

Divisions in the world of Sculpture

Rajesh Kumar Sharma

Assistant Professor, Department of sculpture, College of Art, Chandigarh.

This article is about the divisions in Sculpture. Like all forms of art, sculpture also has a brief division in its form this division is based on the outlook the sculpture carries, which is basically how it looks once complete. In this article we will understand the different types of sculptures and understand it fully with the help of some examples. The Article is written by Mr. Rajesh Kumar Sharma, assistant Professor, department of sculpture College of Art, Chandigarh.

TYPES OF SCULPTURE

Sculpture is divided or classified on the basis of their structure, texture, feel and its form. As we just discussed, **sculpture has basically three types:**

1. **Round**
2. **Relief**
3. **Intaglio**

These three have their own characterizations but, none of them is in superior with the other. So now let's discuss about these 3 classifications with their details, characters, features as well as few examples of them, to make us understand it more effectively.

ROUND SCULPTURES

These sculptures are those, which can be viewed from all the four sides and are not attached to a flat background. We can feel the texture of the sculpture and the feelings of several complementary perspectives of the sculptor. Round sculptures are often seen as free-standing sculpture, such as statues like the 'Liberty Enlightening the World', commonly known as the 'Statue of Liberty' and placed near the entrance to the New York City harbor.

This Statue depicting a lady draped by a cloth holding a torch of liberty is one of the most recognizable symbols in the world. It stands as the first glances of the United States, welcoming millions of immigrants and visitors from around the world. The statue is made, by Barthodli in 1880, covering of pure copper, put on a framework of steel, with the exception of the flame of the torch, which is coated in gold leaf. It stands over a rectangular stonework pedestal with a foundation in the shape of an irregular eleven-pointed star. And with the pedestal and foundation, the statue stands 305 ft. (93 m) tall. She is basically taken as the cultural symbol as well as the symbol of American liberty, and freedom.

Considering, another magnificent example, we would discuss about the Asoka pillar in Sarnath, the place of Buddha's first sermon, is one of the major attractions in the world art history. Though, the pillar is not located in its original location as it is broken, and now the Lion capital is being displayed at the Archeological museum at Sarnath. It was 15.25 m high, fully polished in Chunar sandstone. The Pillar has 0.71 m diameter at the base and 0.56 at the top, over which the Lion Capital was erected by the Mauryan Emperor Ashoka (272 - 232 BC). The pillar depicts four lions on the top, standing back to back over a wheel standing on the lotus, the Ashoka Chakra, on the platform beneath the lions. Below this are representations of a lion, an elephant, a horse and a bull. The pillar bears three inscriptions in Brahmi script. The four lions symbolize power, courage, confidence and pride, while the images of lion, elephant, horse and bull symbolise four different phases of the life of Gautama Buddha. This Lion Capital of Ashoka from Sarnath has been adopted as the National Emblem of India and the wheel "Ashoka Chakra" from its base was placed onto the center of the National Flag of India. This is one of the most important examples in India.

Round sculptures are also used as a decorative piece for indoor display. Round sculptures are made from almost all mediums and materials. To take a few examples we can say the sculpture of the chola period, Nataraj, which we discussed in the first episode, is the sculpture which is made by lost wax process it is technically strong and aesthetically beautiful. This sculpture shows us Shiva's existence and the cosmic dance. This remarkable sculpture is made in bronze and serves as

an example of a well-balanced composition in terms of space, its rhythm, mass and contours. We can see it and feel its perspectives from all the four sides thus call it a pure form of a round sculpture.

Yet another example, which we cannot effort to omit, is the world famous masterpiece 'David' sculpted by artist Michelangelo, in 1501. The 25-year-old Michelangelo worked continuous for two years to turn the marble block into, the 17-foot-tall marble, in to the iconic image that we know and admire today. His David is considered an ideal nude male form combining biblical heroic strength and human uncertainty. Michelangelo depicted the moment before the young shepherd begins his battle with the giant Goliath thus he is shown strong-willed and ready to fight. David was a symbol representing, strength and anger. He is shown tensed, but not so much in a physical as in a mental sense. Michelangelo was careful to temper the athletic warrior with spiritual attributes fitting a young biblical hero. Michelangelo endows the figure with the knotted muscles of an athlete, a massive rib cage, and a confident stance, he carries the stone loosely in his right hand and the sling lies over his left shoulder, David expresses in his the superiority of inner strength over brute force. This sculpture was made to symbolize the new republic of Florence in its activeness, strength. The sculpture is full of action, heroism and potential.

RELIEF SCULPTURES

Relief sculptures are those sculptures in which, we carve out the negative area from the surface, particularly to shape the needed forms, raising the sculpture, partly attached to a background surface. These types of sculpture possess almost two-dimensional form, which we can just see and feel from the front. **Relief is the usual sculptural medium for large figure groups and narrative subjects, which are difficult to accomplish in the round.** And this typical technique has been used both for architectural sculpture, which is attached to temples and buildings, or for decorating other objects, as in pottery, metalwork and jewelry.

In certain characteristics, relief approaches so nearly to painting that it may be called the transitional art between painting and sculpture, calling it as pictorial sculpture. It prefers to represent several figures side by side, as for example, in the case of war scenes, festival or marriage processions, men and women working at home or in fields or the animals or fauna-flora motives. **Relief is often classified by the three degree of projection from the wall into low or bas-relief, high relief, and intaglio or Sunk-relief.**

In low projection of the relief, the modeling is done with no or slight undercuts. The modeling may reach not more than the height of approximately half of the thickness of a head or body. Now, let's come to the 2nd type of relief, the high or full relief, which is the highest type of relief. **High Relief is also called 'grand-relief', in which the projection of the figures appears entirely in the round, but at the base they are still attached to the plain base. They usually project approximately 3/4th of the head or the body thickness. In this type of relief the arms or heads are sometimes be entirely free from the base surface.**

To understand with some examples, let's view few relief sculptures from parts of India, especially in the temple art. The very first examples of relief sculptures could be the monkey jataka stupa of the bhārhut caves. Then we may observe many sculptures like 'Ravana shaking mout kailasha', or Ramayan or Mahabhart scenes from Ellora, or 'Trimurti' from Elephanta- caves, many examples from khajurao say the ganesha, shiva, or various deities and the sculptures on the walls. To relate to the relief sculptures more lets now take up few examples and explain it briefly.

RAVANA SHAKING MOUNT KAILASH

The scene depicting the demon king of Lanka 'Ravana shaking the kailash' is the most impressive sculpture in kailash nath temple, Ellora, situated in Maharashtra, dated around 8th century AD. This sculpture, contain the scenes of semi-mythological history that narrates that after several wars and conquests, Ravana became very strong and arrogant. Thus in the verge of his proud and anger he tried to shake and overturn the mount kailash with his ten heads, and hands. This scene particularly depicts this story, where Shiva and Parvati are depicted seated on Mount Kailash in the upper portion of the portrayal, while Ravana, lifting the mount is portrayed in the lower register.

Goddess Parvati and her entourage are shown frightened and perplexed clutching lord Shiva's hand. However, lord Shiva realized that Ravana was behind the menace and pressed the mountain into place with his big toe, trapping Ravana beneath, he is shown with expression of calm and compositeness on his face. later in the story, 'Ravana' apologised for his dreadful act. And seeing humbled Ravana, Shiva released him. After this experience, Ravana became a great devotee of Shiva. This sculpture is made in volcanic stone, carved in high relief style and one can almost see ¾ of the figure carving out of the

background. This sculpture has beautifully captured the intense moment with drama, energy and passion and is well situated in the northern side of the temple.

Let's now talk about the sculpted image of Gautama Buddha, of Mathura, 5th century AD who is known to be, the charity king and the great messenger of peace. The personified image is commonly characterized through half open meditative eyes, ever listening elongated ears and with a calm responding smile. His right hand is shown raised as if to bless the eternal peace and prosperity. While the harmonious encircling line of aura behind his forehead, continuing again with the drapery folds of his long robe, seems to deliver the vibrations, enlightening his great spirituality. Though the interpretation of "Buddha" has emerged in many more spectrums from 18th century to the most contemporary but the appeal lays the same and that is to spread mental peace. This sculpture is made in sandstone, in the Gupta period where, this sculpture became an icon during the period and was created in many other sizes for Buddhist places of worship.

SUNK-RELIEF/ INTAGLIO SCULPTURES

Intaglio is that techniques in art in which an image is created by cutting, carving or engraving into a flat surface. Intaglio carving is, in fact, the reverse of high and low reliefs. Instead of the figures rising from the background, intaglio figures are carved into the background. **In intaglio, design cut into stone or other material or etched or engraved in a metal plate, producing a concave, instead of a convex, effect — where an image is fully modeled in a "negative" manner.** For example the carving on the lino- sheet for the process of print making or etching, where the images are cut with in the surface. To take a very appropriate example we can say on the Muslim architectures or the mosques, the calligraphy on the walls, or the flora and fauna made.

Quite similar is the technique of sunken relief, where the sculpture carved with the outlining of the image, usually linear in nature leaving the background higher than the picture. In Egyptian sculpture, including hieroglyphs, sunken relief is highly seen. This technique is most successful with strong sunlight to emphasize the outlines and forms by shadow around. The Egyptians often used the practice to paint their carving.