

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2001

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A SELECT LOOK AT SANTA FE ARTS, CRAFTS, TASTES AND STYLES



"Transcend" by David Pearson, bronze 52" high edition of 12 © 2001
Installation at Los Alamos National Bank
Santa Fe, New Mexico

ANGELIC LOVE AND AVIAN GRACE

*David Pearson draws inspiration from Italy's past
and the world outside his window.*

By Gussie Fauntleroy



"Whisper," ©2001, bronze, edition of 9, 72" high



"Dawn," ©2001, bronze, edition of 12, 41" high

Sculptor David Pearson returned from a visit to Italy this spring charged with inspiration—but not simply from having experienced some of the most magnificent sculpture known to man. What impressed Pearson just as much, he reflects, was seeing evidence of the consummate effort made by

the ancients and by Renaissance artists and artisans to improve themselves and their craft ceaselessly.

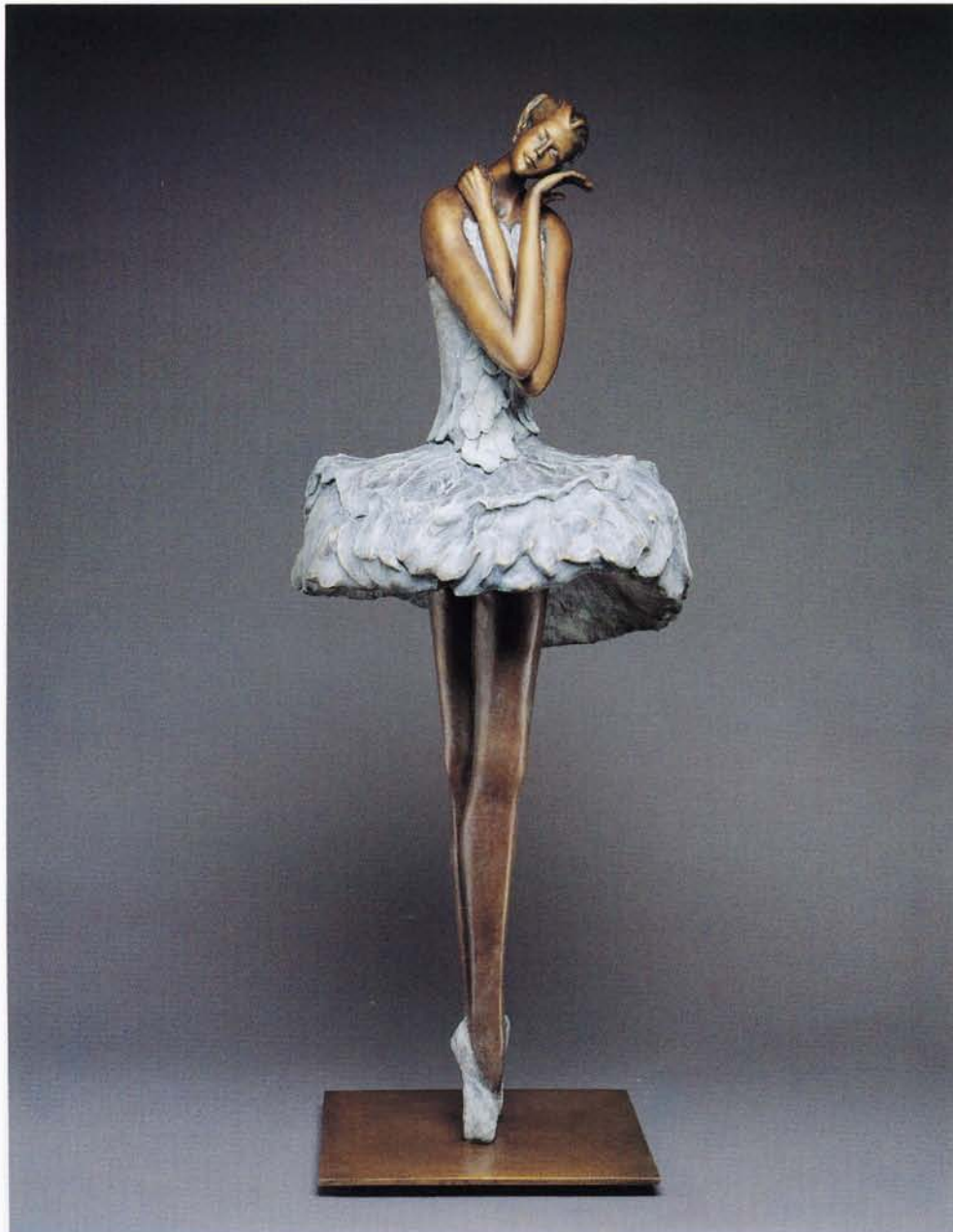
This call to perfection, combined with the sheer delight of seeing churches, public buildings, and even utilitarian items imbued with undeniable beauty, will resonate for a

long time in his approach to his own work, Pearson believes.

Already, the Santa Fe-based bronze sculptor has seen a shift in his attitude in the studio. Patience and concentration have increased, and his acceptance of the good-enough has shrunk. He's eager to push



"Three Muses," ©2001, bronze, edition of 7, 43" high



"Swan," ©2001, bronze, edition of 15, 39" high

himself always a little more, to focus an even stronger flow of creative thrust, to keep on working until he makes a challenging piece succeed. For an artist whose own aesthetic has always leaned in the direction of elegance and grace, this extra impulse to excellence can only result in even more thoughtful and fluid work.

Indeed, Pearson notes that since his return, he has experienced not so much a change in the style or content of his sculpture as a refinement of the direction in which it was already moving. Elongated female forms which had begun to express more individual personalities continue in that vein, while still serving as symbols for universal concepts such as peacefulness,

wonder, and love.

Another influence on Pearson's current body of work is the inspiration he enjoys from spending each day in his new studio, completed a year ago. Any artist can make do, and for years Pearson tapped into creativity and honed his sculptural skills while also being creative with space and honing his cleaning skills in a studio so small the traces of one process had to be tidied before the next could begin.

Now, in a light-filled space more than twice the size of his old studio, separate rooms allow for uninterrupted sculpting, working in wax, and mold-making in areas designed for each process. Outside large windows, landscaping rocks with cavities

that catch water attract all kinds of birds, as does the seed Pearson sets out every day. Like the mood of many of his works, this quiet environment encourages the contemplative watching of birds, the gathering of thoughts, and a smooth creative flow.

Not surprisingly, an avian theme emerges often in the current work. "Innocence," for example, features a female figure holding an arched branch on which sits a line of songbirds. Lost in wonder, the girl stares quietly down at the small creatures.

Another piece, "Dawn," captures the moment of awakening, as one emerges into the morning still wrapped in the calm of sleep, feelings, and dreams. In this case the tall, ethereal figure is half-woman, half-bird,



"Innocence," ©2001, bronze, edition of 12, 62" high

and the cloak of her solitude is in the form of feathered wings.

In an ode to the utilitarian beauty of the ancient world, "Three Muses" is a shallow bird bath held aloft by three graceful figures, drawing together the physical word of actual bird life and the intangible realm of creative thought.

A similar element in other works combines the manifest with the other-worldly in an almost endless array of potential realms of meaning. In "Whisper," one figure stands closely behind another, their heads close together, the back figure gently clasping the front figure's hand. One woman could be the other's guardian angel without wings, the artist suggests. Or the front figure could be a creation of the other's imagination or dream. On a physical plane, they could be sisters, or dear friends. In any case, Pearson relates, the feeling conveyed by the pair is pure, angelic love—no matter who the two may be.



A new series of wall pieces adds another component to the artist's sculptural signature. Fully three-dimensional but mounted close to the wall, these figures of birds on a branch have a loose, free, line-drawing quality, bridging the divide between sculpture and two-dimensional art.

In his new studio, with images of Italy's greatest art ablaze in his memory, Pearson sees his own work these days in a new light. "You realize you have only so much time, and you really want to push yourself—not to try and change the world or the art scene; it's a personal path," he explains. Smiling, he adds, "And it's fun. It's a fun goal."

David Pearson's bronze editions and one-of-a-kind pieces are represented by Patricia Carlisle Fine Art, 554 Canyon Road. Hours: 10:00-5:00 daily. (505) 820-0596 or 1-888-820-0596; www.carlisle.com. A show of Pearson's work runs October 10-18, 2001, with an artist's reception from 5:00-7:00 on October 12th.