**Bronze: An Introduction**

From deep in the earth, copper ores are mined. Reddish-brown in color, this metal has been known and used longer than any other common metal. The Egyptians made many articles out of copper at least 5,000 years before Christ. Later, the Greeks and Romans obtained this reddish metal on what is now the island of Cyprus (the Greek word for copper). In North America, the Indians discovered and used copper before the first white man came.

Copper ores are found in North America, Japan, Africa, Australia and South America. It is more elastic than any other metal except steel, and ranks next to silver as a conductor of electricity. Copper is widely used with other metals to form such alloys as brass, bell metal, gun metal and bronze.

Bronze is a hard, durable, metal alloy made by melting copper and tin in varying proportions. Bronze melts readily and is easily worked, molded and tooled. It does not rust when exposed to moisture, and it takes a fine smooth finish. These properties, combined with its ability to take on artistic and beautiful coloring make it a valuable material to the artist. In their natural state these raw materials remain static, but once processed, blended and placed into the hands of the artist, the copper ore becomes an artistic statement for all time — Bronze Sculpture.

The lost-wax method of bronze casting is at least 6,000 years old. Ancient cultures in Greece, Egypt, Rome and the Near East used this method to create masterpieces. Many of the ancient principals of casting are used in today’s lost-wax method.

The earliest bronze works were solid (a single mass). It was 2,000 years later during the Akkadian Period in Mesopotamia that artisans learned to cast hollow interiors. Thus, the door was opened to creating larger works. In the sixth century B.C. the Greeks brought bronze casting to a perfection never before achieved.

The lost-wax bronze method developed as a continuous chain, linking pre-history to present day, though many people erroneously believed that the term *lost-wax* described an old method lost through disuse. But, by now, it becomes clear that the term is derived from the process itself, wherein the wax is lost.
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Soon after the year 1,000 A.D. masterpieces cast by lost-wax appeared, e.g., the doors of Saint Michael that now hang in the Cathedral of Hildesheim. From this time on, the lost-wax casting method was used by all of the great sculptors ranging from Donatello (1386-1466) to Rodin (1840-1917), our own Remington (1861-1909) and Russell (1864-1926), and our contemporaries Lipchitz and Moore. It was not until the late 1800’s that any bronze castings were done in America. Prior to this time American artists traveled to Paris or Munich to have their castings completed. Today you will find some of the finest foundries in the world in the United States.

Bronzes are created from original sculptures from which master molds are created. It is from these molds that wax duplicates are created and it is through the lost-wax process a bronze is created. Many artists found more than a single casting. They will create editions from 1 to 1,000 units. Though the edition might be large, each sculpture is an original work of art. No two bronzes will be identical because of the nature of the process and the fact that a wax pattern will be hand-worked by the artists or a trained artisan prior to investment and again after casting. This process gives each bronze individual value no matter how extensive the edition size.

Many famous works of art have become sought after by avid collectors. Such an example is the Bronco Buster by Remington. He originally cast 200 units of this one sculpture. Today, an original casting can bring anywhere from $75,000.00 to over $100,000.00 at an auction. Because of this type of demand, recasts are being created for the general market. Such items as the Remington sculpture have become public domain, meaning that a piece is free from copyright or patent, and hence, open to use by anyone. The fact that they are free from copyright gives the general public an opportunity to collect a beautiful piece of art, but at a much reduced cost. In many cases a mold is created from the original artwork, preserving the fine detail of the casting. Each casting is created with the same concern for detail and quality of product as the original.

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