

GESTURE & POSTURE

"We cannot assume because there are similarities in forms of sculptures from different cultures that they are being made for the same reasons. Whenever I am looking at a piece of art, I realize I am involved with three histories: the object's history, the history of my time, and my personal history."

There is a long history of representations of the body that use gestures and postures to make symbolic and/or emotional meaning. I think it is impossible to totally understand how a sculpture functions outside of its time or culture. But I'm looking for things that are resonant and useful for me as an object maker."



1. Thailand, Sukhothai period
Seated Buddha in Maravijaya
Late 15th-early 16th century
Bronze
31 x 22.5 x 9.5 inches (79 x 57 x 24 cm)
Gift in memory of Cameron Horner Smyser, 1998.190



2. Rona Pondick
Dog
1998-2001
Yellow stainless steel
5/6, edition of 6 + 1 AP
28 x 16.5 x 32 inches (71.1 x 41.9 x 81.3 cm)



3. Mexico (Remojadas)
Seated Male Figure
900-1200
Ceramic
31 x 14.5 x 17.5 inches (78.7 x 36.8 x 44.5 cm)
Gift of Charles B. Cohn in memory of Stuart P. Anderson, 1980.13



4. Egyptian, Middle Kingdom
Statuette of Hapidejai
2060-1780 B.C.E.
Limestone
20.6 x 8.8 x 12 inches (52.4 x 22.2 x 30.5 cm)
Museum purchase, 1938.9



5. Greek (Canosa, Southern Italy)
Orante Figure
Late 4th-3rd century B.C.E.
Terra cotta
36.3 x 12.3 x 8.4 inches (92.6 x 31.6 x 22 cm)
Museum purchase, 1927.45



6. Italian (Florence)
Male Figure
16th century
Terra-cotta relief
13.5 x 5.6 x 2.3 inches (34.3 x 14.3 cm)
Museum purchase, 1924.16



7. Rona Pondick
Pine Marten
2000-01
Stainless steel
AP, edition of 6 + 1 AP
9 x 18.9 x 6.8 inches (22.9 x 47.9 x 17.1 cm)



8. Etruscan
Cinerary Urn
160-140 B.C.E.
Terra cotta
44.3 x 35.2 x 20.8 inches (112.4 x 89.3 x 52.7 cm)
Museum purchase, 1926.19



9. Rona Pondick
Cougar
1998-99
Stainless steel
4/6, edition of 6 + 1 AP
8 x 17.5 x 43 inches (20.3 x 44.5 x 109.2 cm)



10. Greek (Boeotia)
Female Goddess with a Birdlike Face
600-550 B.C.E.
Painted terra cotta
5.2 x 2.3 x 1.3 inches (13.1 x 5.7 x 3.1 cm)
Gift of Alexander Bullock, Worcester, 1946.38



11. New Guinea (Ramu River Valley)
Male Ancestor Figure
Late 19th-early 20th century
Wood with pigments
48.8 x 8.3 x 5.9 inches (123.8 x 22.5 x 15 cm)
The Helen Slosberg Collection of Oceanic Art
in memory of her brother Israel Sagoff, 2004.188



12. Rona Pondick
Otter
2002-05
Stainless steel
AP, edition of 3 + 1 AP
30.5 x 6.8 x 23.8 inches (77.5 x 17.2 x 60.3 cm)



13. Mexico (Remojadas)
Woman in a Turtle Shell
Ca. 850-1200
Ceramic with traces of pigment
28 x 17.8 x 12.2 inches (71.1 x 45.1 x 30.8 cm)
Eliza S. Paine Fund, 1964.8



14. Mexico (Teotihuacán)
Figurine
300 B.C.E.-700 C.E.
Ceramic
2 x 1.3 x 5.5 inches (5.3 x 3.5 x 1.7 cm)
Bequest of Charles B. Cohn in memory of Stuart P. Anderson, 1985.45



15. Mesopotamian (Sumer)
Statuette of a Man
3000-2500 B.C.E.
Limestone and shell
13.8 x 4.8 x 4.8 inches (33.5 x 12 x 12 cm)
Museum purchase, 1937.91



16. Rona Pondick
Muskat
2002-05
Stainless steel
AP, edition of 3 + 1 AP
10 x 12.5 x 4.6 inches (25.4 x 31.8 x 11.7 cm)



17. Greek (Cyclades Islands)
Female Votive Figure
Ca. 2400 B.C.E.
Marble
5.8 x 2.3 x 7.5 inches (14.5 x 5.6 x 2 cm)
Museum purchase, 1956.1



18. South Indian
Hanuman
18th century
Bronze
4.8 x 1.8 x 1.3 inches (12.4 x 4.4 x 3.3 cm)
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Alfred Yankauer, 1985.332



19. Mexico (Nayarit)
Figurine with Four Legs
300 B.C.E.-400 C.E.
Ceramic
5 x 2.5 x 1.8 inches (12.4 x 6.2 x 4.7 cm)
Bequest of Charles B. Cohn in memory of P. Anderson, 1985.74

REPRESENTATIONS OF HAIR

"I wanted to scan hair using computer technology. I was told it wasn't technically possible, so I started looking at how sculptors represented hair in the past. I became fascinated by the ways artists made hair feel like hair and I was very interested in the ways it can suggest deep meanings that range from the social, ritualistic, symbolic, and fetishistic to the emotional."



20. Roman (?)
Portrait of a Ruler (Possibly Diocletian)
284-315
Black basalt
8 x 6.4 x 16.9 inches (20.3 x 16.3 x 16.7 cm)
Alexander Bullock Fund, 1974.297



21. Chinese (Henan Province), Northern Qi Dynasty
Head of a Buddha
550-577
Limestone
17.5 x 10.5 x 13.3 inches (44.5 x 27 x 34 cm)
Museum purchase, 1914.24



22. Angolan
Mask (Mwana Pwo)
Early 20th century
Wood and hemp
26 x 10 x 7 inches (66 x 25.4 x 17.7 cm)
Private collection



23. Rona Pondick
Monkey with Hair
2002-03
Stainless steel and modacrylic hair
Unique
14.5 x 4.4 x 32 inches (36.8 x 11.8 x 81.3 cm)



24. Egyptian, 18th Dynasty
Ay, Fan Bearer
Ca. 1360 B.C.E.
Plaster on limestone with polychrome
13.6 x 8.9 x 2.1 inches (34.5 x 22.3 x 5.3 cm)
Austin S. and Sarah C. Garver Fund, 1949.42



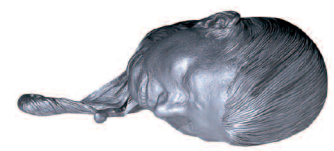
25. Rona Pondick
Monkey with Hair
2002-03
Stainless steel and modacrylic hair
Unique
14 x 41 x 32 inches (35.6 x 104.1 x 81.3 cm)



26. Southern French (?)
Head of an Apostle or Saint
First half of 14th century
Limestone with polychrome and traces of gilding
9.75 x 6.75 x 6.5 inches (24.6 x 17.2 x 16.5 cm)
Austin S. and Sarah C. Garver Fund, 1949.36



27. Roman
Portrait of a Lady (Possibly a Daughter of Marcus Aurelius)
160-180
Bronze
21.3 x 18.5 x 13.4 inches (54 x 46.9 x 34 cm)
Sarah C. Garver Fund, 1966.67



28. Rona Pondick
Mouse
2002-06
Stainless steel
2/3, edition of 3 + 1 AP
6.5 x 9.5 x 17 inches (16.5 x 24.1 x 43.1 cm)



29. Roman
Goddess
1st century B.C.E.
Marble
14.8 x 6.8 x 7.5 inches (37.5 x 17.3 x 19.2 cm)
Museum purchase, 1914.57



30. Chinese, Yuan Dynasty
Head of Guanyin
1260-1368
Wood, polychrome, and gold leaf
47.9 x 21.8 x 24.9 inches (121.6 x 55.2 x 63.2 cm)
Museum purchase, 1932.15



31. Greek (Cyprus)
Colossal Female Head
Ca. 510-480 B.C.E.
Limestone
20 x 13.8 x 16.3 inches (50.8 x 34.9 x 41.2 cm)
Museum purchase, 1941.49



32. Auguste Rodin (French, 1840-1917)
Head of Sorrow
1882
Bronze with black patina
9 x 8.8 x 10.8 inches (22.9 x 22.2 x 27.3 cm)
Museum purchase, 1923.21



33. Roman Egypt
Portrait Mask of a Young Man
1882
Plaster with traces of polychrome
9.8 x 7.1 x 5.8 inches (24.7 x 18 x 14.3 cm)
Austin S. Garver Fund, 1970.53



34. Rona Pondick
Fox
1998-99
Stainless steel
AP, edition of 6 + 1 AP
14.5 x 8 x 38 inches (36.8 x 20.3 x 96.5 cm)

REPETITION OF IMAGERY

"Repetition shows up constantly in art and nature. When I look at the Kannon figure, the dwarfed heads in the crown remind me of the earrings in my Ram's Head. I try to understand the repetition in the underlying structure of trees so that I can make something unnatural that mimics nature. I see that trees' branches grow in spiraling patterns and I use that in my work. Repetition is implicit in every structure, natural or manmade."



35. Roman
Double Head-shaped Bottle: One Serious Face, One Smiling Face
Ca. 75-125
Glass
3 x 1.5 x 1.5 inches (7.6 x 3.7 x 3.7 cm)
Museum purchase, 1905.9



36. Rona Pondick
Ram's Head
2000-01
Yellow-blue stainless steel
5/6, edition of 6 + 1 AP
8 x 24 x 10.5 inches (20.3 x 60.9 x 26.7 cm)



37. Japanese, Heian Period
Juichimen Kannon (Eleven-headed Kannon)
Early 10th century
Wood with traces of polychrome
67 x 19.3 x 15.6 inches (170.4 x 50.1 x 39.7 cm)
Eliza S. Paine Fund, 1959.72



38. Rona Pondick
Worry Beads
1999-2001
Bronze
4/6, edition of 6 + 1 AP
1.5 x 2 x 24 inches (3.8 x 5.1 x 61 cm)



39. Rona Pondick
Gille
2006-07
Painted bronze
Unique
28 x 30 x 34 inches (71.1 x 76.2 x 86.4 cm)
Collection of Anna and Martin Rabinowitz



40. South Indian
Kartikya
17th century
Granite
39 x 25 x 8.5 inches (98.7 x 63.5 x 21.6 cm)
Museum purchase, 1923.22



41. German
Tree of Jesse
1400-1625
Oak
19 x 5.2 x 2.25 inches (48.2 x 13.4 x 5.7 cm)
Museum purchase, 1922.191



42. Rona Pondick
Pyraantha
2005-06
Stainless steel and rocks
Unique
39.8 x 36 x 22 inches (101 x 91.4 x 55.9 cm)

PONDICK AND TECHNOLOGY

"I do whatever is necessary to make my work. If it means learning a new technology or using a technology from the past, I will do that. I do not use a specific technology for its own sake and I don't care whether it is ancient or cutting-edge. I think of technology as a tool, like a hammer or saw, and nothing more."



43. Life cast of head with hair; life cast of head used for computer scanning (hair and neck removed by hand); heads scanned and reduced by 3-D computer technology. All in urethane



44. Life cast of hand in urethane



45. Computer-generated hand in thermoplastic



46. Master for cast of **Cat**. Head and hand in urethane; animal body in modeling epoxy



47. Rona Pondick
Cat
2002-05
Stainless steel
AP, edition of 3 + 1 AP
4.5 x 33 x 14.1 inches (11.4 x 83.8 x 35.9 cm)

APRIL 18 – OCTOBER 11, 2009

The Metamorphosis of an Object

RONA
PONDICK

“I WANT TO LOOK AT HOW SCULPTURE IS PHYSICAL AND HOW THE PHYSICAL MAKES PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT. WHEN THESE DIFFERENT HISTORIC SCULPTURES AND MINE ARE INSTALLED NEXT TO ONE ANOTHER, THERE IS A VISUAL COMMUNICATION SPOKEN IN ‘BODY LANGUAGE’ THAT NEEDS LITTLE EXPLANATION. THE SCULPTURES START LOSING THEIR HISTORICAL PLACE AND TAKE ON MORE PHYSICAL, EMOTIONAL, AND VISCERAL RELATIONS WITH THE VIEWER.”

RONA PONDICK

Since achieving international prominence in the early 1990s, Rona Pondick has become one of the most accomplished sculptors of her generation. Over the past decade, she has combined both ancient sculptural methods (carving, modeling, and casting) and the latest 3-D computer technologies to produce a powerful group of hybrid sculptures that fuse human and animal or human and flora forms. Her sculptures are cast in stainless steel or bronze, their human parts originating from life casts of Pondick’s body. She sculpts the animal bodies in an epoxy by hand; for tree forms, she combines parts of real trunks and branches with hand-modeled elements. Pondick’s sculptures are not illusionistic or lifelike so much as they are believable fictions, which help us recognize the ways sculptors from all periods and cultures, using the tools available, constantly navigate between representation and invention.

Unlike other considerations of her sculpture, this exhibition presents Pondick’s art as the lens for looking at centuries of world sculpture from the Museum’s collection that she feels resonate with her own creative process. Juxtaposing her hybrids with a personal selection of historic sculptures illustrates their connections to the past and relations to art’s originating impulses. Pondick has “unlocked” her art and the Museum’s, if only temporarily, from the strictly historical confines in which they are usually placed, creating an alternative way of understanding sculpture. At the heart of this project is Pondick’s captivation with the idea of “metamorphosis,” not only the transformations between animal or tree and human forms but also changes in scale, material, surface, and meaning. Pondick’s groupings focus on her particular interest in three aspects of sculpture—the communicative capacity of gesture and posture, the treatment of hair, and the effects of repetition.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Rona Pondick was born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1952. After studying at Queens College, she received a Masters of Fine Arts degree at Yale University School of Art in 1977. Pondick gained public recognition in the mid-1980s, and since that time her sculpture and site-specific installations have been shown in important individual and group exhibitions throughout the world. Her work is included in major museum and private collections internationally. Pondick is represented by Sonnabend Gallery, New York and Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Paris/Salzburg and exhibits regularly at Howard Yezerski Gallery, Boston.

ARTIST TALK: RONA PONDICK

September 23, 6:30pm
Free with Museum admission but space is limited.
Reserve by calling 508-793-4333 or 508-793-4334

Calaogue available.

The exhibition is organized by Susan L. Stoops, Curator of Contemporary Art.

This exhibition is supported by the Don and Mary Melville Contemporary Art Fund, the Barbara Lee Family Foundation Fund at The Boston Foundation, and the Art Mentor Foundation Lucerne. Additional generous support is provided by Worcester Magazine.

Front: (left) Rona Pondick, *Dog*, 1998-2001, yellow stainless steel. Courtesy of Sonnabend Gallery, New York, and Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Paris/Salzburg. (right) Thailand, *Seated Buddha in Manaviya*, late 15th-early 16th century, bronze. Gift in memory of Cameron Horner Smyser, 1998.190

“I HAVE ALWAYS LOOKED BACK. ART IS MY HISTORY AND IT FEEDS ME.”

RONA PONDICK

