

# Richard Hunt (sculptor)

**Richard Hunt** (born September 12, 1935) is an internationally renowned sculptor who is African American.

He was born in 1935 on Chicago's South Side. From an early age he was interested in the arts, as his mother was an artist. As a young boy, Hunt began to show enthusiasm and talent in artistic disciplines such as drawing and painting, and also sculpture, an interest that grew more and more as he got older. He developed his skills at the Junior School of the Art Institute and later at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Hunt also acquired business sense and awareness of social issues from working for his father in a barber's shop.

Hunt began to experiment with materials and sculpting techniques, influenced heavily by progressive twentieth-century artists. This experimentation garnered critically positive response from the art community, such that Hunt was exhibited at the Artists of Chicago and Vicinity Show and the American Show, where the Museum of Modern Art purchased a piece for its collection. He was the youngest artist to exhibit at the 1962 Seattle World's Fair, a major international survey exhibition of modern art.

Hunt has completed more public sculptures than any other artist in the country. His signature pieces include *Jacob's Ladder* at the Carter G. Woodson Library in Chicago and *Flintlock Fantasy* in Detroit. He was appointed by President Lyndon Johnson as one of the first artists to serve on the governing board of the National Endowment for the Arts and he also served on boards of the Smithsonian Institution. Hunt is the recipient of numerous awards and honorary degrees.

Hunt has continued to experiment throughout his successful career, employing a wide range of sculptural techniques. Through his work, Hunt often makes comments on contemporary social and political issues.

*From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia*

## Artist's Statement

My career in sculpture began in 1955. It was then, while still a student, I began to exhibit my sculpture around Chicago in all sorts of places-art fairs, small galleries, local art centers, and the like. During the twelve years that followed, my sculptural development grew as a private, independent, studio-based, self-generated activity that responded to the stimuli I supplied and the skills I could master.

Then in 1967, I began work on *Play*, a commissioned sculpture which my studio could not accommodate. I started to work on sculpture for the first time outside of my studio, on a time and material basis in a metal fabrication shop, with the help of other men and machines. *Play*, as I look back on it, began what has been a second career for me, that of a public sculptor. The dimensions of this second career, which remains inextricably linked with the first, were not clear in that beginning, and have only become apparent to me with time and reflection on its course.

Work in the factory contrasts with work in the studio, where the sculptor's head, hand, and hammer can shape an idea in a spontaneous generation, which is frozen in time as it is fused with the torch's heat. Outside the studio, the sculptor's horizons broaden to the limits of the possible; that is to the extent the sculptor can conceive of, and master, the interactive possibilities. These possibilities are often realized through the creative interaction of the artist with patrons, or patron groups in their conception, and with engineers, technicians, and tradesmen in their execution. Outside of the studio, the sculptor's internal dialogue gives way to the dialogue that a sculpture sets up with the environment the sculpture is created for.

Public sculpture responds to the dynamics of a community, or of those in it, who have a use for sculpture. It is this aspect of use, of utility, that gives public sculpture its vital and lively place in the public mind.

The challenges utility brings to the sculptor's mind and art, are as varied as the people and the sites encountered with each commission. As sculptors in our time respond creatively to the challenges that the opportunities for the greater utilization of sculpture impose, we establish links with the greatest traditions in sculpture, and with the largest and most diverse audience sculpture has ever had.

***Richard Hunt***

*reproduced from Richard Hunt, New York: Dorsky Gallery, 1989*