
Patricia Wengraf

I have always been more taken by three-dimensional works than flat art and learned about model making and injection moulding in my first business producing toys. At that time, I bought sculpture of various periods and origins as a hobby. It was some years later when on several occasions viewing the Giambologna exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1978, I perceived that although most of the bronzes were labelled as either by Giambologna, or by Antonio Susini, there were clearly more hands and styles involved, which could not all have emanated from those two sources.

So I decided to learn about sculpture, and turn what had been a hobby into a business.



The very first work that I purchased as a dealer, in December 1979 was a Renaissance terracotta figure of *St Michael* which I later sold to Alexis Gregory, who gifted it to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (see fig. 1). And my second purchase, also at that time, was of a bronze statuette of *David Drawing Goliath's Sword*, which was immediately snapped up by the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.

Fig. 1 Master of the David and St John Statuettes, *St. Michael*, 1500-10, terracotta, h. 86 cm, Acc: 2004.534 Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Bequest of Alexis Gregory.

When I first met the eminent art historian Sir John Pope-Hennessy in 1980, he encouraged me to work with bronzes and immediately introduced me to Mrs Charles Wrightsman. Over the next couple of years or so, I found her several very fine bronzes which she bought on Sir John's advice (fig. 2).



Fig. 2 Roger Schabol, *Electeur Maximilian II Emanuel of Bavaria on Horseback*, signed and dated 1707, after a model by Desjardins, bronze with gilt bronze mount, h. 53.3 cm., Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Acc: 2019.283.27. Bequest of Mrs Charles Wrightsman.

A couple of years later, Sir John introduced me to Claudia Quentin. By 2000, when we had already collected a good body of works including the finest cast known of Giambologna's *Mars* (fig. 3), I suggested to Claudia that she might like to have the collection exhibited and a catalogue compiled. *European Bronzes from the Quentin Collection* opened at The Frick Collection in September 2004 to great critical acclaim. It was the first exhibition of a private collection to be staged in a major New York museum.



Since 2004 Claudia has added some more fine works to the collection of the Quentin Foundation, including a magnificent terracotta circular relief by Giambologna, representing *An Episode from the Crusades* (fig. 4). It was shown in *The Cinquecento in Florence* exhibition which opened in September 2017 in Palazzo Strozzi, Florence. It was subsequently published in *Paragone* (March 2018) by Dimitrios Zikos.

Fig. 3 Giambologna, *Mars*, cast before 1577, probably by Zanobi Portigiani, bronze, h. 39.6 cm., the Quentin Foundation on loan to The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



Fig. 4 Giambologna, *An Episode from the Crusades*, terracotta bozzetto. The Quentin Foundation, on loan to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

When I first met Tom Hill in 1998, he had wanted to buy a bronze of *Hercules & Antaeus* (fig. 5) which I had already sold. However, over the next few years I managed to find Tom ten of the finest Giambologna statuettes to be found in any museum, and in 2009 I found him another early cast of the group of *Hercules & Antaeus* which had first brought us together in 1998. In 2008 we bought de Vries' *Bacchic Man* (fig. 6) which is the greatest bronze in the collection, to which several more works were added following the exhibition *European and Baroque Bronzes from the Hill Collection*, held at The Frick Collection in early 2014.



Fig. 5 Attributed to Maso Finiguerra, *Hercules & Antaeus*, c. 1460, bronze, h. 25.5 cm., the Quentin Foundation, on loan to The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



In the exhibition, Tom and I wanted to demonstrate how one can mix modern paintings with old master bronzes, as he does in his home. Working together with Denise Allen (then at The Frick Collection) on the installation, she selected the Ruscha and two Twomblys from Tom's collection and juxtaposed them with the de Vries *Bacchic Man* and the Piamontini equestrian statuette, creating a very beautiful and innovative installation.

Fig. 6 Adriaen de Vries, *Bacchic Man*: Lomazzo personifying the *Accademia della Val di Blenio*, cast c. 1578-80, probably by Giovanni Andrea Pellissone, bronze, h. 89.5 cm., collection of Mr and Mrs J. Tomilson Hill, New York.

Fig. 7 Jan Baptiste van Helderberghe, *Guardian Angel leading a Child away from the Devil*, signed *JB. V.H. F.*, gilt bronze, h. 38.2 cm., private collection, New York.

I was first encouraged by Anthony Radcliffe, then Keeper of Sculpture at the Victoria and Albert Museum, to publish a short article for *The Burlington Magazine* (December 1988), about my discovery of a couple of bronzes that were similarly signed. One of them (a *St. Martin and the Beggar*) had previously been misidentified, while from the other formerly unknown model of a *Guardian Angel leading a Child away from the Devil* (fig. 7), I reinterpreted the signature *JB. V. H. F.* to read: 'Jan Baptiste van Helderberghe Fecit', due to a documented marble by the sculptor in the Church of St. Bavo, Ghent.



Looking back to some of my most important finds - my first real discovery was probably my purchase in 1981 of a bronze group of *Pan & Syrinx*, which I identified with Giovan Battista Foggini from a drawing for the model. I sold it to a private client who still owns it.

In 1984, I heard that a quite extraordinary sale of paintings and sculptures was taking place just outside Angoulême and rapidly headed there with a catalogue. I was primarily interested in a life-size marble figure of *Paris* (fig. 8), which I had identified as being by the great northern baroque sculptor, Gabriel Grupello. I arrived just in time to view it. Luckily the four curators from the Louvre who were there failed to recognise it and I bought it for a fraction of what I had been prepared to bid. The sculpture is now in the Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg.

Fig. 8 Gabriel Grupello, *Paris*, c. 1691-92, marble, h. 176 cm., Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg.

Fig. 9 Giambologna, *Fata Morgana*, 1571-72, marble, h. 99 cm., private collection, Europe.



My greatest discovery came in 1989, when flipping through some auction catalogues, I immediately recognized that a half-length marble sculpture being offered by Christie's at Wrotham Park was by Giambologna. Mis-catalogued as '*Venus Marina*, Italian eighteenth century', it was estimated at just £3000 - £4000. I grabbed an offprint of Charles Avery's article of 1982 on Giambologna's female marble figures, which had been published in *The Burlington Magazine*, and there was Borghini's original text which accurately described the marble in Christie's catalogue. I cannot go into the lengthy saga that ensued, but against everyone else, I bought the *Fata Morgana* (fig. 9).

In 1997 the *Fata Morgana* was exhibited in the Palazzo Pitti, as the City of Florence were trying to buy the sculpture. But when they were unable to do so, I sold it in the following year to a private collector.

Fig. 10 Germain Pilon, and workshop, *The Young Henri III, wearing a hat*, c. 1555-56, polychrome terracotta, h. 37.5 cm., Bode Museum, Berlin.

In 1990 I had come across a very beautiful, but considerably over-painted, little polychrome terracotta bust, which I was unable to buy at that time. In 2007 I was able to purchase the work, which I had in the meantime researched and identified as Germain Pilon's portrait of the *Young Henri III* of France of 1555-56 (fig.10). As I had suspected, most of the original polychrome was still present and once my restorer had brought the bust back to life, I immediately sold it to the Bode Museum, Berlin.



Fig. 11 The Fury Master, *St. Sebastian*, early 17th century, ivory, h. 44.5 cm., Acc. 2013.36, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, European Sculpture and Decorative Arts Fund, Walter and Leonore Annenberg Acquisitions Endowment Fund, and Mr. and Mrs. J. Tomilson Hill and Hester Diamond Gifts, 2013.



In September 2007, at the Paris Biennale I noticed a quite exceptionally beautiful ivory statuette of *St. Sebastian*, described as 'German seventeenth-century'. Not then knowing who had made it, I saw the outstanding quality and decided to buy it. I was in no rush to sell it as I wished to really get to know this work which I love. In due course I identified it as an early work by the Fury Master, made in Salzburg circa 1605/10. I was thrilled when it was bought by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, as I can always visit *St. Sebastian* (fig.11) whenever I'm in New York. Many of my other significant discoveries, particularly in bronze and terracotta, are found among the works now in the Quentin and Hill collections.