

SCULPTURE BY Nathanscott

THE PROCESS BEGINS



Quite often the subject I'm going to sculpt has grown up. The client often wants them sculpted when they were children. I guess they were cuter then! Many times, the subject is no longer living. In these circumstances, we agree on a pose and the clothing and I go and find a model with the same body type and size. I'll take photos of the model in a couple of different poses and let the client decide which pose they like. I then get as many photos of their child at the age they are to be sculpted and super impose that head to the body of the model.

Other times, especially with grandchildren, I'll take photos of the individual or have a parent do that. Then I'll work right from these photos. I don't do too much sculpting from a posing live

model because nobody wants to sit around for hours trying to hold a facial expression! Sometimes after I've done the bulk of the work, I'll have the subject come in for a bit to do some final touches. Usually it's the parent or grandparent that comes in and tells me to tweek a little here and there until we're done.

Sometimes I will make a miniature of the sculpture to work out the pose, or to send back with the client so a committee get an idea of how it will look. I like to work in 3-dimensional because it will be a 3-dimensional piece in the end and it gives a better idea of what the finished product will actually look like.



BUILDING A FRAME

Once the pose is worked out and pictures and measurements are taken, I get to work building a steel armature. I weld it up and bulk it up with foam in the general position.

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An oil-based clay is applied over the frame and I take several weeks-several months to sculpt it, depending on the project. Once the client is perfectly happy and has "signed off" or accepted the clay sculpture, this is the point where the transformation from clay to bronze begins.

MAKING THE MOLD

The mold making is next in the process. This is the step of making a complete negative of the completed clay sculpture. This usually takes about one week to complete. First I paint a few layers of rubber over the clay to capture all the details of the sculpting. I then fibreglass over the rubber in panels. The panels are pulled off and the mold is taken apart. I remove the clay sculpture inside and am left with a negative of the sculpture.



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REBUILDING THE SCULPTURE IN WAX

I use the mold to paint a few layers of wax in. The wax hardens and I now have an empty shell that looks exactly like the sculpted piece. I cut the sculpture up into smaller, workable chunks and add wax sprues and a wax pouring cup. I dip the wax pieces into a ceramic mixture many times. There is now many pieces of the sculpture in wax with ceramic covering the wax.



FOUNDRY WORK BEGINS

I don my most expensive silver suit and put the ceramic covered wax into a very hot furnace. The wax runs out (which is why this method is referred to as 'Lost Wax Bronze') leaving an empty ceramic mold--ready for bronze to be poured into.



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POURING THE BRONZE

We are finally ready to pour bronze into the molds. The bronze takes a few hours to melt in the furnace and then we very carefully pour it into the molds. It cools quite quickly and starts cracking the ceramic off as it cools. I clean it up and grind off the now bronze pouring cup and sprues...



and begin to weld the pieces back together into a metal sculpture.



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FINISHING THE BRONZE

The sculpture is welded together and seamlines are worked on to ensure that they disappear. It is sandblasted and finally, after many months, a patina is applied to get the colour and pattern desired on the bronze. Many different patinas are possible. It is buffed up in certain places and finally, a wax coating is applied for protection.



At long last, the sculpture is complete and ready for installation. It is either crated and shipped or delivered personally. Plans have already been made to secure it to a base. Most installations take less than an hour to install.

