American sculptors have played an active role in New York's National Academy of Design from the time of its establishment in 1825 to the present day. Sculptors were among the founders of the Academy; their work appeared in the earliest of its annual exhibitions, and the permanent collection of the Academy was enhanced almost from the beginning by examples of their work. In spite of this, painting dominated the Academy and much of the nineteenth century, leaving sculpture to play a less conspicuous role.[1]

One of the reasons for this limited attention was almost certainly an early Academy rule, in effect from 1826 until 1869, which required that members maintain residency in New York City. Dependency on Italian workmen and Italian marble kept many nineteenth-century American neoclassic sculptors in Florence or Rome and therefore unable to conform to the residency rule. The Academy could, however, award Honorary Memberships to the better known sculptors of the day which it did in the case of Horatio Greenough, Hiram Powers, and Thomas Crawford.

The 1841 annual exhibition was the first to include a comparatively respectable quantity of sculptural work. A total of eighteen pieces were displayed all of them portrait busts. This number was, however, quite unusual and it was not until after the Civil War that more sculptures were seen at the Academy. Although some writers did comment on the disparity between the number of paintings and the number of sculptures on view, critical notice of sculpture at the Academy was generally scarce. A writer for the June, 1851, *Bulletin of the American Art-Union* did notice that only one sculpture was included in the annual that year, Erastus Dow Palmer's bust of *Infant Ceres.*[2] While he praised this lone bust, he was dismayed at its isolation and was inspired to compare the Academy's show to that of the French Salon. "The number of objects in sculpture in the great French exhibition," he wrote,

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\text{was four hundred and sixty-six, about one-tenth of the whole. Of these, there were about three hundred portraits, leaving one hundred and sixty works of the imagination. Applying that ratio to our Exhibition, we should have had forty productions in sculpture, and at least sixteen examples of its higher walks.}
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He conceded that not only were most American supporters of sculpture living in Europe, but also that "connoisseurs at home [did] not extend to [sculpture] the attention and support" of which it was deserving. [3]

The first internationally-known sculpture to appear in an Academy exhibition was Horatio Greenough's *Chanting Cherubs* (unlocated), shown in 1832. The work, which had been commissioned by James Fenimore Cooper, made its New York debut at the American Academy of Fine Arts. Although as an Honorary Member Greenough was not required to submit a diploma piece to the Academy, he was an ardent supporter of the institution, even during his long years abroad. Greenough registered for the antique drawing classes in 1827 and 1828; he sent casts from the antique and copies of Old Master paintings to the Academy for use by its students; and, although it was strictly an honorary position, he held the title of Professor of Sculpture there for a decade.

Today, Greenough is represented at the Academy by the neoclassical bust of his friend and correspondent, Samuel F. B. Morse, modeled in the autumn of 1831 when the sculptor and the painter were both working in Paris. Greenough sent the first marble version of the bust, (now housed at the National Museum of American Art, Washington, D.C.), from Florence directly to the Academy where it appeared in the 1833 annual exhibition.[6] A decade later the Council of the Academy asked that Morse "permit a copy in plaster to be made of his marble bust and that the same be placed at the head of the council room."[7] At the same time, they deemed that, once completed, the bust should be paired with a sculpted portrait of Washington Allston, an Honorary Member of the Academy who had recently died. It was immediately agreed that the commission should be awarded to Ohio-born sculptor Shobal Vail Clevenger, who had already taken a model of Allston from life for the Boston Athenaeum in 1839. Unfortunately, the sculptor died before the Academy's request could be met and so the original plaster was purchased from Clevenger's widow and placed in the Academy's collection. [8]
During its early decades, the Academy actively pursued the purchase of antique sculpture plaster casts for use by its students and members. By far the most important accession of this type was a collection purchased from the American Academy in 1842. Several of the older plasters were not casts from the antique at all, but more recent sculptures which, today, would be considered original, or nearly original, works of art. A cast of Alexander Hamilton by Giuseppe Ceracchhi, modeled from life in Philadelphia in the early 1790s, formed part of the group, as did several busts by the Frenchman Jean-Antoine Houdon, including a portrait of Robert Fulton.

The majority of sculptures at the Academy were presented by artists in fulfillment of membership requirements, but in some cases the collection was in fact enhanced by donations, commissions or bequests. An important example of this is the bust of a founding member of the Academy, Asher Brown Durand, modeled in 1847 by the subject's friend and soon-to-be fellow Academician, Henry Kirke Brown. On completion, Brown presented the bust to Durand who then passed it on to his son, John. Understanding the importance of his father to the Academy and vice versa, he donated the work in 1887. The well-known American painter Henry Inman was the subject of a second sculpted portrait, executed by Robert Ball Hughes and donated to the Academy in 1887 by Inman's good friend, George Buckham. It is most likely that the work was also commissioned by Buckham, who was instrumental in organizing the 1846 Inman memorial exhibition in New York.

While it remained rare for the Academy to commission works of art, occasions did arise during the second half of the nineteenth century where portraits were granted in commemoration of artists who had played an important part in the development of the institution. One of these individuals was Charles Loring Elliott whose portrait by Charles Calverley was acquired by the Academy in 1870. The two artists, Elliott and Calverley, met in the early 1860s in the Albany studio of Erastus Dow Palmer where Calverley was an apprentice. Apparently, a mutual admiration developed between the two for they soon executed portraits of each another, and a version of Calverley's sculpted image of Elliott was exhibited at the National Academy in the spring of 1868. Elliott died only a few months later and a group of his fellow artists and friends soon established a subscription for a memorial to him. Calverley, who by then had moved to New York, was remembered for his slightly earlier bust of Elliott and the group recommended that he receive a commission to create a marble version. The finished bust was unveiled at the Academy in 1870 with the appropriate speeches and toasts.

In the years following the Civil War, several works also entered the Academy's collection by the more usual means, that is, as required diploma works presented by artists on their election to Academician status. Such was the case for John Quincy Adams Ward, who presented the Academy with a plaster bust of the painter Henry Peters Gray in 1863. This is evidently the only cast ever made of the work. Although accidentally destroyed around the turn-of-the-century, Ward was able to replace it with an important bronze piece, The Freedman. He may have selected this particular sculpture for presentation not only because of its enduring popularity, but because it was typical of the work he was doing during the 1860s. His thoughtfulness in this matter was, in a sense, to be expected, for he was very active at the Academy during the second half of the century, serving as vice president beginning in 1870, and as president in 1873.

The final quarter of the century also saw the arrival in the collection of a portrait of the French artist Jules Bastien-Lepage by Augustus Saint-Gaudens. This work, presented to the Academy as the sculptor's diploma piece in 1890, provides a fine example of the low-reliefs for which Saint-Gaudens became famous in the early years of his career. The sculptor had first shown his work at the Academy in 1875, but he was never an active exhibitor there, no doubt due to his involvement in the founding of the rival organization, the Society of American Artists, in 1877. It is interesting to note, however, that his boyhood home was located immediately next door to the Academy on Fourth Avenue in New York. It was obviously very convenient, therefore, for him to attend the antique class here between 1863 and 1867 and the life class in 1866 and 1867. He recalled these years in his reminiscences which were first published in Century Magazine in 1909:

Shortly after beginning with Lea Brethon [a New York cameo-cutter] I also entered the National Academy of Design, the picturesque Italian Doge's palace on the corner of Fourth Avenue and Twenty-third Street.... This studying in the Academy at nights was very dream-like and in the surrounding quiet, broken only by the little shrill whistle of an ill-burning gas jet, I first felt my God-like indifference and scorn of all other would-be artists. Here, too, came my appreciation of the antique and my earliest attempts to draw from the nude with the advise of Mr. Huntington and Mr. Leutze.

The advent of a new century saw a marked increase in the number of sculptures shown at the Academy's annual and admitted into the permanent collection. The number of sculptors becoming members of the organization also increased, leading to an expanded range of subject matter. Genre pieces were provided by the likes of Edward Clark Potter, whose Sleeping Faun was presented to the Academy as a diploma work in 1908. Sculptural representations of animals were executed by Alexander Phimister Proctor who, in 1904, admitted his diploma work, A Horse, 1890. Anna Hyatt Huntington followed suit with Contended Lioness, made expressly for presentation as her diploma piece in 1922. Several
sculptures based upon biblical or mythological subjects also entered the collection. Among these are Herbert Adams' *The Rabbi's Daughter*, a cast of 1894; Frederick Mac Monnies' uniquely silver-patinated bronze *Diana*, completed in 1890 and accepted by the Academy in 1907; and, later, Anna Huntington's version of the same subject, a bronze *Diana of the Chase*, first modeled and exhibited here in 1922, and given to the permanent collection in 1948. The latter bronze has long been the centerpiece for the main staircase of the Academy's current home, the perfect adornment for the former residence of its creator, and, inevitably, the unofficial symbol of the Academy itself.

Notes:

1. The National Academy's sculpture collection has been catalog and published four times, often as part of larger cataloging projects. A "List of Statues, Busts: Bas Reliefs, Books, Engravings and Paintings" was included in the 1843 publication, *Constitution and By-Laws of the National Academy of Design* (New York: I. Sackett, Book and Job Printer); *Catalogue of Statues, Busts, Studies, Etc. Forming the Collection of the Antique School of the National Academy of Design*, 1846 (New York: 1. Sackett, Book and Job Printer); the 1852 *Constitution of the National Academy of Design* (New York: Sackett & Co., Book and Job Printers) was appended with a list of property owned by the Academy, including sculpture; these works were again featured in the most comprehensive catalog of the Academy collection to date, *Catalogue of the Permanent Collection, National Academy of Design 1826-1910*, prepared by George W. Maynard and published in 1911 (New York); and Abigail Booth Gerdts compiled the brief Checklist: *Sculptures in the Collection of the National Academy of Design* in 1984. The definitive work on the collection as it exists in 1993 will be the forthcoming *Catalogue of the Paintings and Sculptures in the Collection of the National Academy of Design*, edited by Abigail Booth Gerdts.


5. See Bill Deyonghy, Lehdon, to J. L. Morton, NAD, New York, February 25, 1832, NAD Archives.

6. This marble is now in the collection of the National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. Following its exhibition at NAD in 1833, it was sent on to Morse, its owner.

7. NAD Minutes, October 16, 1843, and December 4, 1843. Despite the role of the sitter of this bust in the history of the Academy and the distinctive features of the bust itself, the work was thought to be lost for much of the 20th century until it was located in the Academy school's cast collection in the mid-1980s by Abigail Booth Gerdts, former Curator of Painting and Sculpture of NAD.

8. The American Art Union borrowed the Allston bust in 1847 to use as the model for a medal to be cast in silver and bronze and distributed to its members. The design was executed by Paul Peter Duggan and was engraved on the die by Charles C. Wright. Several examples of the Allston Medal were presented to the Academy and remain in the collection.

9. Several founding members of the Academy gave or lent casts of antique sculptures that were in their possession. (NAD, Minutes, January 14, 1826).

10. NAD Minutes, January 31, 1842.

11. See John Durand, South Orange [New Jersey], to Daniel Huntington, NAD, New York, April 5, 1887, NAD Archives.


17. NAD Minutes, February 3, 1890.

18. NAD School records, NAD Archives.

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