HOW DID THE WORKS of ancient and Renaissance sculptors—monumental objects of bronze and stone located primarily in Italy—come to be known to artists and art lovers throughout Europe?
BEFORE THE RISE OF PHOTOGRAPHY in the nineteenth century, prints played a major role in celebrating these sculptures and establishing their reputations.

RELATIVELY AFFORDABLE AND VERY PORTABLE, printed images could be produced in multiples, allowing individuals in England and the Netherlands, for example, to get a glimpse of a statue housed on the other side of the continent.

Printed Sculpture/Sculpted Prints examines the reasons printmakers chose to depict sculpture, the challenges this task presented, and the different ways that artists responded. Three key and sometimes overlapping themes run throughout the exhibition, leading to multiple and varied connections among the works on view. These include:

REPRODUCTION: Transmission of an idea

SOME PRINTS WERE MADE primarily to transmit the appearance of a sculpture, including ancient statues that few people had the opportunity to visit. The famous marble Farnese Hercules, for example, was in a private palace in Rome and was accessible only to a select audience. Through reproductive prints, this statue became an iconic work, known and imitated throughout Europe.

REINTERPRETATION: Invention in paper and line

PRINTMAKERS OFTEN USED SCULPTURE as a point of creative departure, depicting their source of inspiration in new and unexpected ways. These innovations included placing a familiar work in an imaginary setting, combining aspects of several famous statues into one composite figure, or developing a style that is itself sculptural, suggesting volume and weight through the interplay of line.

RIVALRY: Dialogue among media

RIVALRY WAS A FAMILIAR THEME in Renaissance culture. It originated with the concept of the paragone, or comparison, in which painting and the written word vied for expressive power. But the idea also carried over into the visual arts more generally, whereby artists working in different media strove to match or better each other’s accomplishments. The representation of sculpture in linear, two-dimensional form posed challenges that printmakers tackled with ingenuity and invention.
INSPIRED BY
THE LAOCOÖN

SPANNING THE EXHIBITION'S CHRONOLOGY from the mid-sixteenth through the early nineteenth century, these works represent two distinct print techniques and demonstrate radically different interpretative approaches.

Both depict the Laocoon, an ancient work in marble that portrays the horrific punishment of the Trojan priest Laocoon and his sons. The marble Laocoon was discovered in Rome in 1506, and immediately became one of the best known sculptures in Europe. Reproductive prints helped spread its fame.

Charles-Clement Bervic's engraving, in the reproductive tradition, transcribes the Laocoon with great precision and maintains its proper orientation. Niccolò Boldrini, in contrast, allowed the printing process to reverse the sculpture, and drew on the expressive power of the woodcut to create a very personal interpretation of it. His startling substitution of monkeys for human figures may be a play on the popular notion of "art as the ape of nature."

> Charles-Clement Bervic, after the antique. Laocoon. 1809, printed later. Engraving. Garrett Collection (no. 8).

AFTER MICHELANGELO

Both of these prints reproduce works by Michelangelo, but to very different ends. Agostino Carracci's engraving of the famous Pietà transforms a monumental work into one suitable for the cabinet of a private collector. Although its subject is devotional, the individuals who purchased this print probably valued it above all as a chance to study—and even to own—the artistic invention of Michelangelo.


Cherubino Alberti uses an imaginative setting to bring Michelangelo's Deposition to life. Located between the place of Christ's crucifixion (on a hill in the distance) and his burial (in a cave to the right), the sculpture is part of an unfolding sequence of narrative events. At the same time, Alberti does not let us forget that his model was carved from marble. We see the stone base on which the figures rest and sense their physical weight, as Christ is carefully lowered to the ground.

Cherubino Alberti, after Michelangelo. The Virgin, a Holy Woman, and Joseph of Arimathæa with the Body of Christ (Deposition), c. 1575-1600. Engraving. Garrett Collection (no. 1).
ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL CHALLENGES PRINTMAKERS FACED in representing sculpture was capturing the effects of viewing “in the round,” or from multiple angles. Giambologna’s Rape of a Sabine Woman, which depicts a Roman tale of abduction, was particularly famous for its swirling, serpentine composition. Andrea Andreani used multiple prints (at right are two from a series of three) to suggest the experience of moving around Giambologna’s work and viewing it from different vantage points.

Andreani’s mastery of the chiaroscuro woodcut allowed him to convey both the solidity and the texture of marble. The chiaroscuro technique involves layering patches of variously colored inks and permits a range of tones, from deep shadows to bright highlights. Together, these help suggest the volume of Giambologna’s sculpted form, as well as the reflective sheen of its polished surface.

» Andrea Andreani, after Giambologna. Rape of a Sabine Woman, 1584. Two chiaroscuro woodcuts. Garrett Collection (no. 2-3).

IN THIS DEPICTION OF THE FARNESE HERCULES, Giuseppe Vasi challenges the medium of sculpture by flaunting the rich representational possibilities of printmaking. Whereas an individual standing before the statue can take in only one perspective at a time, a viewer of Vasi’s print encounters the front and back of the work simultaneously. Indeed, the rear view was considered as interesting as the frontal view, and was frequently reproduced in print. This perspective also adds a narrative dimension, allowing us to see that, behind his back, Hercules holds the Apples of Immortality, which he had stolen from the Garden of the Hesperides.

» Giuseppe Vasi, after the antique. Two Views of the Farnese Hercules, 1773. Etching and engraving. Garrett Collection (no. 2-3).
HENDRICK GOLTZIUS WAS REMARKABLY ADEPT at creating an illusion of volume in the two-dimensional medium of engraving. In this print, the contorted pose of Tantalus—who was thrown into the underworld for various crimes against the gods—recalls contemporary sculptures that favored a twisting, serpentine form. Goltzius used the unusual, circular shape of this print to contain Tantalus’s outspread body, further emphasizing its mass and the power of his fall.

Although there is no direct model for this figure, Hendrick Goltzius was clearly inspired by sculptural forms. He traveled to Rome to study its monuments, and he also knew the exaggerated, Mannerist works of contemporary sculptors in his native Netherlands. The Latin inscription below Hercules’s right foot tells us that Goltzius not only invented this image (“Invent.”), but engraved it as well. The term “Sculpt.” is a variant abbreviation of sculptavit, meaning “incised it,” and refers here to the work of cutting into a copper plate with a burin, the engraver’s favorite tool. Goltzius surely appreciated the technical similarities that associated engraving with sculpting.

Although there is no direct model for this figure, Hendrick Goltzius was clearly inspired by sculptural forms. He traveled to Rome to study its monuments, and he also knew the exaggerated, Mannerist works of contemporary sculptors in his native Netherlands. The Latin inscription below Hercules’s right foot tells us that Goltzius not only invented this image (“Invent.”), but engraved it as well. The term “Sculpt.” is a variant abbreviation of sculptavit, meaning “incised it,” and refers here to the work of cutting into a copper plate with a burin, the engraver’s favorite tool. Goltzius surely appreciated the technical similarities that associated engraving with sculpting.

Although there is no direct model for this figure, Hendrick Goltzius was clearly inspired by sculptural forms. He traveled to Rome to study its monuments, and he also knew the exaggerated, Mannerist works of contemporary sculptors in his native Netherlands. The Latin inscription below Hercules’s right foot tells us that Goltzius not only invented this image (“Invent.”), but engraved it as well. The term “Sculpt.” is a variant abbreviation of sculptavit, meaning “incised it,” and refers here to the work of cutting into a copper plate with a burin, the engraver’s favorite tool. Goltzius surely appreciated the technical similarities that associated engraving with sculpting.
BRINGING STONE TO LIFE

CLAUSE MELLAN’S ENGRAVING was part of the Galleria Giustiniani, a catalogue that was one of the first attempts to illustrate an entire collection in print. The collection, which belonged to the Giustiniani family in Rome, was more famous for its size than its quality. Mellan brings this rather anonymous sculpted figure to life, however, by giving her a bright, firmly focused gaze.

PIGMALION

*Claude Mellan. Statue of a Standing Woman, c. 1631-1636. Engraving. Garrett Collection (no. 21)*.

THESE FIGURES, CALLED HERMS, are classically inspired architectural elements characterized by a plain shaft topped with a head, bust, or torso. Seemingly half human (or, in this case, Hercules) and half stone, they played with the dialogue between art and life popular in the Renaissance. Agostino Veneziano underscores this theme by giving the figures startlingly life-like eyes, as if to show that print can outdo sculpture in the game of imitation.

*Agostino Veneziano. Herms, 1536. Engraving. Garrett Collection (no. 24).*

EMMANUEL DE GHENDT used a series of prints to tell the story of Galatea’s mythical transformation from a finely crafted sculpture to a graceful living woman. Utilizing changes in viewpoint and pose—for example, the shifting placement of the statue’s arms—de Ghendt allows the viewer to experience Galatea’s metamorphosis and share in the astonishment of her creator, Pygmalion. The printed series allowed artists to present stories unfolding over time, something more difficult to achieve in a single, sculpted work.

*Emmanuel de Ghendt. The Story of Pygmalion and Galatea, 1776. Three etchings with engraving. Garrett Collection (nos. 12-14).*
ABOUT THIS EXHIBITION

IN THE SPRING OF 2007, ten undergraduate students at The Johns Hopkins University and their instructor, Elizabeth Rodini, met every Monday afternoon in the Department of Prints, Drawings, and Photographs at The Baltimore Museum of Art. Studying the BMA’s extensive collection of Renaissance and Baroque prints and working with the Museum’s staff, the class spent the semester planning, research­ ing, and designing this exhibition. Divided into three teams, they wrote label and brochure text, authored promotional materials, and developed supplementary programs. This exhibition, as well as its accompanying materials and events, are the results of their work.

ABOUT THE PROGRAM IN MUSEUMS AND SOCIETY

THE PROGRAM IN MUSEUMS AND SOCIETY is concerned with the institutions that shape knowledge and understanding through the collection, preservation, interpretation, and/or presentation of objects, artifacts, materials, monuments, and historic sites. Through classroom teaching, research, and real encounters with museums, the Program promotes the study of material culture and its place in a wide range of scholarly disciplines. In addition to curricular and scholarly activities within the University, the Program promotes meaningful connections with local and regional museums. For more information on the Program in Museums and Society, visit http://web.jhu.edu/museums/index.html.

ABOUT THE BALTIMORE MUSEUM OF ART

THE BALTIMORE MUSEUM OF ART is home to an internationally renowned collection of 19th-century, modern, and contemporary art. Founded in 1934, the BMA today has 95,000 works of art—including the largest holding of works by Matisse in the world, outstanding European and American fine and decorative arts, 15th- through 19th-century prints and drawings, contemporary art by established and emerging artists, and objects from Africa, Asia, the Ancient Americas, and Pacific Islands.

A major cultural destination, the BMA welcomes 250,000 visitors annually with an exciting program of dynamic exhibitions, lively lectures and performances, and imaginative activities for families. The Museum frequently collaborates with other cultural and educational institutions, acting as a cultural catalyst for the community. Thanks to extraordinary government and private support, general admission to the BMA is free for everyone, every day.

EXHIBITION CHECKLIST

All works are in the collection of The Baltimore Museum of Art. Works by unknown artists appear at the end of the list in chronological order. Measurements provided for prints are sheet dimensions; in all cases, height precedes width.

1. Cherubino Alberti, Italian, 1555-1617. The Virgin, a Holy Woman, and Joseph of Arimathea with the Body of Christ (Deposition, or "Florentine Pieta"). c. 1575-1600. Engraving, after a sculpture by Michelangelo Buonarroti (Italian, 1475-1564). 449 x 304 mm. Garrett Collection, BMA 1946.112.10658

2. Andre Andreae, Italian, 1575-1593. Rays of a Sabine Woman. 1584. Two chiaroscuro woodcuts, after a sculpture by Giambologna (Giovanni da Bologna) (Flemish, active in Italy, 1529-1608). 345 x 205 mm, 469 x 203 mm. Garrett Collection, BMA 1946.112.8590-8591


4. Nicholas Burtinnet, French, active in Italy, 1723-1765 or earlier. Ecstatic Interior of Marcus Aurelius, 1747-1841. From the Program promotes meaningful connections with local and regional cultural and educational institutions, acting as a cultural catalyst for the community.

ABOUT THE BALTIMORE MUSEUM OF ART

THE BALTIMORE MUSEUM OF ART is home to an internationally renowned collection of 19th-century, modern, and contemporary art. Founded in 1934, the BMA today has 95,000 works of art—including the largest holding of works by Matisse in the world, outstanding European and American fine and decorative arts, 15th- through 19th-century prints and drawings, contemporary art by established and emerging artists, and objects from Africa, Asia, the Ancient Americas, and Pacific Islands. A major cultural destination, the BMA welcomes 250,000 visitors annually with an exciting program of dynamic exhibitions, lively lectures and performances, and imaginative activities for families. The Museum frequently collaborates with other cultural and educational institutions, acting as a cultural catalyst for the community. Thanks to extraordinary government and private support, general admission to the BMA is free for everyone, every day.

PIERRE-CHARLES BAQUOY’S IMAGE reveals the important role of sculpture in a printmaker’s shop. In this detail, a young apprentice studies the bust of a male figure, preparing to translate its volumetric form onto paper. Scattered throughout the studio are other models and casts, including a reproduction of the Forum’s Hercules, which inspired countless variations and copies.


ABOUT THE PROGRAM IN MUSEUMS AND SOCIETY

THE PROGRAM IN MUSEUMS AND SOCIETY is concerned with the institutions that shape knowledge and understanding through the collection, preservation, interpretation, and/or presentation of objects, artifacts, materials, monuments, and historic sites. Through classroom teaching, research, and real encounters with museums, the Program promotes the study of material culture and its place in a wide range of scholarly disciplines. In addition to curricular and scholarly activities within the University, the Program promotes meaningful connections with local and regional museums. For more information on the Program in Museums and Society, visit http://web.jhu.edu/museums/index.html.