

A MIND IN MOTION: THE ART OF  
**CHARLES H.  
FORRESTER**



CURATED BY WINIFRED FORRESTER

A MIND IN MOTION: THE ART OF CHARLES H. FORRESTER





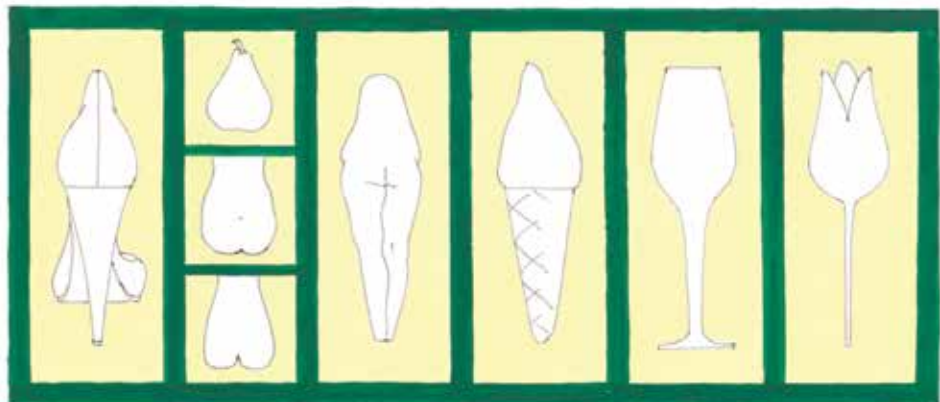
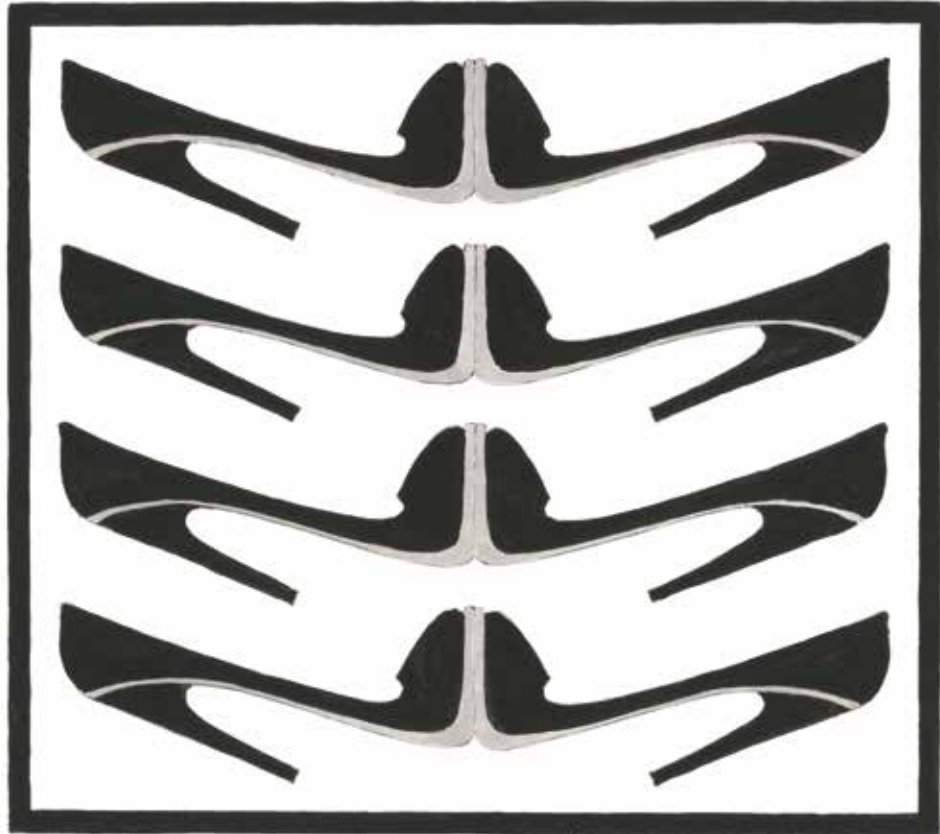
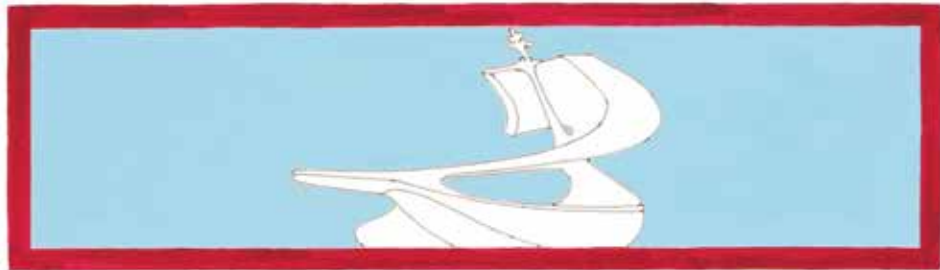


*“Having a conversation with my father, it was a mind-opening experience. He viewed the world differently. If you’d just be driving down the road and he looked out the window, and you looked out the window, he saw something different. . . .*

*Everything he did, and everywhere he looked, he was looking for ideas about sculpture and art.*

*He lived, breathed, and thought about making artwork, all the time.”*

—WINIFRED FORRESTER



Shoe Fantasies Series: 479 The Shoe as Related Form I Forrester

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THE DOCUMENTARY  
*A Line Unbroken: The Charles Forrester Story*  
A FOLLY INDUSTRIES, LLC MEDIA PRODUCTION

AN EXCEPTIONALLY GIFTED sculptor and artist, Charles H. Forrester (1928-2010) left his unique imprint on this world—his artwork spans six decades and captures a multitude of mediums and styles.

The documentary, *A Line Unbroken: The Charles Forrester Story*, honors his legacy and noteworthy contributions to the art world. The film will preview in the summer of 2020 in conjunction with an exhibit featuring the late sculptor's work at the Downing Museum in Bowling Green, Kentucky. In addition, the documentary will be submitted for consideration in various film festivals.

A professor at Western Kentucky University in Bowling Green for almost thirty years, Forrester and his work directly impacted generations of sculptors and artists.

Commissioned by the Forrester family, the film was produced by David and Patricia Earnhardt of Earnhardt Films, LLC of Nashville, Tennessee.

More information about the documentary and art exhibit  
is available at: [www.charlesforrester.com](http://www.charlesforrester.com).



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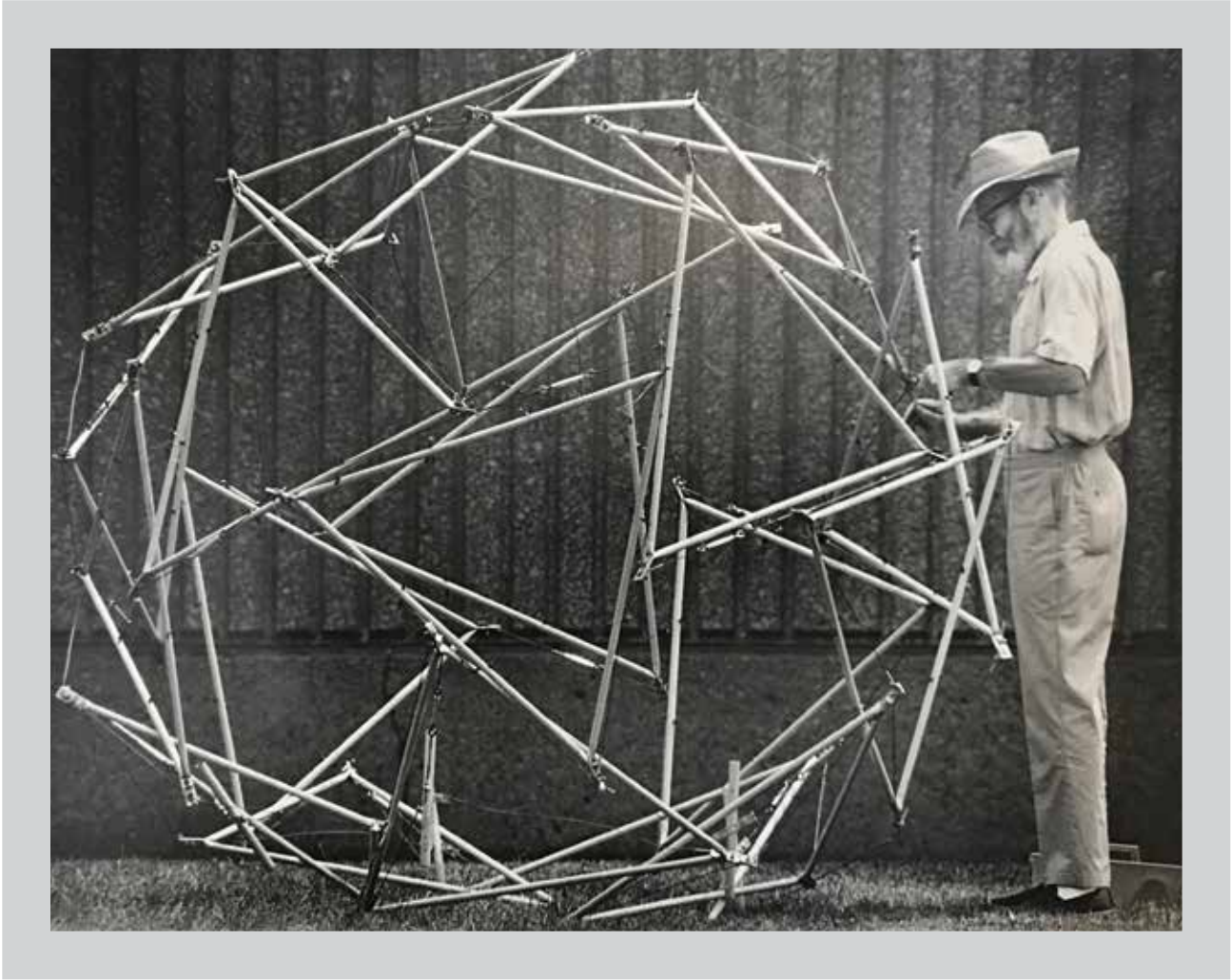
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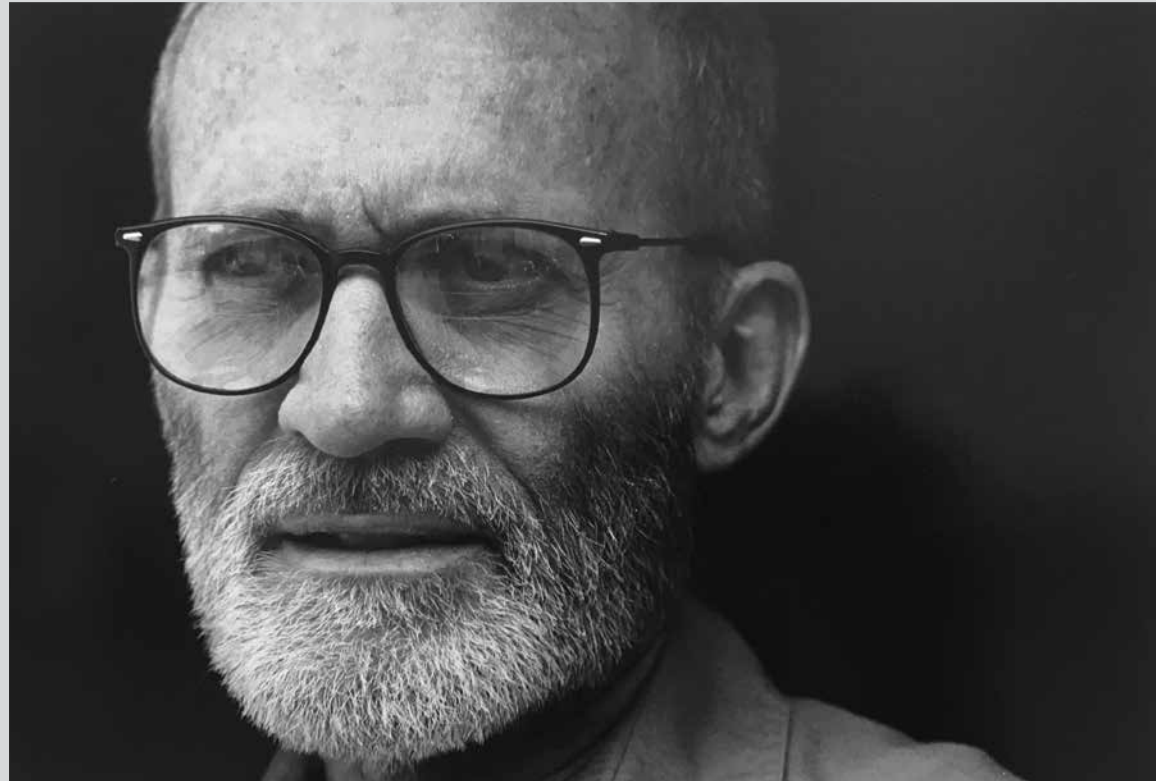


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THE BOOK IS DEDICATED to the memory of our mother, Dorothy Reese Forrester (1924-2004), and all the women from that era who took a back seat in order to fully embrace their husbands' spotlight, all the while playing an essential supporting role to ensure their success.

Our mother was a gifted writer, intellectual, linguist, and political commentator extraordinary in the family home. She dearly loved her family and most of all, our father. She ghost-wrote his artist statements, edited his thesis, typed, acted as publicist and agent, and was his muse for most of her life. She is to be celebrated as the essential half of a partnership that spanned fifty-three years.

---



*“AS A SCULPTOR I endeavor to interpret some aspect of the spiritual reality. I feel orientated toward a spiritual reality rather than nature because I regard nature as merely a reflection of the spiritual reality. I believe that it is not enough that a sculptor’s work mirror the confusion of his times. It is the artist’s duty to seek meaning in chaos.”*

—CHARLES FORRESTER, 1960



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS by Winifred Forrester

This book, *A MIND IN MOTION: The Art of Charles H. Forrester*, and the short documentary, *A Line Unbroken: The Charles Forrester Story*, are powerful examples of how many people came together to honor my father’s work because they believed it worthy to be recognized and remembered for generations to come.

I met many new people and rekindled old friendships during the process of curating the collection of my father’s artwork and working to bring his life’s passion to a larger audience. I came to fully appreciate life’s lesson that one is only as successful as the relationships cultivated during one’s life. I am indebted to the amazingly creative people that made this project happen, and I want to acknowledge them all.

DR. GUY JORDAN, Associate Professor of Art History, Western Kentucky University (WKU), for his keen insight and the introduction to this book.

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- BARBARA DEEB, WKYU-FM Public Radio
- DONNIE FIRKINS, former student and stone sculptor
- JEFF JENSEN, Associate Professor, Graphic Design
- DAVID LEE, University Historian

- JACK LESIEUR, Director, Downing Museum
- DAVID MARQUEZ, Assistant Professor of Sculpture
- NEIL PETERIE, former colleague and professor
- SANDRA STAEBELL, Curator, Kentucky Museum

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AT LAST BUT NOT LEAST, MY CHILDREN, ISABELLA AND MERONICA, AND THEIR FATHER, BOBBY KENT, for enduring countless hours without me while I worked on this project.

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## A MIND IN MOTION: *The Art of Charles H. Forrester*

An Introductory Essay by Dr. Guy Jordan  
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ART HISTORY, WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

IN HIS 1953 BOOK, *The Hedgehog and the Fox*, British Philosopher Isaiah Berlin described two types of thinkers. The first type, whom he termed “hedgehogs,” focuses intensively on one big thing and spends their time fixated upon a singular topic or intellectual pursuit. The second type, whom he termed “foxes,” knows a little about a lot of things, and spends their time making connections and drawing analogies between disparate fields of knowledge.

Charles Forrester (1928-2010) was, without a doubt, a fox—clever, creative, curious, and constantly crafting analogies between things, a master of the visual pun. His artistic projects reveal the flux and flow of an artist’s mind as he mapped out correlations between experiences and synthesized something new. Forrester’s material legacy—his sculptures, drawings, and scrapbooks—reveals a mind in motion, constantly linking knowledge, experience, impulses, and memories to one another through techniques that operated both at and below the level of consciousness.

Forrester’s penchant for protean forms that always seem in flux between identifiable categories is apparent in some of his earliest works. His glazed teapot from 1957, for example (fig. 36), seems to oscillate before our eyes between an inert functional object and a model of a human heart, where openings and spouts mimic arteries and veins.

This anthropomorphic object formally evokes the human body and also begs to be held by someone. While the heart distributes a body’s blood, Forrester’s teapot distributes another kind

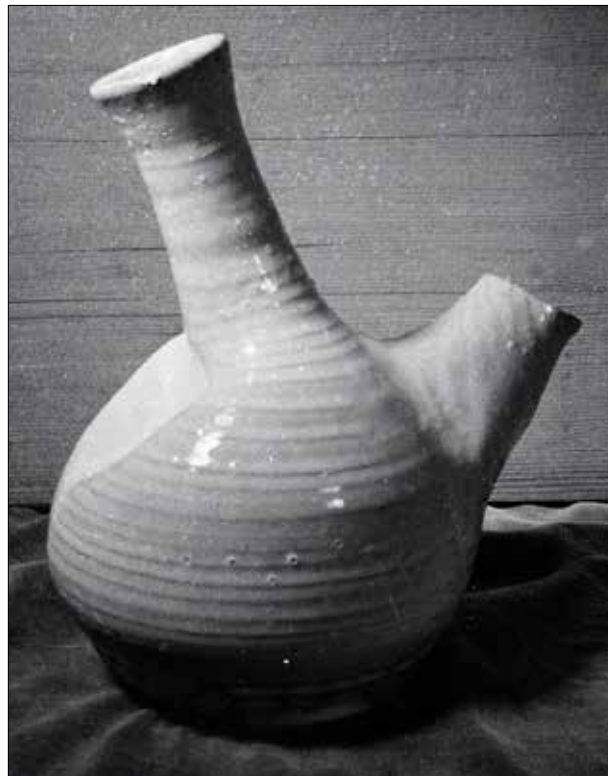


Fig. 36 *Glazed Tea Pot*, 1957  
Ceramic clay, 8”H

of liquid ingested into the body. This rich tapestry of allusion and embodiment animates many other examples of his work. However sophisticated his interest in formal modernist compositions might have become, he never allowed his work to lose the fundamental preciousness and humanity evidenced in this teapot.

Forrester’s master of fine arts thesis, completed in 1960 at the University of Oregon, comprised sculptural interpretations of the Four Evangelists (the authors attributed with creation of four Gospel accounts in the Bible’s New Testament).

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without a doubt, a fox—  
clever, creative, curious, and  
constantly crafting analogies  
between things, a master  
of the visual pun.*

The example in this exhibition evokes Saint Matthew, which was cast five years later in 1965. The compositions of Matthew and the other three evangelists were derived from felt marker drawings (fig. 91) that evoke the spontaneity and automatic techniques of surrealist artists who were active a generation before him. He wrote in his thesis that “each drawing was done in a manner of seconds... before allowing time for the intellect to interpret the process while it was being executed.” He wanted the pure structural impulses of his unconscious to govern his process, unencumbered by deliberation and choice.

Forrester trusted his sympathetic nervous system—which governs our unconscious impulses and predilections—to provide the most accurate elaboration of his true intentions as an artist. His felt drawings seem related to the flat, primal *Art Brut* figures of Jean Dubuffet, a French post-war artist who likewise preferred direct, visceral imagery. The sculpture *Evangelist—Matthew* (fig. 100, 1965, see p. 33) itself suggests a reclining abstract inchoate form, a head, spine, and perhaps a ribcage, that envelop and protect a womb-like space. The work appears frozen midway

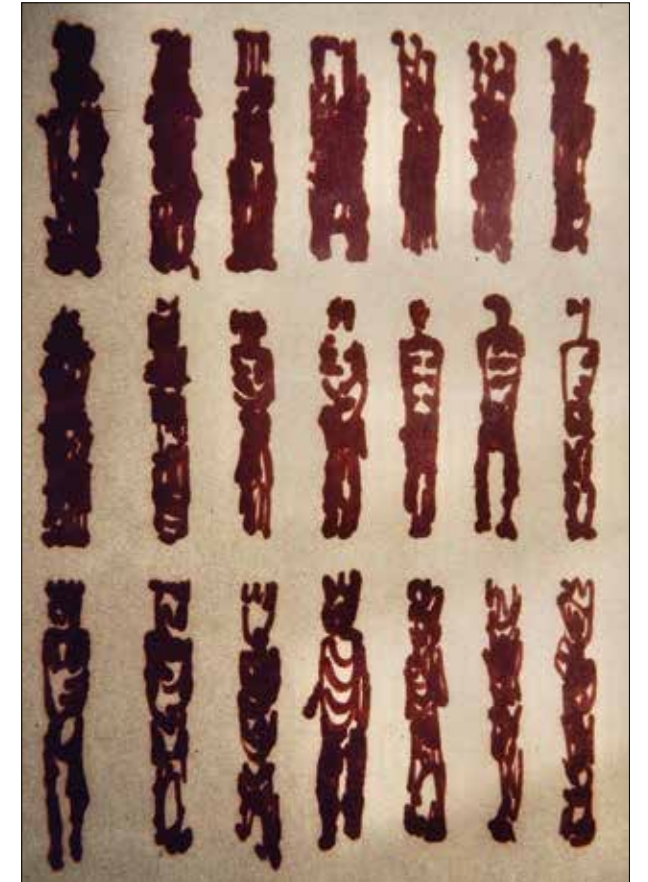


Fig. 91 *Drawing of the Evangelist*, 1959  
Felt marker drawing, 8” x 11”

through the process of its development. It embodies its own eternal becoming.

The sculpture does not focus on the text of that Gospel, but rather alludes to its conception and elaboration, an analogy for the creative process itself. He noted this shift from textual mediation to a more immediate way of engaging an audience in his thesis where he wrote, “In the twentieth century we have moved away from the literary world of Matthew Arnold to a new appreciation of the basic art forms which do not speak in words. Sculpture communicates with modern man in a direct, even primitive manner which defies the complexity of our times.”

Forrester continued the spare, abstractly embodied directness from his early works in creative



*One of the most important ingredients in Forrester's mature work is humor.*



**Fig. 357** *Running Abreast*, 1970  
Plaster with stain, 13"W x 4.25"D x 19"H  
Forrester Family Collection

pieces such as *Vanquished* (fig. 187, 1961, see p. 32), *Fallen Warrior* (fig. 190, 1961, see p. 32), and *Seven Maidens* (fig. 237.2, 1964, see p. 79), all included in this book. These early career sculptures are like that of another major mid-century artist, the sculptor Henry Moore. Incidentally, Forrester would teach from 1963 to 1965 in Salford, UK, just an hour's drive to the southwest of Moore's hometown of Castleford. Moore, one of the most important British sculptors of the twentieth century, likewise produced abstracted

vertebrae and reclining figures organized around hollow interiors.

One of the most important ingredients in Forrester's mature work is humor. Puns abound in his art that often juxtapose seemingly incongruous forms in funny, mischievous, and thought-provoking ways.

These works show the technical skill of a master sculptor comfortable with representational work

*Forrester's two-dimensional studies of high-heeled shoes are notable for their crisp art deco lines and mutability—where they often double as landscapes and reclining figures.*

and abstraction. For instance, in *Running Abreast* (fig. 357, 1970), Forrester gave us a single powerful lower leg and foot topped by a female breast. The phrase "running abreast" refers to two athletes in a dead heat running side by side, where neither has a clear advantage over the other. This verbal pun was turned into a visual one where two elements that should not be connected to one another exist in a state of equilibrium. This surreal combination of a breast and a foot balances the sacred and the profane, one body part designed to nurse a child with another intended to shuffle and hop across the ground.

In a related work from the same year, *Hand Phone* (fig. 361, 1970, see p. 112), depicts



**Fig. 466.3** *The Shoe as Sea & Clouds*, 1979, Pen & Ink Drawing, 6" x 8.5". Forrester Family Collection

a then-contemporary telephone receiver melded into a human hand. The piece begs to be touched, picked up, and held against the side of the head. In this way it engages multiple senses: vision, touch, and hearing. But if one were to actually "use" this object, the hand and fingers would cover the ear and impede rather than enhance one's ability to listen.

Forrester's works often function as visual puzzles and provocative jokes that prompt fascinating questions about the boundaries between objects and bodies. Sometimes, his visual jokes are more straightforward, such as the *Two-Headed Hammer* (fig. 542, 1986, see p. 107). Here, viewers are prompted to imagine the added efficiency (or perhaps the potential disastrous consequences,

both for the nails and one's forearm) of hammering two nails at once with an "improved" tool. Even here though, the artwork challenges the viewer to consider whether doubling an object's capabilities in fact doubles its value. Humor in Forrester's work can be deceptively instructive. Even his works that use the simplest, most direct jokes and puns provide lessons.

Perhaps shoes served as the most common subject of his work. They appear in free-standing cast sculptures, friezes, as motifs used in combination with other forms, and as the subject of many drawings, paintings, and collages.

While best known as a sculptor, his two-dimensional studies of high-heeled shoes, such as *The Shoe as Sea & Clouds* (fig. 466.3, 1979), are

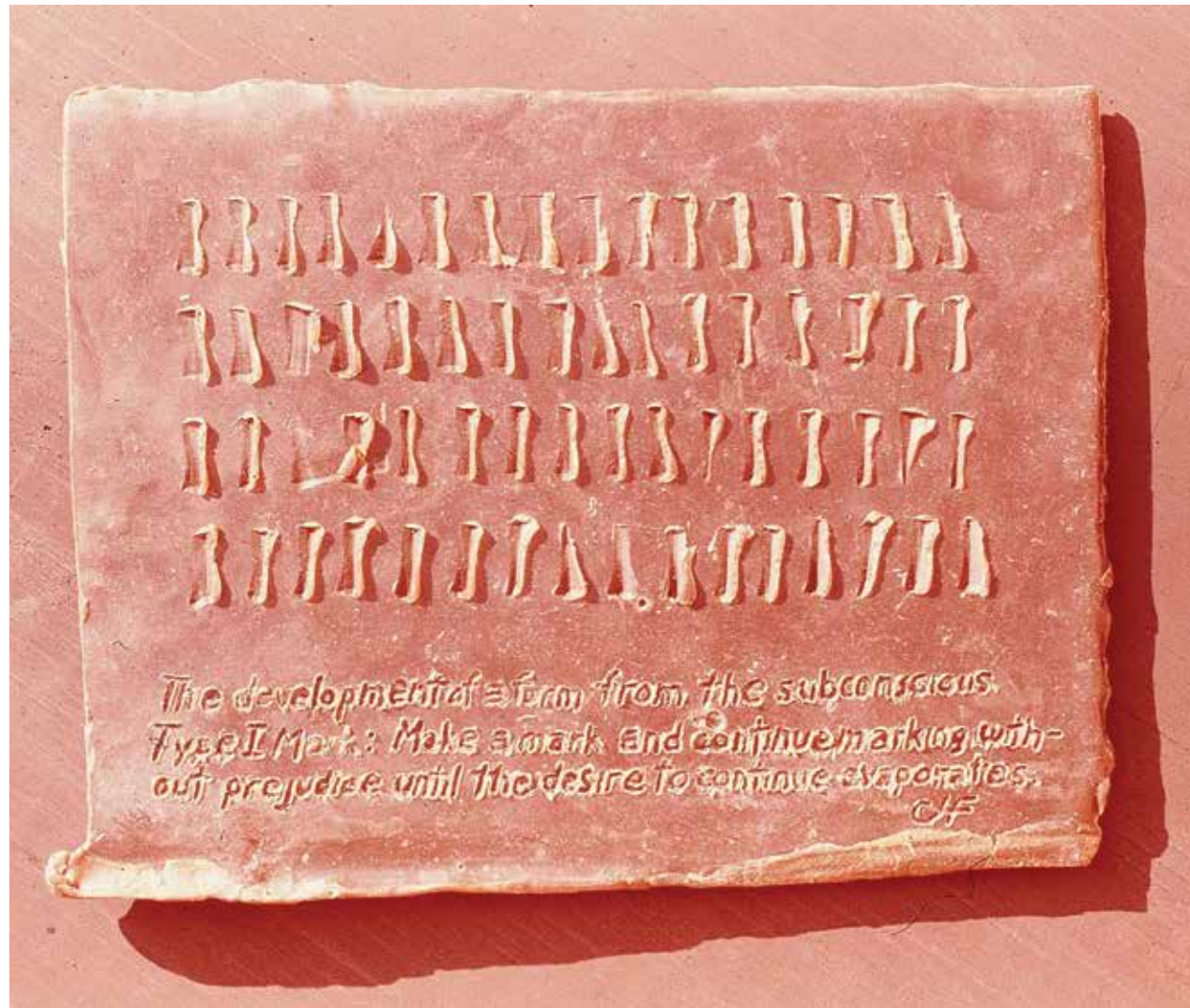


Fig. 500 *Sculptural Beginnings: Marks*, 1982, Clay relief, 6" x 7.5"

notable for their crisp art deco lines and mutability—where they often double as landscapes and reclining figures. This emphasis on the flow and flux of one form into another is a constant refrain in his work.

Forrester also investigated these themes in sculptures such as *Shoe Ship* (fig. 469, 1979, see p. 120), where a shoe and a ship meet heel-and-toe to mast and form a sailing vessel. These two forms, which ostensibly have little to do with one another, are united into a clean and polished curvilinear object that appears natural and seaworthy.

In other works, Forrester explored connections between boots and buildings, such as *Shoe as Architecture* (fig. 470, 1979, see p. 118). Both here and in *Shoe Ship*, he made a connection between an item of clothing, meant to surround and contain a single person, with vessels and structures intended to hold many people. He successfully transformed the shoe from an item of fashion into something like a monument. His work plays with the viewer's expectations and confounds their sense of scale. Is the boot as big as a Roman Temple? Or is the temple so small that it fits inside a boot? He left these relationships productively unresolved.

In a remarkable work from the early 1980s, *Sculptural Beginnings: Marks* (fig. 500, 1982), Forrester made a series of notch-like impressions on clay in a manner that recalls the cuneiform inscriptions of the Ancient Near East. Underneath these marks, he added the inscription, "The development of a form from the subconscious. Type I Mark: Make a mark and continue marking without prejudice until the desire to continue evaporates."

Forrester's written exercises, found in his scrapbooks and notebooks, reveal a similar technique. Page after page contains lists of word associations jotted down in a stream-of-consciousness fashion, one after another, until we can assume his desire to continue evaporated. He was always in search of, it seems, the perfect pun. These notebooks offer a wealth of material for those who wish to research his life and art, from profound musings about teaching objectives and the value of "folly" to column after column of pasted paper slips from fortune cookies.

On his trips and sabbaticals abroad to places like Rome, Prague, Budapest, and Istanbul, he kept detailed records of every place he ate, his daily activities, the museums and galleries he visited, and all manner of receipts. As we look upon

---

*These volumes of thoughts  
and wayward distractions he  
clearly intended for others to  
see reveal a man and a mind  
in constant motion.*

---

*Together, with his art, they  
form a lasting legacy.*

---

Charles Forrester's work in retrospect from the age of the internet, it's hard not to conceive of these books as a form of social media news feeds as he "checked in" to this or that museum, hotel, barbershop, or café. These volumes of thoughts and wayward distractions he clearly intended for others to see reveal a man and a mind in constant motion.

Together, with his art, they form a lasting legacy.



# Biography

by John and Winifred Forrester  
SON AND DAUGHTER OF CHARLES H. FORRESTER

IN 1928, SHORTLY before the Great Depression ravaged the United States, Charles Howard Forrester was born in Jersey City, New Jersey. Besides the widespread poverty faced by so many during that time period, Charles's family faced extreme hardship as his father, a bank accountant, served three years in prison for bank fraud. In 1932, his mother developed schizophrenia and spent her remaining years in a mental institution until her death decades later. Charles's sister, ten years older, became his caretaker and maternal figure.

World War II raged through Charles's teenage years. In New York City where he lived, Jewish refugees from Europe flooded the same ports where soldiers shipped out and dead bodies were returned home from the war front. Rumors of concentration camps in Germany spread throughout the nation, although many Americans denied the news. At the same time, Japanese-Americans were rounded up and placed in camps. The scarcity of jobs forced millions to lose their homes to foreclosure, while they also faced starvation, especially in the cities. This tumultuous backdrop imprinted itself on Charles during his youth and provided context to his later life and artwork.

After his father remarried when he was a young teenager, Charles found refuge and a welcoming home with his sister, Gay, and her new husband, Bob Worthing. When Bob got a job as a research chemist in Charleston, West Virginia, Charles moved with them. Like many New York intellectuals in the 1940s, Bob became interested in

socialism and the rights of ordinary workers while he attended college. As followers of Paul Robeson, the African-American singer, actor, and political activist, the family also attended Communist Party meetings. This ultimately cost Bob his job, and it was years before he found steady employment.

In 1946, at age eighteen, Charles joined the Air Force and was stationed in South Carolina. As a radio operator, he flew in a Fairchild C-119 Flying Boxcar, a military transport aircraft. After being discharged in 1949 and earning his high

*Charles knew he was talented  
in art and passionate about  
drawing, but lacked confidence  
to explore it as a profession.*

school diploma, Charles took classes at City College in New York and received a certification from a School of Upholstery. Unfocused, he remained adrift and uncertain about his future. He knew he was talented in art and passionate about drawing, but lacked confidence to explore it as a profession.

In 1951, his fortunes changed one night at a party in New York City when he met Dorothy Reese. She was twenty-seven, engaging and educated, and had already traveled around the world. Originally from

*Dorothy became Charles's muse  
and provided the support and  
encouragement he needed to  
explore his creativity.*

Seattle, Dorothy had graduated from Barnard College in New York with a degree in political science. By 1951, she had returned from Europe after graduate study at the University of Zurich and the University of London. At twenty-two years old, Charles was a handsome rebel. When Dorothy discovered he had attended Communist Party meetings and subscribed to the *Daily Worker*, she was hooked. They married within weeks, and their loving partnership lasted fifty-three years. Dorothy became Charles's muse and provided the support and encouragement he needed to explore his creativity.

Shortly after their marriage, Charles and Dorothy moved to Seattle, where he attended the University of Washington, using the G.I. Bill. During those years, he held many part-time jobs to support his family, which included working on B-52 bomber navigation systems for Boeing. It took him seven years to graduate, as he initially studied engineering and switched to art, earning a bachelor of fine arts degree in 1958.

He studied sculpture under Everett DuPen (1912-2005), well known for his figurative sculptures. DuPen's influence is evident in Charles's work from the abstract use of the human figure in his early massive concrete sculptures to the soft curves in wood sculptures created in his later years.

Along the way, they had a child, John, and lived on a boat in Union Bay, Seattle, for several years. They spent summers living at lookout fire stations in the



Dorothy Reese Forrester, 1954.



Charles with son John aboard their sailboat, *The Chum*, in Union Bay, Seattle, 1954.





Winifred Forrester, 1960.

Northwest wilderness as they lived a bohemian lifestyle fueled by creativity and frugality—Charles built the family's furniture using plywood and black paint. While caring for her family, Dorothy immersed herself in writing and studied classic Greek and Roman literature. In 1958, the family moved to Eugene, Oregon, where their second child, Winifred, was born.

Charles studied under the internationally known artist Jan Zach at the University of Oregon with fellow sculptors Arthur Jorgenson, Walter Hannula, and Phillip Levine. Charles held a graduate teaching assistantship from 1958 to 1960, graduating with a master of fine arts degree. Zach's influence can be seen in Charles's interest in geometric lines and non-objective abstract sculpture. Other early influences were the Russian sculptor, Naum Gabo, and Buckminster Fuller. Fuller's geodesic domes inspired a generation of sculptors like Charles and New York's Kenneth Snelson with their kinetic sphere sculptures.

Early on in his career, while a graduate student, Charles began gaining notoriety for his work. In 1959, Springfield's Junior Chamber of Commerce commissioned him for a monument honoring Oregon's one-hundredth year of statehood. The sculpture,

known as *The Equestrian* (fig. 138 see p. 75), became one of his most famous outdoor works. Sixty years later, the twenty-five-foot-tall horse and rider sculpture still stands at the west entrance to Springfield on Highway 126 as a timeless monument to the spirit of the early pioneers. Its modern abstract style caused a lot of controversy, with locals making jabs about Springfield becoming "a one-horse town." Charles held multiple community meetings during the process of building the monument. A new art movement called The Hybrids influenced his outreach as its philosophy promoted cooperation and engagement with one's local community.

By 1961, the Forrester family lived in Ashland, Oregon, where Charles continued his participation with The Hybrids movement and immersed himself in the arts community. His commissions included busts of King Lear, Malvolio, and Shylock for Oregon's Shakespearean Festival and several outdoor sculptures for the Medford Parks & Recreation Department.

The next year, restless and always looking for inspiration, he and Dorothy moved their family overseas to Florence, Italy. This move outside of the United States became one of many over the years as they traveled to foreign countries where they would live for months or even years in cheap pensions. Dorothy would use her gift of languages as an interpreter, and Charles would set up a studio and immerse himself in local architecture as inspiration to design and create sculptures. Ultimately, he and Dorothy traveled extensively across Europe, the Middle East, and the Americas for sabbaticals and residencies throughout their lifetimes.

In 1963, they moved to Manchester, England, where Charles served as a sculpture instructor at Salford Technical College (now known as the University of Salford) for the next two years. It was here that he worked with British sculptor Mike Yeomans in structural studies which inspired many of his wire

and metal tube suspended sculptures.

Just two years later, in 1965, the family moved to Southern Kentucky when Charles became the first professor of sculpture at Western Kentucky University (WKU) in Bowling Green. Dorothy, in particular, had reservations about living in the South, where schools had been recently desegregated, although racial discrimination still persisted. The need for stability and a steady paycheck won out, and Charles started teaching classes in the basement of the university's historic Cherry Hall.

Later, when the Ivan Wilson Fine Arts Center was built in 1973, Charles designed the 4,000 square-foot sculpture facility with its state-of-the-art metal casting foundries for sand casting, lost wax, and ceramic shell processes. Charles taught hundreds of students during his teaching career and was known for his tidy, well-designed studio where every tool had its place. His daily attire comprised all-black turtlenecks and pants, immune to the white plaster dust floating everywhere. He taught at WKU for the next twenty-seven years while maintaining a studio in Southern Kentucky where he created his own artwork and showed it in many galleries and exhibitions.

Charles was first introduced to the Christian Science Church by his mother during the brief early years of his life when they were together. Although the church was unable to help with her illness, the family remembered them as being kind. Years later, as an adult, Charles joined the Christian Science Church and helped to design a new building at 2033 Nashville Road in Bowling Green (now occupied by the Unitarian Universalist Church). Charles believed in the power of prayer to heal the body and rarely took medicine. He enjoyed C. S. Lewis's books and found commonality by relating his own experience of finding spirituality in religion.

Charles used Gestalt drawings for designing his sculptures, as well as modified Ouija boards

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*Charles believed in the power  
of prayer to heal the body and  
rarely took medicine.*

---

for creative inspiration (see sidebar in *Human Figures* category). His sculptures also reflect his intellectual curiosity of metaphysics. He read extensively about the afterlife and near-death experiences. His daughter recalls as a young teenager witnessing his ability to move small objects solely with his mind, and cannot say today with certainty whether it was a well-played ruse or if it actually happened.

Charles became an expert in many mediums, following his curiosity and love of experimenting. His large concrete outdoor sculptures are among his most well-known works, but he also created much smaller sculptures cast in bronze or aluminum using the lost wax casting technique. Charles was especially adept at working with the human figure, and he created portrait busts, as well as much larger figurative forms, in materials ranging from welded steel to laminated plywood.

Although quite capable of capturing startlingly realistic details, his works are highly stylized and often abstracted—sometimes he twisted them into sly visual puzzles and riddles. Charles's projects, as well as his kinetic sphere sculptures and wire suspension works, inspired him to take a keen interest in engineering and merge interdisciplinary processes into his already diverse creative practice.

A prolific sculptor, Charles created over five hundred fifty sculptures during his lifetime. Most have been sold to collectors. In 1992, Charles retired from teaching. Five years later, he and Dorothy moved to Nashville, Tennessee, where he maintained a studio until he died in 2010 at eighty-one.

*“He was meticulous in his planning and engineering from the very beginning (for the) structural integrity of the piece, all the way to the finished surface. I never knew if Chuck was an engineer stuck in a sculptor’s body or a sculptor stuck in an engineer’s mind. But they always intermingled.”*

—RUSS FAXON, FORMER STUDENT AND SCULPTOR

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*The*

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# *CATEGORIES*

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*by Joe Nolan*

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CHARLES HOWARD FORRESTER made 567 sculptures during his lifetime and left detailed records about each of them. The figure numbers used in the photography captions and elsewhere in the book correspond to the chronological number he assigned to each sculpture.

## Early Works

YOUNG ARTISTS OFTEN EXPLORE many styles as they search for a flair of their own. These works offer insights into Forrester's early explorations where we see him working out techniques and testing materials. These early pieces also show us his initial interests in subjects, materials, and methods that came to mark his mature practice. We also see the first evidence of his love for soft, rounded forms, as well as the origins of his lifelong explorations of anatomy and architecture.

Perhaps most importantly, we see a diverse output of works that hint at a tireless curiosity and set the tone for his career. Some of the strongest examples of Forrester's early works are his portraits which demonstrate a natural knack for conveying emotion through gesture.

In *Self Portrait* (fig. 54, 1958), Forrester sees himself not unlike Auguste Rodin's *The Thinker*—the artist rests his head in his hand, and his eyes are closed in deep contemplation. He portrays himself with a bushy beard which even makes him look a little like the French master.

*Waiting Woman* (fig. 40, 1957) pictures its subject kneeling, her head covered in a scarf she holds together beneath her chin. Like *Self Portrait*, the *Waiting Woman* holds her eyes closed in a gesture simultaneously pained and peaceful.

Works like *Evangelist—Matthew* (fig. 100, 1965), *Vanquished* (fig. 187, 1961), and *Fallen Warrior* (fig. 190, 1961) all demonstrate Forrester's early interest in abstract works which still flirt with figuration. *Vanquished* makes use of anatomical rib-like structure, while *Fallen Warrior* echoes and includes a form like a mushroom cap.

*Druid's Circle* (fig. 216, 1965) offers an abstract cylindrical form that's both figurative and architectural. One can imagine the titular druids linked arm in arm in a magical circle, but the work also recalls druidic stone structures standing like Stonehenge.



Fig. 54 *Self Portrait*, 1958  
Fiberglass  
Steve Worthing, Asheville, NC

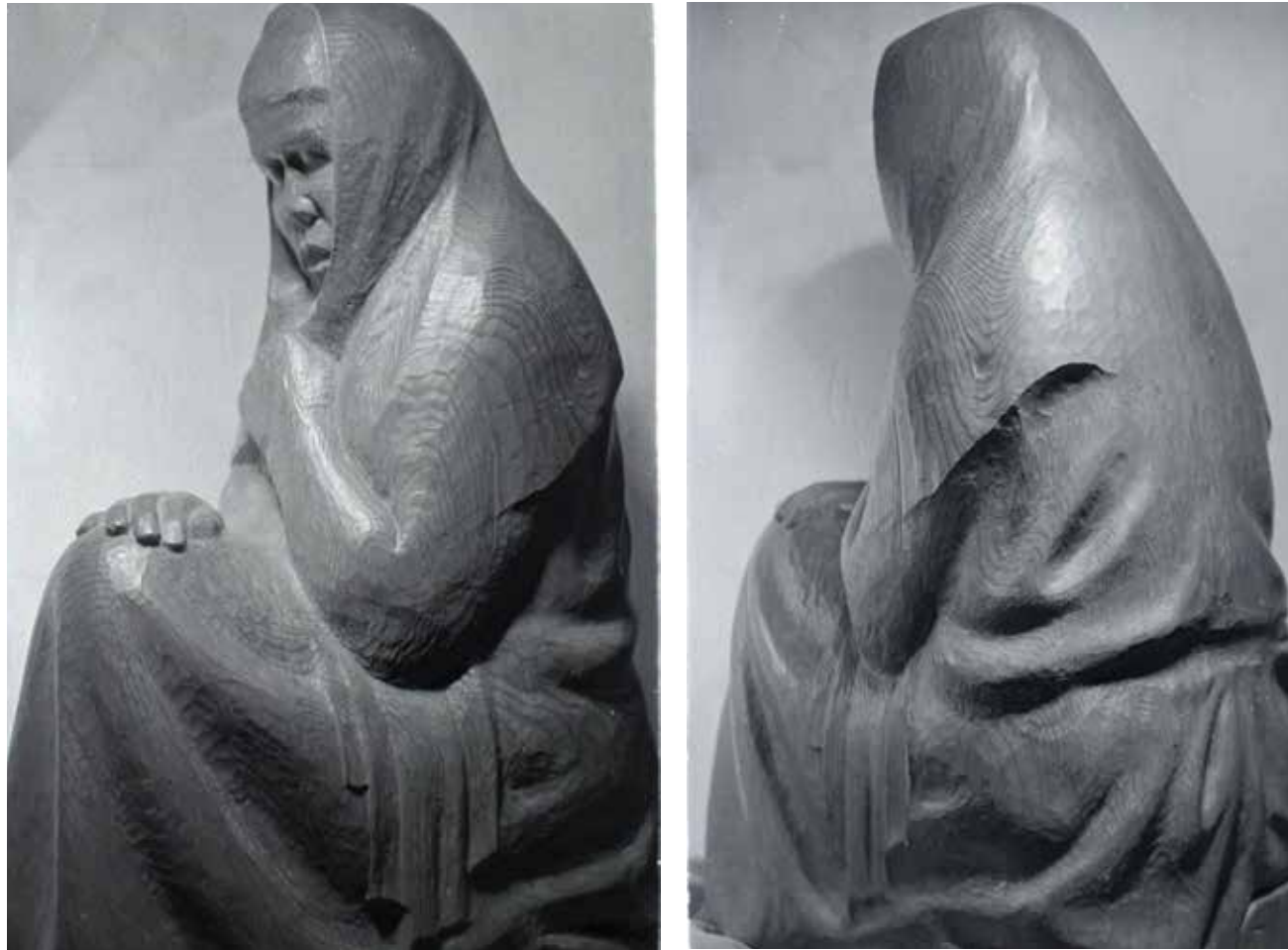


Fig. 40 *Waiting Woman*, 1957  
Cedar wood, 24" H  
Dr. W. H. Gaughan, Eugene, OR



Fig. 216 *Druid's Circle*, 1965  
Bronze, 11"W x 8"D x 12.5"H  
Forrester Family Collection





Fig. 100 *Evangelist-Matthew*, 1965  
Aluminum, 7"W x 7"D x 31"H  
Forrester Family Collection

Opposite page

Above:  
Fig. 187 *Vanquished*, 1961  
Aluminum, 19"W x 6.5"D x 10"H  
Forrester Family Collection

Below:  
Fig. 190 *Fallen Warrior*, 1961  
Bronze, 19.5"W x 6.5"D x 7"H  
Forrester Family Collection



## Human Figures

LOOKING ONLY AT FORRESTER'S human figures we can see the breadth of his works. From masterful realism to playful abstractions, these figurative pieces are the best introduction for viewers new to his art.

Comparing *The Voyage* (fig. 218, 1962) with *English Daughter* (fig. 221, 1962) we can gather insights into the broad range of expressions Forrester brought to his figurative works. *The Voyage* gives us two travelers, linking arms—they're rendered in abstract lumps and lines, their heads and facial features are jarringly geometric. We don't know if these voyagers are departing or arriving, but there is a darkness to this voyage, and I'm reminded of photographs of refugees who've had their human dignity stripped-away by war, famine, or disease. *English Daughter* gives viewers something completely different: a girl bundled-up in a winter coat, looking like she's about to head out on her morning walk to school. There is nothing abstract about this work, but it's stylized in its minimalist detailing which gives the work a buoyant joy in contrast to the darker implications of *The Voyage*.

*Margo* (fig. 408, 1973) and *Reclining Figure* (fig. 422, 1978) are another pair of similar, but strikingly different works. *Margo* finds the eponymous nude reclining into the cascade of her thick, curling hair. *Reclining Figure* is also a nude, but the body of the figure is awkwardly twisted into an unnatural position, and there is only a kind of apostrophe for a head at the end of a long neck.

Forrester also indulged his penchant for puns and hidden details in his figurative work. *Running Abreast* (fig. 357, 1970) features the lower leg of a walking figure which morphs into a single nude breast on the reverse side of the sculpture. Similarly, *Portrait Bust* (fig. 356, 1970) is a portrait of a woman's peaceful face, but the back of her head is actually another sculpture of a gracefully upturned breast.



Fig. 218 *The Voyage*, 1962  
Aluminum, 14"H  
J.P. Matthews & Co., North Little Rock, AR



Fig. 221 *English Daughter*, 1962  
Bronze, 4.5"W x 3.75" x 17"H  
Forrester Family Collection



**Fig. 408** *Margo* (two views), 1973  
Terracotta, 19"W x 9.5"D x 9"H  
Forrester Family Collection

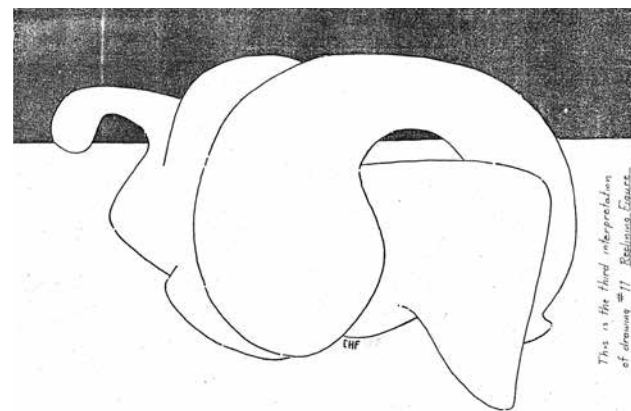
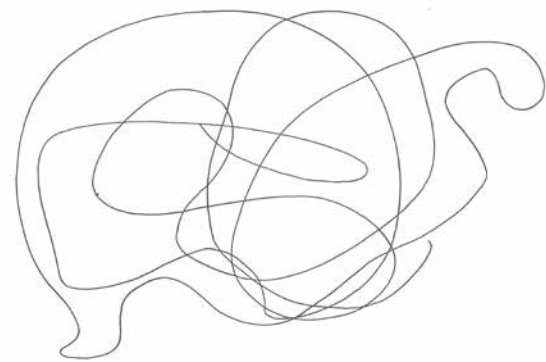


## *The Development of Sculptures from Drawings by Two People Using a Ouija Board*

ARTIST'S STATEMENT BY CHARLES FORRESTER, 1978

THE *RECLINING FIGURE* (fig. 422, 1978) sculpture shown here was developed from one Ouija board drawing. The planchette was modified to accept a felt tip pen. After an initial warm-up period, the Ouija drew one picture after another, pausing only for a paper change and stopping when we decided we had enough drawings. As the eye will see only what it is capable of seeing, my students and I each interpreted the drawings differently. Some drawings were clearly mine; others had no meaning for me.

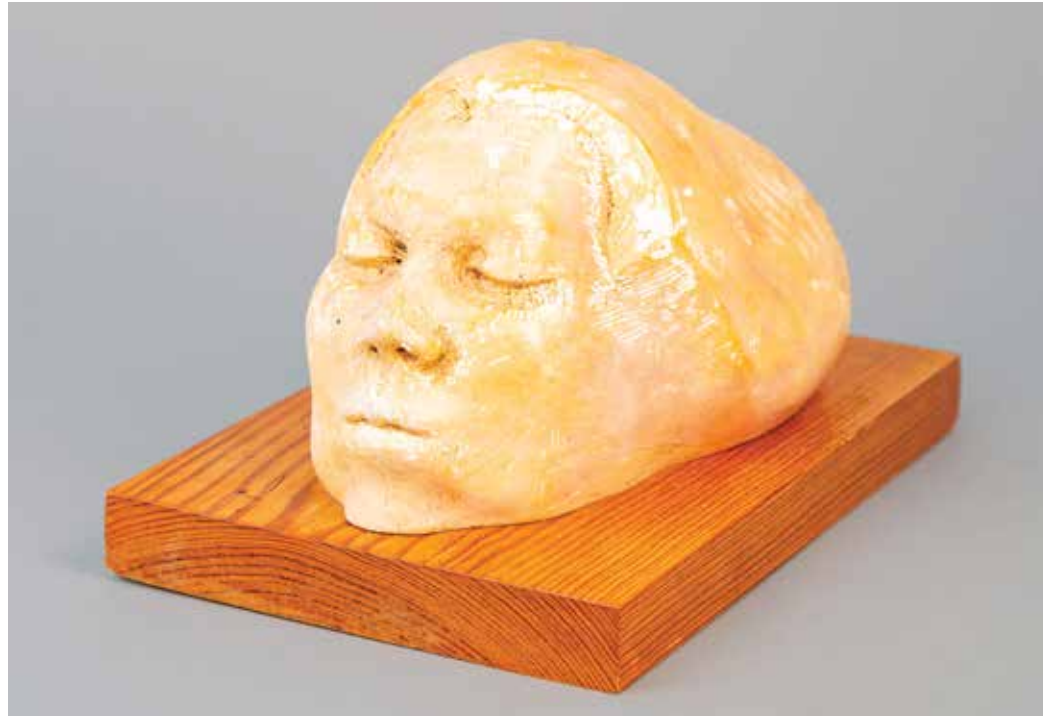
All drawings were not only transparent and showing all edges at once, but they presented different sculptures from different views. The problem was to redraw them as a solid sculptural object.



This is the third interpretation  
of drawing #11. Reclining Figure.



**Fig. 422 *Reclining Figure*, 1978**  
Bronze, 12"W x 5.5"D x 4.5"H  
Forrester Family Collection



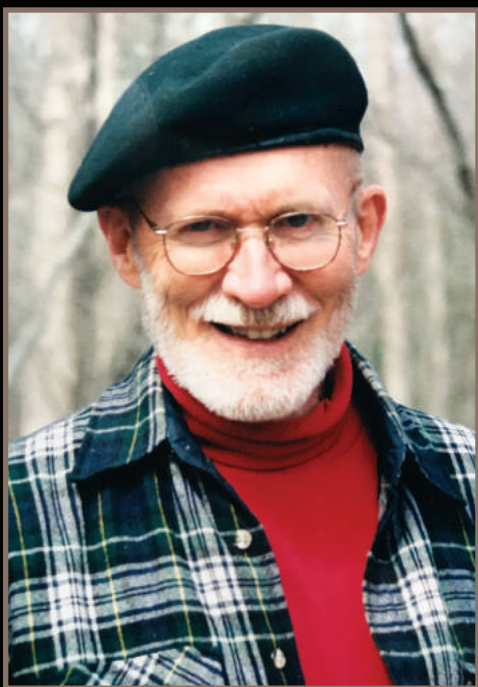
**Fig. 356 *Portrait Bust*, 1970**  
Plaster with stain, 9.25"W x 6"D x 6.5"H  
Forrester Family Collection



**Fig. 357 *Running Abreast*, 1970**  
Plaster with stain, 13"W x 4.25"D x 19"H  
Forrester Family Collection







# *Journey into the World of Charles H. Forrester— A Mind in Motion.*

CHARLES FORRESTER (1928-2010)—master of the visual pun—comes to life through his art, reflecting the flux and flow of an artist's mind as he mapped out correlations between experiences and synthesized something new.

Forrester's material legacy—his sculptures, drawings, and journals—reveals a mind in motion, constantly linking knowledge, experience, impulses, and memories to one another through techniques that operated both at and below the level of consciousness.

Following his curiosity and love of experimenting, Forrester became an expert in many mediums. Although quite capable of capturing startlingly realistic details, his works are highly stylized and often abstracted.

The artist's large concrete outdoor sculptures across the United States and England are among his most well-known works, but he also created many smaller sculptures cast in bronze and aluminum. A professor at Western Kentucky University (WKU) in Bowling Green, Kentucky, for almost thirty years, Forrester and his work directly impacted generations of sculptors and artists.

A prolific sculptor whose artwork spans six decades, he created over five hundred fifty sculptures during his lifetime. Most have been sold to collectors. In 1992, Forrester retired from teaching. Five years later, he and his wife, Dorothy, moved to Nashville, Tennessee, where he maintained a studio up until his death.

## *Insight into Forrester and his work*

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*"He was able to put forms and shapes together to make them their own expression, which I just love...very inspirational."* — Russ Faxon, WELL-KNOWN SCULPTOR AND ONE OF FORRESTER'S WKU STUDENTS, 1969-73

*"Some artists find a particular trope that works for them, and they exhaust that trope. Charles Forrester had a more expansive, restless approach to making work. I see architectural studies, portraiture, abstractions, assemblage, postmodernism."* — Guy Jordan, WKU ART HISTORIAN

*"I didn't know Charles Forrester face to face, but as artists, we're connected through almost an unbroken line. I know him. I just never met him."* — Kristina Arnold, WKU ART DEPARTMENT HEAD



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