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Berend van der Struik, the sculptor who has transformed the foyer of the Union Hall, wrote this article especially for "On Dit." Mr. van der Struik began studying under the Dutch painter, Kees Bol. After continuing as a student at the School of Arts and Crafts at Eindhoven, where he worked at sculpture and basic design, he went to Paris and entered the Academie de la Grande Chaurriere under Ossip Zadkine and Auricoste.

After Paris, he made a study tour through Europe. Before coming to Australia in 1957, he worked in Holland for the Dutch Government and for private individuals. He undertook many portraits.

Berend van der Struik is at present an industrial designer. He also teaches at the School of Arts and Crafts in Adelaide.

THE SCULPTURE IN THE UNION HALL



Berend van der Struik at work.

It would be a mistake if I gave here an 'account of the whole wall. I have neither the knowledge of the language nor that "certain feeling" for the material "word" to provoke the sensation, which I believe I achieve in forms.

Yet I know (my wife told me) that a few words, indications, might help quite a few people, who have never looked at sculpture work, been able to see forms, let alone think in forms before, Not that I can tell the reasons why I did it just so and not otherwise, As a rule we can say, where there is a reason there is no art. , We usually hardly know why we did 'it particularly that way at that stage.

Only years later when we can look back on our mental development can we see these phases as milestones. We develop, one way or another. Everything changes and so does art. An artist, who does not change, who does not grow, who is emotionally not touched by the problems of his time, does not produce art. He is only dull, and his work will be accordingly,

This is not the place to discuss what happened the last, say, sixty years, but one thing must be mentioned, namely, that the form comes to, the fore in this century, as it has never done in the last 200 years, The painter painted his dream of dreams in a painting, things are never there, they are two-dimensional, dreams. Perspective is only an illusion. "Sculpture is brute, too much there" (Baudelaire), and the. sculpture

stayed in the background. Nowadays we even see traces of the third dimension in Painting.

The world of today is sculpture minded, the century can be compared with the Renaissance. In any situation we show a great desire to communicate with each other in whatever way suits us best. Any form of art is a way of communication. We try to convey our emotions and experiences in some sort of container, according to our talents.

And we hope that our fellow man recognises his own emotions, reflected in our work and that a state of mutual understanding, a form 'of resonance, is achieved, This is the very goal we hope for in the loneliness of our lives. And there it is now. As the committee wanted it. As I wanted it.

A long, smoothly curved wall, coming up at several places, forming seven life-size figures as if they were pushed from behind through tile wall. A big, living wall, probably the biggest in South Australia, Seven figures and some animal figures forming the life of Orpheus, a figure who has appealed to, me all my life and, I behooove, quite appropriate for the. Hall,

In the middle than, one sees Orpheus the great Greek, playing his harp. The accent is on creation, the hand and the instrument The body. in some way resembles a sound board — the figure becomes the instrument.

On the left are the three Bachantes, who, on seeing Orpheus, attack him, because he no longer cares for women after he loses his wife Euridice for the second time in the Underworld (the two-walking fig-urea at the right).

The accent in the Bach-ante-figures is on the simple-minded, the coarse living: — big bodies, small heads, mainly jaw, hands like little claws (did you notice the four fingers to emphasise this).

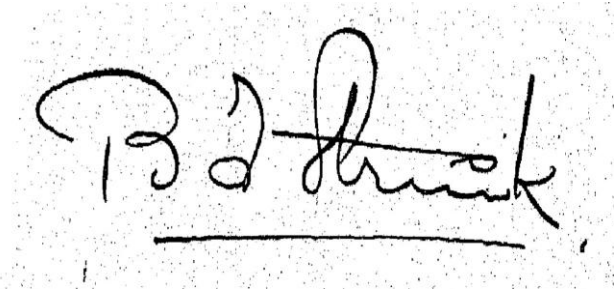
This is a very active, aggressive group. The right figure is discovering Orpheus and leading the attack. The second is the nobody we find in any group of society, the "onlooker," while the left figure depicts total sine-render.

In the two walking figures towards the right, Orpheus takes Euridice out of the Tartarus, but does not quite believe that she really follows him. The accent is on his head, lifted in doubt, ready to look over his shoulder to find his wife taken away from him for the second time, His hands are less important, which is even more so in the Euridice figure, where the body is only a gesture of following.

Once Orpheus is killed by the Bachantes, his body is borne out by the river, while his head comes to rest on the island of Lesbos, where he finds his wife and peace of mind, this is the lonely figure at the far right, more or less leaning out of the wail, turned in on himself.

Only through one's very self does one come to wisdom, I have honestly tried to put this in the best form. Not so much in the way the eyes see it, but rather as shapes provoked by the emotions. Not deformed as some like to put it. Human being a live according to certain norms and so does sculpture-work, A sculptor thinks in forms, as

the painter. does in colour, the musician in sound, the poet in words. "Jeder in seiner Sprache," as Goethe said it.



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