

## Introduction

The summer after I graduated from high school I discovered that art wasn't merely a way to fill a blank wall. "I think you'll enjoy this," said my high-school art teacher, Mrs. Hartman, as she handed me what looked like the largest, thickest book in Catawissa, Pennsylvania. To eyes accustomed to garden gnomes and rock-star posters, the pictures in H. W. Janson's *History of Art* shone outrageously, extravagantly beautiful. More than that, I realized that when studying the art of the Renaissance, for instance, I could see what Europeans of that time considered important. Because art expresses ideas, I began to see how it related to history, science, technology, politics, philosophy. My greatest regret in reading Janson was that I couldn't travel the world to view all those artworks. What would I find if I moved around the side of Bernini's *David*? What colors were used in Rubens's *Landscape with the Chateau of Steen*, which Janson printed in black and white?<sup>1</sup>

After I moved to New York City, the Metropolitan Museum, the Frick Collection, and other institutions helped satisfy my curiosity. Then I noticed there were literally hundreds of sculptures in the city that I could study from any angle, at my leisure: the memorials and portrait sculptures erected in Manhattan over the past century and a half.<sup>2</sup> Most New Yorkers pass these sculptures so often that they don't even look at them. Tourists give them a brief, puzzled glance because guidebooks usually ignore them. Once you meet them, however, these "Forgotten Delights" become reliable friends. They can make you stop, look, and think when you'd swear your brain was too tired to function. They can provoke you or make you laugh aloud. They can invigorate you when you're tired or exasperated. The achievements and the virtues of the people represented in these statues can help supply the emotional fuel—the psychological energy—that keeps you going.

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**Sculptures Included in This Book**

The works in *Outdoor Monuments of Manhattan* are either of high quality artistically or have intriguing subjects, or both. Among the fifty-four sculptures are conspicuous landmarks such as the *Firemen's Memorial*, the *Maine Monument*, *Prometheus* and *Atlas* at Rockefeller Center, and *Charging Bull*. Aside from a few allegorical or symbolic figures, most of the remaining works are portraits: explorers, an inventor, an architect, a musician, an engineer, businessmen, newspaper moguls.<sup>3</sup> Some are famous: George Washington, Alexander Hamilton, William Tecumseh Sherman, Fiorello La Guardia. Others have fallen into obscurity: J. Marion Sims (the "Father of Gynecology"), Daniel Butterfield (composer of "Taps"), and David Farragut ("Damn the torpedoes!"). And who would expect to find, in twenty-first-century Manhattan, statues of an eleventh-century Spanish hero, a medieval king of Poland, or a South American revolutionary?

**Organization of the Essays**

Each essay begins with the title, artist, date of dedication, medium, size, and location.<sup>4</sup> A sidebar offers a quotation by or related to the sculpture's subject.

The About the Sculpture section suggests what to look for in the sculpture. What does that gesture mean? What's the significance of the setting? (For more on this, see Appendix A: How to Read a Sculpture.) Occasionally this section tackles more abstract aesthetic questions: To what does a viewer react in a work of art? Can art be evaluated objectively? What's the point of portrait sculpture? What is art, what purpose does it fulfill, and how does it accomplish it? Why bother studying a work in detail, rather than enjoying it for a few seconds and moving on? I base these discussions on my understanding of Ayn Rand's work on aesthetics, particularly her definition of art.<sup>5</sup>

The About the Subject section discusses either the event commemorated, or an important episode or achievement in the life of the person represented. When a figure is well known, I've deliberately chosen a facet

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of his or her life that will be unfamiliar to most readers. Sherman doesn't march through Georgia, he court-martials a journalist. Lincoln doesn't issue the Emancipation Proclamation, he deals with a vociferous Confederate sympathizer from Ohio. Richard Morris Hunt doesn't design a Beaux-Arts museum, he designs a skyscraper.<sup>6</sup> About the Subject comes after About the Sculpture because knowing biographical details about the subject tends to influence how you see the sculpture (see #18). I prefer that you look at the sculpture without preconceptions.

The sculptures are listed in chronological order by date of dedication in Appendix B. Appendix C offers additional information on the artists.

### Visiting the Sculptures

The essays are arranged for a walking tour from the southern end of Manhattan northward. No single photograph reveals every detail of a three-dimensional object. To get the full impact, you must visit the work. Since it's difficult to get close to some of the sculptures, I recommend taking binoculars or a camera with an optical zoom lens. (Enlarging digital photos on a computer monitor is particularly helpful.) My favorite viewing time is an overcast day after the leaves have fallen, when shadows and glare are at a minimum.

You would think a multi-ton inanimate object would remain in one place. Not so: sculptures are moved, sometimes for cleaning, sometimes because the owners decide they would show to better advantage elsewhere. I verified all locations in late 2005. If you cannot find a city-owned sculpture in the location given, ask a Parks Department employee for information or try the Parks Department's Web site (<http://www.nycgovparks.org/index.php>). If the sculpture is privately owned, the nearest doorman often knows where the work has decamped to.

### Acknowledgments

The research for this book could not have been completed—or even begun—without the magnificent resources of the New York Public Library and the New-York Historical Society Library. The writing could not have

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been completed without the blissful silence of the New York Society Library. Thanks also to the staffs of the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation, the Art Commission of the City of New York, and the National Sculpture Society for helping me track down obscure pieces, elusive sculptors and photographs of sculptures as they once were.

Heartfelt thanks to my agent, Rita Rosenkranz, to whose business sense and common sense this book owes its inception. The editorial suggestions of Steve Maikowski at New York University Press greatly improved the text, and the staff of the Press deftly handled a multitude of archaic foreign names and a complex layout. I am grateful to John McNulty and Sylvia Bokor, who read and commented on parts of this book before publication. John Haralabopoulos did exemplary research for the *Verdi Monument* (#41).

If a picture equals a thousand words, I would have to insert ten graphics here to thank my family. My husband, Sal, has been unfailingly supportive while I wrote this book, always straightening out my priorities when I worried that perhaps I should devote a week or two or three to cleaning the house. He has also spent hours looking at sculptures, commenting on drafts, and discussing art. My thanks also to my daughter, Allegra, whose constant search for knowledge and relentless refusal to accept any assertion she doesn't understand inspired the methodology for looking at art that is set forth in the About the Sculpture and How to Read a Sculpture sections. My debt to both of you is monumental.

And thanks, Mrs. Hartman. I really, really enjoyed the book.

## NOTES

1. I read the third edition (1974). Later editions focus on individual artists' works and biographies rather than on integrating art with the philosophy and history of the time. The illustrations, however, have greatly improved.
2. If you're not in New York, photos at [www.ForgottenDelights.com](http://www.ForgottenDelights.com) offer additional views.
3. My earlier book, *Forgotten Delights: The Producers* (New York: Forgotten Delights, 2003), covered twenty sculptures of businessmen, inventors, explorers, engineers,

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and workers. Ten of the sculptures from that volume are included in this one, although in most cases the essays have been substantially revised.

4. Usually only the height is indicated. For a few very large ensembles, the width is given as well. The Smithsonian Institution's Inventory of American Sculpture ([www.siris.si.edu](http://www.siris.si.edu)) supplies detailed information on dimensions, foundry marks, inscriptions, and provenance. The Smithsonian Institution Research Information System (SIRIS) is a great resource for finding sculptures of your favorite Founding Father, every work of Augustus Saint Gaudens, or all the sculptures in Catawissa, Pennsylvania.
5. See #30 and the Afterword. For Ayn Rand's aesthetics, see especially *The Romantic Manifesto: A Philosophy of Literature* (New York: New American Library/Signet, 1975), and Leonard Peikoff, *Objectivism: The Philosophy of Ayn Rand* (New York: Penguin, 1993), Chapter 12.
6. To learn more about the lives of most individuals in this volume, the best source is the *American National Biography* (ANB), available in print or online at major libraries. The ANB presents a scholarly biography followed by an indispensable annotated bibliography for thousands upon thousands of Americans, as well as foreigners such as Christopher Columbus who played important roles in American history.