





McMichael Canadian Collection  
Kleinburg, Ontario

SEPTEMBER 21, 1979 to JANUARY 5, 1980

**LEO MOL**

Sculpture 1952-1979

His Holiness Pope John-Paul II received his sculptural portrait in bronze at the Vatican's Santa Sophia Cathedral on September 21, 1979 with Canadian sculptor, Leo Mol, the creator of this work, present for the ceremony. On the same day, His Eminence, Cardinal Carter, unveiled the cast of the bust which the artist retains at the retrospective exhibition of Mol's work in the McMichael Canadian Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario.

The portrait bust of Pope John-Paul II is the third sculpture of a pope by Leo Mol. In 1967, the artist was given the use of a studio in the Vatican to do the official bust of Pope Paul VI. Mol so successfully captured the pious dignity of His Holiness that the Vatican commissioned him to do a sculptural portrait of the preceding pope, John XXIII, using photographs from the archives.

Mol worked throughout April and May of 1979 in a specially assigned studio in the Vatican creating the bust of Pope John-Paul II. During his stay, the artist was given many opportunities to study the Pope which enabled him to gain the insight and feeling necessary for the portrait. Cardinal Vladyslav Rubin, who has known the Pope for many years, commented that the sculpture was so realistic, he expected to hear the Pope speak.

The sculptor has portrayed His Holiness as a warm, humble man of the people yet with qualities of the resolute intellectual. He has created the bust slightly larger than life size.

At the Vatican, it was said to Leo Mol, "You serve in your own way." Indeed, Mol does serve to record historical portraits of great and famous men of his time, while remaining modest about his commissions and international reputation. Of working at the Vatican, he says, "It is disturbing. There are so many excellent examples, you feel overwhelmed. What could you do after 2,000 years of what other people did?" Yet he found the atmosphere of Rome very conducive to the work. "You do not have to go to museums. In the daily life, you experience the heritage as you are passing by so many masterpieces."

Mol feels drawn to Rome with his intense interest in the splendid collections of Roman portrait sculpture.

*Personally, I most enjoy working on sculptural portraits. I feel it is one of the most difficult parts of sculpture. It requires that the sculptor not only have the necessary formal training, but a certain feeling and intuition for character. In a way it is something like a cartoonist working except that a cartoonist always exaggerates the character. When you do a sculptural portrait you have to bring out the individual character so strongly that when you see the head later, it is almost as if you are meeting the living person.*

Mol achieved this feeling in his portraits of Group of Seven members including A. J. Casson, now in his eighty-first year. He has captured Dr. Casson's firm manner which combines qualities of



both the artist and the businessman. The bronze portrait of A.Y. Jackson, on the other hand, reveals the gruff exterior masking the gregarious personality fondly remembered by Canadians.

*I like nature very much and for that reason I have my studio outside of the city. That way I really enjoy every minute not only working, but the nature surrounding me.*

Mol's appreciation of nature and the people who live and work in close harmony with her is apparent in his recent work "Lumberjacks, 1978" and in his tribute to "Tom Lamb, Bush Pilot", 1971. It is appropriate that a cast of the Lamb sculpture is permanently exhibited at the airport of The Pas, an area carved from the thick forest wilderness of Manitoba. "Lumberjacks" is in tribute to the hardy shantymen of the bush who are the backbone of Canada's great industry. The tension and suspension bear testimony to Mol's identification with the subjects and to his artistry.

Leo Mol was born in the Ukraine and studied in Germany and the Netherlands. A citizen of Canada, the artist has lived for many years at Winnipeg, Manitoba. Mol built his studio and then his own foundry to facilitate his casting. The artist and the process of his work in this setting is documented in the film "Immortal Image" by Slavko Nowytski.

The bronze bust of Pope John-Paul II was cast in Munich, Germany, as is all of his current bronze casting. A multilinguist, Mol can speak directly with the foundry technicians, and under his own supervision he achieves the exact results he seeks. He found the German people were particularly interested in the cast for the Vatican, and the event was widely covered in the German press.

Mol's commissions command international attention not only in Italy and Canada, but also in the United States and Argentina. His bust of the Right Honourable John George Diefenbaker was commissioned for the Senate Chamber of Canada. Mol's tributes to the great Ukrainian poet hero, Taras Shevchenko, stand both in Washington, D.C. and Buenos Aires. A commission in honour of President Dwight D. Eisenhower stands at Gettysburg.

In the artist's words...

*Where art is concerned, I have strongly believed that the artist has a certain place in the community. He can actually serve the community in a spiritual way. How? It is up to the artist really. There is no formula. That is the whole essence for the creative work... The artist should be responsible for finding out how he can best serve his community.*

Of Leo Mol, it may be said with certainty, "He serves."





Mrs. X.—1952  
bronze  
h. 56 cm.

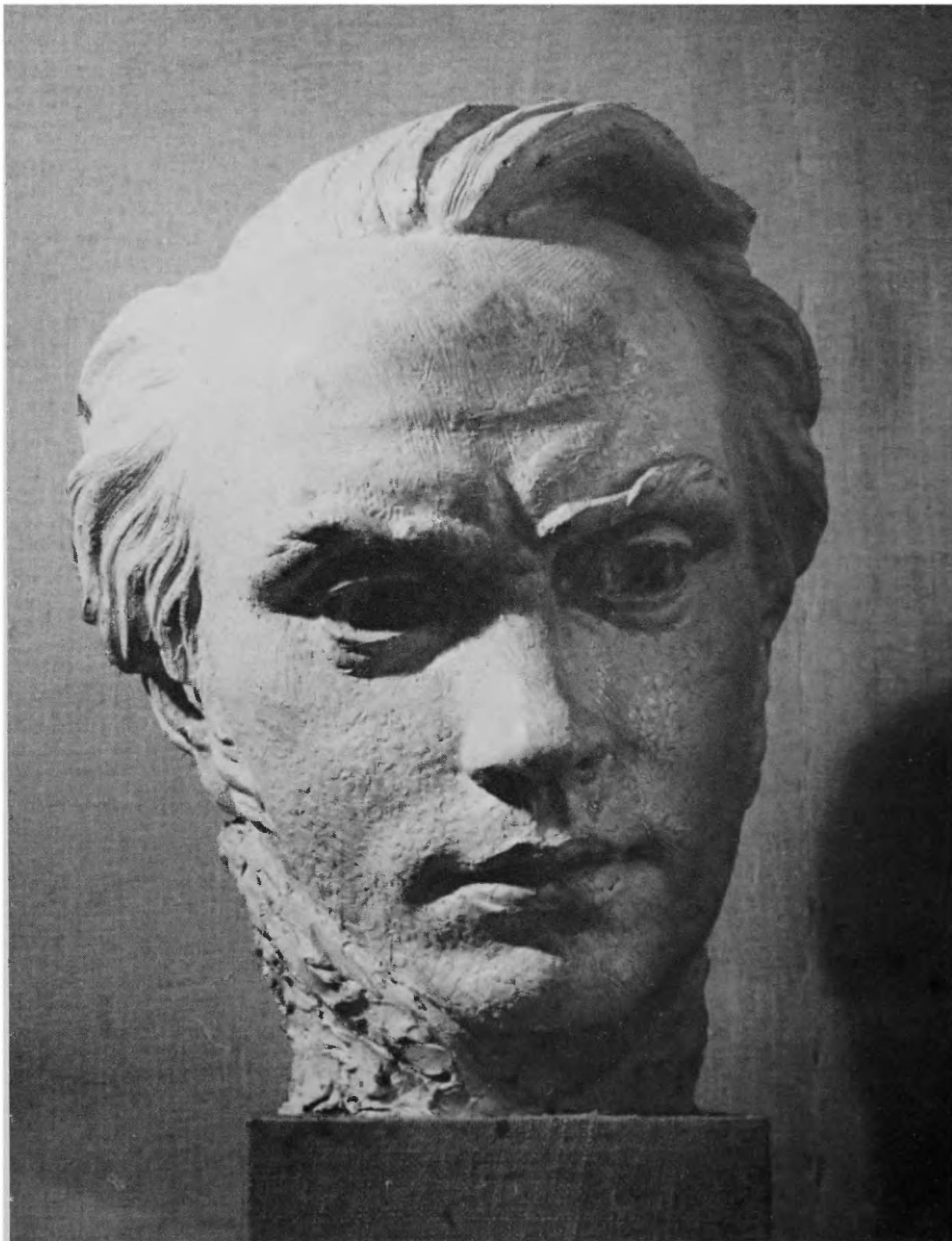


Jane—1972  
bronze  
h. 100 cm.



Maria—1971  
bronze  
h. 35 cm.





Taras Shevchenko—1963  
fiberglass (detail)  
h. 70 cm.



St. Mary with Christ—1956  
bronze  
h. 49 cm.

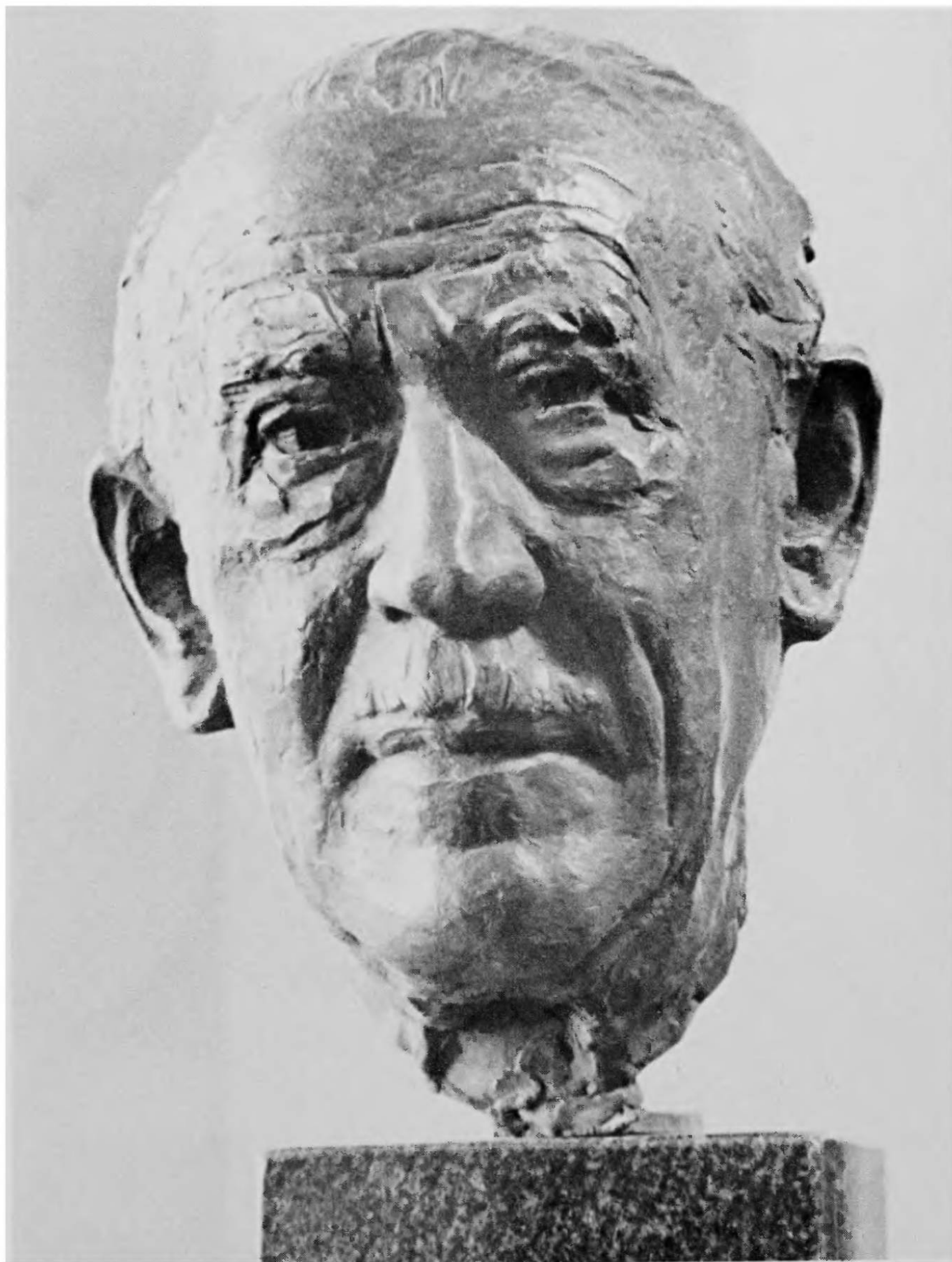


Teenager—1978  
bronze  
h. 43 cm.



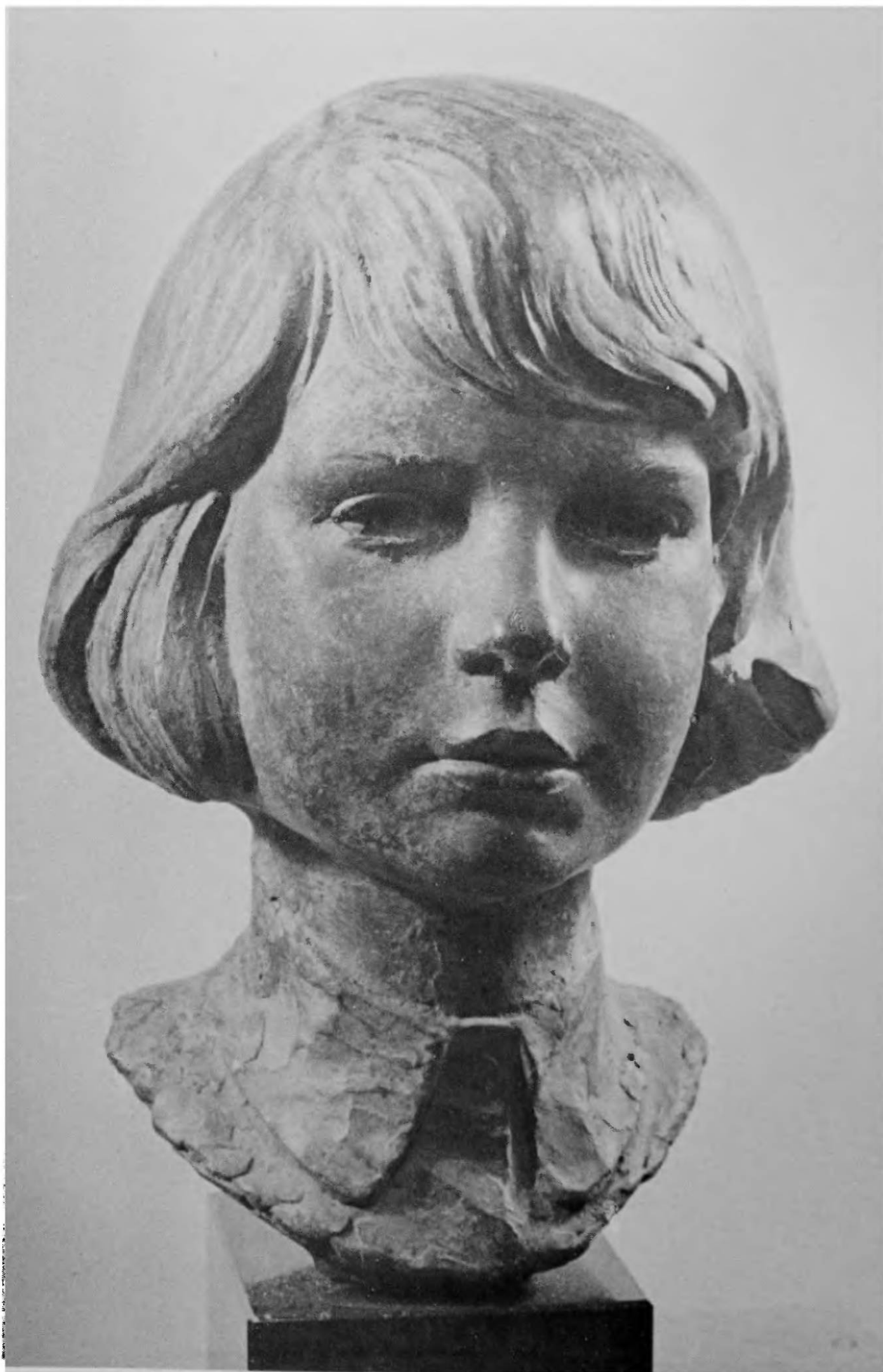


Moses—1969  
bronze  
h. 55 cm.

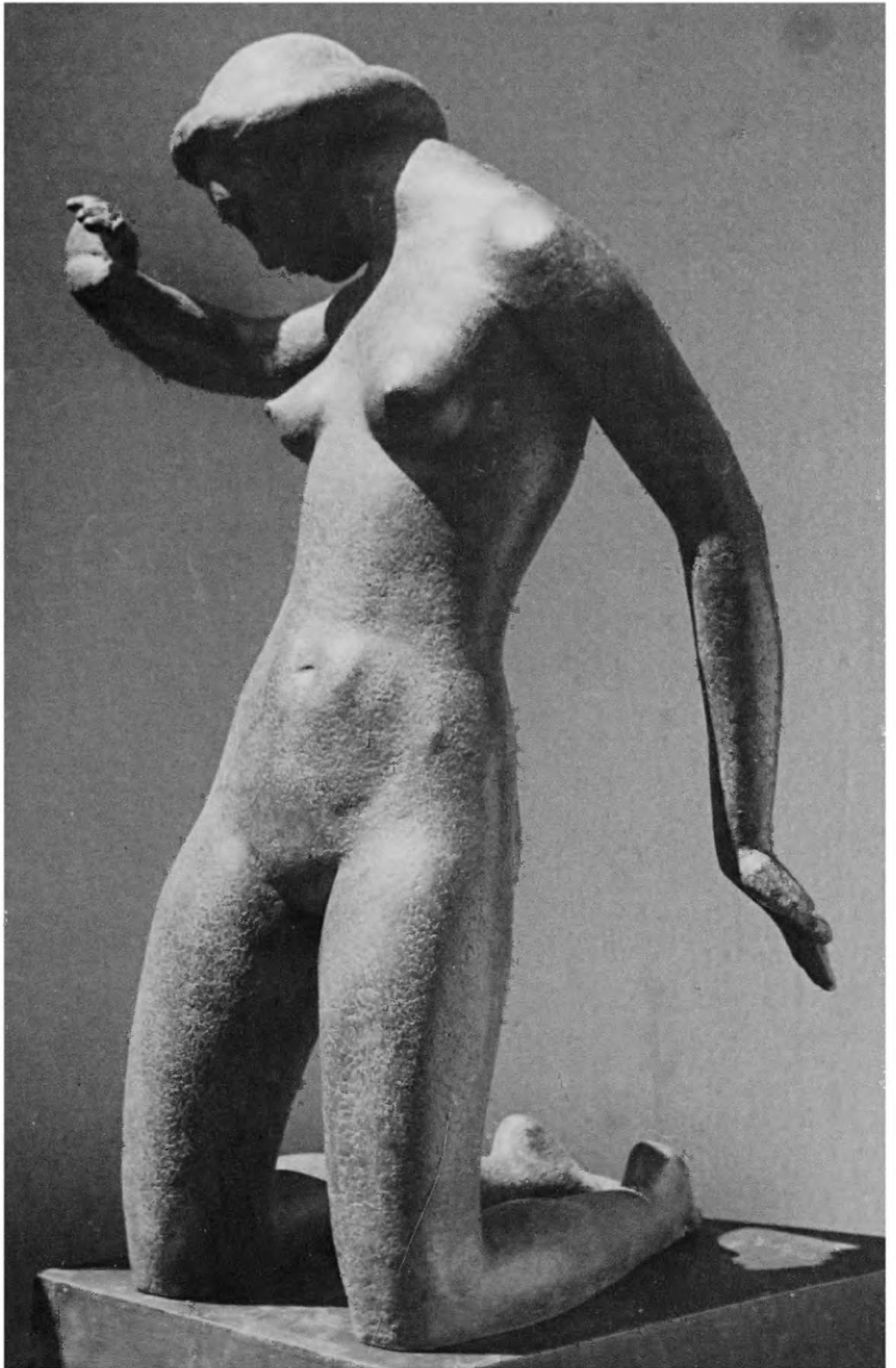


A. J. Casson—1970  
bronze  
h. 32 cm.





Vicki—1972  
bronze  
h. 31 cm.



Dream—1974  
bronze  
h. 126 cm.





Lumberjacks—1978  
bronze  
h. 33 cm.

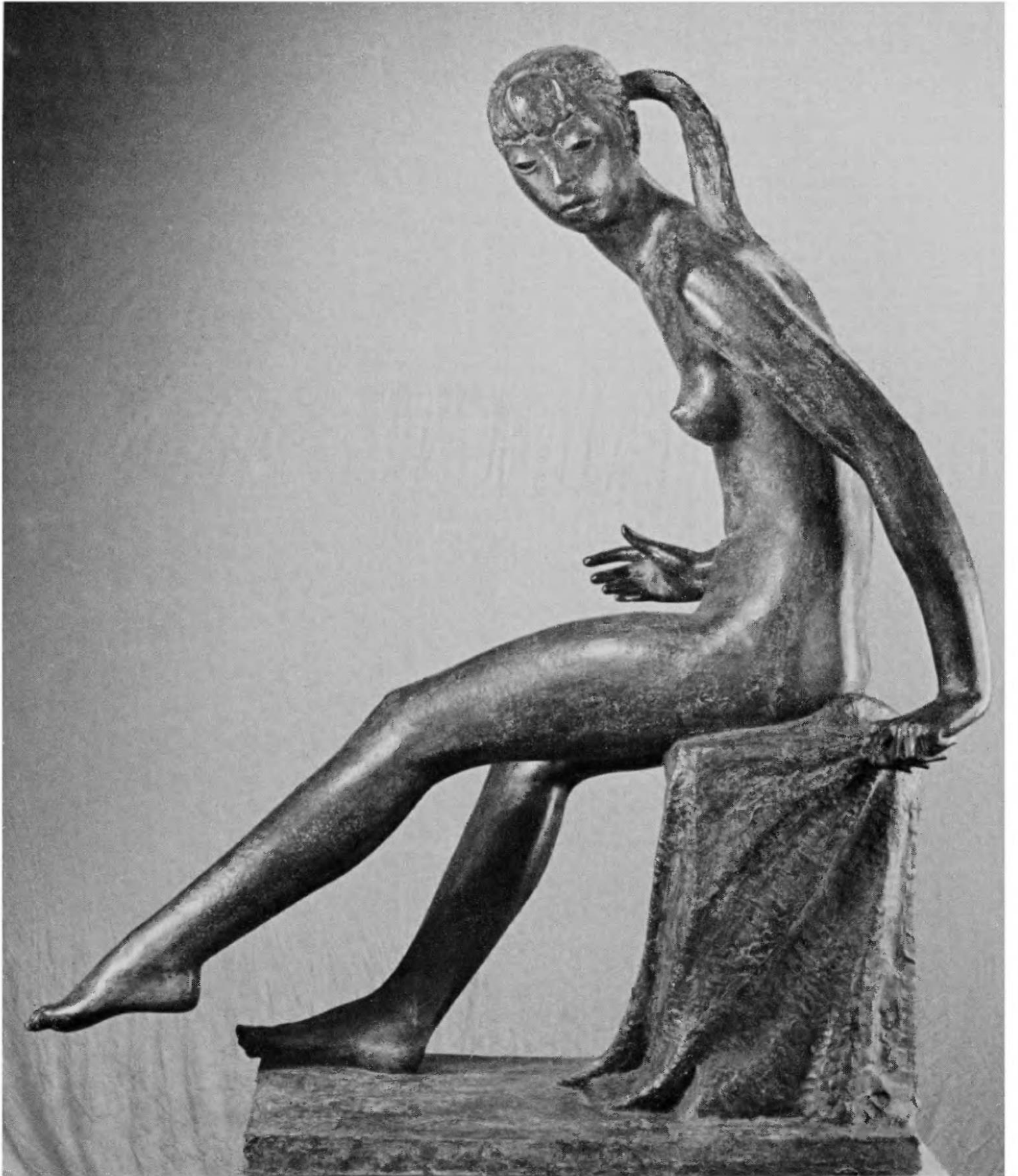


A.Y. Jackson—1962  
bronze  
h. 37 cm.



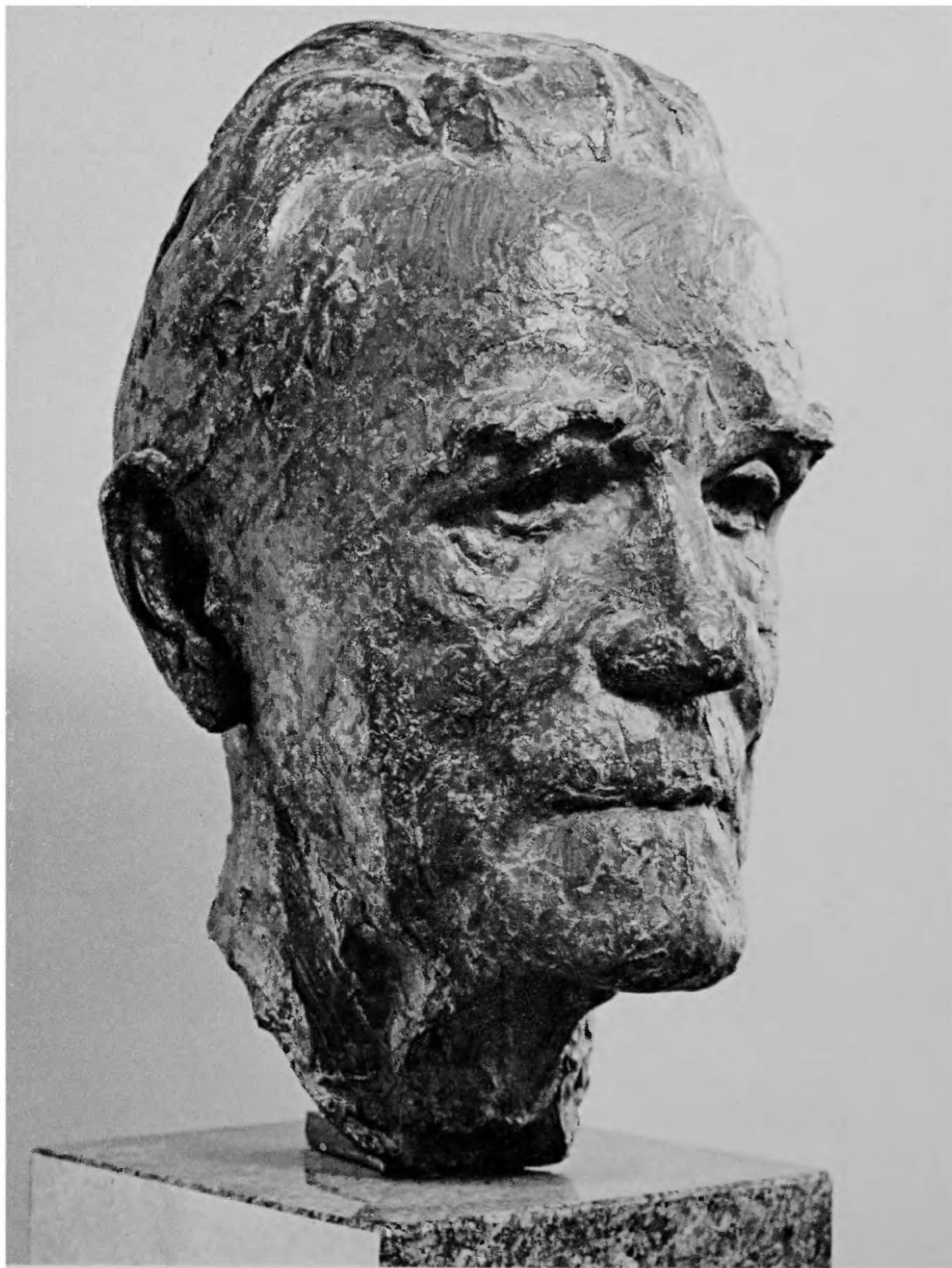


Sitting Figure—1973  
bronze  
h. 27 cm.



Surprise—1976  
bronze  
h. 125 cm.





F. H. Varley—1961  
bronze  
h. 33 cm.



Tom Lamb, bush pilot—1971  
bronze  
h. 135 cm.





Torso with Pigtails—1956  
bronze  
h. 39 cm.



Dancer—1977  
bronze  
h. 49 cm.



Summer Time—1978  
bronze  
h. 30 cm.





Peter Kuch—1960  
bronze  
h. 30 cm.

## CATALOGUE

1. Maria — 1971  
bronze, h. 35 cm.
2. Mrs. X. — 1952  
bronze, h. 56 cm.
3. Tom Lamb, bush pilot — 1971  
bronze, h. 135 cm.
4. Peter Kuch — 1960  
bronze, h. 30 cm.
5. Vicki — 1972  
bronze, h. 31 cm.
6. Summer Time — 1978  
bronze, h. 30 cm.
7. Sitting Figure — 1973  
bronze, h. 27 cm.
8. Lumberjacks — 1978  
bronze, h. 33 cm.
9. Moses — 1969  
bronze, h. 55 cm.
10. Taras Shevchenko — 1963  
detail for the monument in Washington D.C.  
fiberglass, h. 70 cm.
11. Dream — 1974  
bronze, h. 126 cm.
12. Jane — 1972  
bronze, h. 100 cm.
13. Surprise — 1976  
bronze, h. 125 cm.
14. Torso with Pigtales — 1956  
bronze, h. 39 cm.
15. Dancer — 1977  
bronze, h. 49 cm.
16. St. Mary with Christ — 1956  
bronze, h. 49 cm.
17. Teenager — 1978  
bronze, h. 43 cm.
18. Balance — 1975  
bronze, h. 129 cm.
19. Trembita — 1977  
bronze, h. 45 cm.
20. Sasha — 1972  
bronze, h. 37 cm.
21. Polar Bear with Cubs — 1977  
bronze, h. 17 cm.
22. Justice — 1977  
bronze, h. 34 cm.
23. Grandma — 1976  
bronze, h. 31 cm.
24. Pioneer Woman — 1977  
bronze, h. 24 cm.
25. In the Wind — 1977  
bronze, h. 52 cm.
26. Pope John Paul II — 1979  
bronze, h. 75 cm.
27. A.Y. Jackson — 1962  
bronze, h. 37 cm.
28. A. J. Casson — 1970  
bronze, h. 32 cm.
29. F.H. Varley — 1961  
bronze, h. 33 cm.
30. Tom Lamb, bush pilot — 1971  
bronze (sketch), h. 52 cm.
31. Sviatoslav Hordynsky — 1966  
bronze, h. 33 cm.
32. Sunning — 1978  
bronze, h. 133 cm.



CREDITS

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‘Immortal Image’ by Slavko Nowytski  
*Production:* Matthews Ingham and Lake Inc

On September 21, 1979, a sculptural portrait of Pope John-Paul II by Canadian sculptor Leo Mol, was presented to His Holiness at the Vatican.  
On the same day, His Eminence Cardinal Carter unveiled a cast of the portrait at the McMichael Canadian Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario.