. I have always thought of wax as if it were a metal of very low melting point and used it in that way, pouring it out in sheets, cutting and welding it together. Any surface quality is the result of a direct working process.'

'Spar Head', 1963, was the first sculpture of Sheppard's made entirely of wood and all subsequent work has been in this medium.

Clive Sheppard first exhibited in 1960 at the New Vision Centre with an occasional subsequent showing at Gallery One. In 1960 he started work as assistant to Moore and shortly afterwards moved from the Abbey Art Centre to Digswell House. He was represented in the I.C.A. exhibition '26 Young Sculptors' in 1961 and, in 1962, the Bear Lane Gallery, Oxford, held an exhibition of his work. He is represented in the Arts Council Collection.