French Bronze Sculptures: Representing History through Art by Albert Cash

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Bronze sculptures are some of the most sought-after items by private collectors and museums because of their beauty and presentation, as well as for their rarity. These characteristics of bronze sculptures make them good finds that command high prices at auctions. Some of the best sculptors of these masterpieces were the French, and the bronze sculptures that have survived give testament to their genius.

Countless masterpieces of French bronze sculpture were lost during the French Revolution as they were melted down and made into bullets and other weaponry. Despite this, history would tell that the French first embraced the use of bronze in their art during the 16th century. Italian sculptors of the Valois king, Francois I, brought bronze to France, which became commonly used after just a few years. One of the best sculptures of this period is BarthÃ©lemy Prieurâ€™s Abundance.

The demand for bronze sculptures in France flourished for a couple of centuries, even during the reign of the Sun King Louis XIV when France was deep in debt because of countless wars that the monarchy engaged in. Louis XIV was a patron of the arts and in his honor, a thirty-foot high equestrian monument made entirely of bronze was made by the foremost sculptors of the time. This monument was destroyed during the uprising of the proletariats during the French Revolution though and the only thing that remains of it is one large left foot.

However, making bronze sculptures only reached its peak in France at the latter part of the Sun Kingâ€™s reign as sculptors started making small replicas of famous artworks for private collections. Sculptures featuring scenes from plays, the opera, and dance were also portrayed in bronze. The concepts of love and passion were also explored through this form.

During the 18th century, France, along with the rest of the world, entered into the Age of Reason. Great thinkers like Voltaire, Rousseau, and Diderot saturated the period with intellectual exchange and high emphasis on the arts, the sciences, and philosophy. Sculptors celebrated this era by representing these thinkers in French bronze sculptures.

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II has made a lot of contributions to the preservation of French sculptures and other bronze works of art through the French Bronze Study Group. The influence of bronze art is readily apparent even here in England. You can see examples of bronze sculptures in parks and other venues all over the country.

Private collectors in England who want to own bronze works of art can do so by visiting auction or art sites with bronze sculpture for sale. For more information, you can visit Getty.edu/art or TheArtNewspaper.com.

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