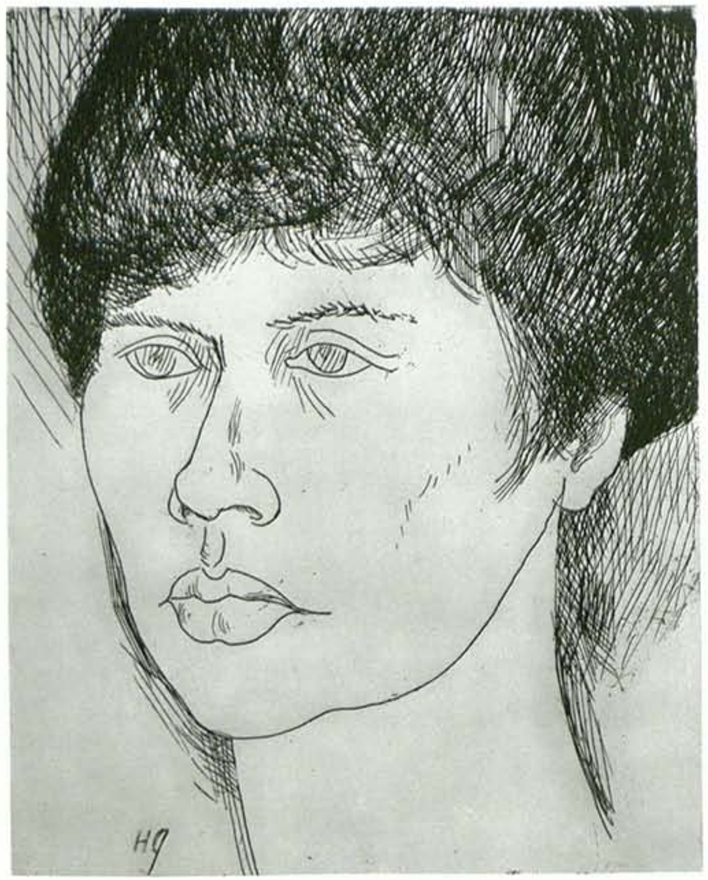


163. *Nini* (Tina Jackson). 1980. Etching (4th state), 6½ x 5⅛"



CHAPTER 10

# THE FRONTIER WITHIN

With a second home and studio in Wyoming, Jackson again became more directly involved in Western life. In addition to the property at Lost Cabin, he bought land in 1972 on upper Sage Creek, near Cody, where he and ranch manager Mel Stonehouse now raise registered longhorns. This property became part of Jackson's Salty Dog Cattle Company, which also owned the 40,000 acre YH ranch on the Greybull River below Meeteetse (sold in 1977) and some range 150 miles south of Lost Cabin. The overall outfit was managed by Cal Todd.

During this period Jackson became acquainted with Bill Lear, whose plant he visited in Reno, Nevada, in 1971. Lear was at that time developing an automotive steam engine, a project that consumed a great deal of money but was never marketed. Jackson recognized in the inventor the same stubborn self-reliance and inner vision with which he was driven, and a mutual respect and friendship grew between the two men.

Jackson's relationship with Lear's youngest child, Tina, also grew during these years. In August 1973, Tina went to live with Jackson at Lost Cabin and they were married in Cody in February 1974. Accustomed to the frenetic life style and creative energy of her father, she readily adapted to the constant commotion of Jackson's life, the shuttling between Italy, Wyoming, New York, and wherever else their activities took them. Though thirty years separated them in age, they seemed to complement each other in ways that neither might have thought possible before.

Living in Wyoming for a good part of the year, Jackson turned to cowboy themes with renewed vigor in 1973–74. It is in these works that Jackson comes closest to the tradition of Western American art, particularly the bronzes of Frederic Remington and Charles M. Russell, both familiar to Jackson since childhood. He had also recognized in Remington's paintings the "vast, new, and all but untouched land of our American West" as a visual experience distinct from that of European painting. In two bronzes made in 1973, *Silent Pardners* (pls. 321–23) and *A Lack of Slack* (pls. 324–29), Jackson seems to purposely evoke the anecdotal realism and expressive action of Remington and Russell, almost as an antidote to the idealized structures of European art and American abstract painting. Jackson may, in these works, be paying homage to his nineteenth-century forerunners, but the change in his own art is more fundamental than that. Whereas the earlier *Pony Express* and *The Marshal* represented heroic, purposeful action tightly constructed around the center, these later works break open the structure, introducing an element of chance, verging on chaos, that pushes the focus of attention to the outer edges of the composition.

In *Silent Pardners* horse and rider approach the herd to select and rope a single animal. Action is potential and there is no way to predict what form it will take when the newly roped animal tries to break loose in the midst of a close-packed bunch. Everything is directed toward the surface, toward communicating a total awareness and sensitivity between man and horse that will allow them to react and move in any direction. There is a sureness of movement and gesture, a determination based on the expectation that anything can happen, including failure or even disaster if they don't respond instantly and as a perfect team.

The nearly hidden unpredictability at the center of *Silent Pardners* becomes a spontaneous, explicit

164. Left to right: Tina, Luke, Harry, Molly, and Jesse Jackson at Camaiore. 1980

165. Left to right: Matthew Jackson on Gina, Tina holding Luke, Molly, and Harry holding Jesse on Victory Deck, at Camaiore. 1979

force in *A Lack of Slack*. Stepping to the left, the packhorse has jerked the lead rope under the tail and across the sensitive rump of the saddle horse, who reacts by kicking out suddenly and knocking the packhorse over backwards. The work seems to combine the curvilinear movements of Jackson's earlier *Bronc Stomper* and *Steer Roper* in a hopelessly doomed confrontation. At the center of this maelstrom is a void of empty space punctuated by one flailing upturned hoof of the packhorse. The two horses form a continuous circle from which the tails, manes, diamond-hitched pack, and the cowboy himself flare out like the jagged corolla of an exploding orb.

By opening out the center to a savage, accidental force, Jackson has destroyed the integrated structure of his earlier work, or rather turned it inside out, transforming it into an endless spiral of swirling, expanding movement. The careful detailing of ropes, rigs, and musculature no longer appears strictly anecdotal but rather reflects the tremendous stress that threatens to tear the group apart. This is the moment when motion follows its own laws, when the normal, expected order of things is reversed and everything is magnified in clarity, as in a mirror. The cowboy either rides out the storm or is destroyed by it.

The extremity of *A Lack of Slack* is carried to an almost demonic level in *Two Champs* (pls. 330–34), which is in many ways Jackson's tour de force of both sculptural expression and technique in bronze casting. His initial idea for the sculpture came out of a session in April 1974 with Harmon Watt, Wyoming banker and art collector, and Neil Suntych, chairman of a committee planning the Diamond Jubilee Celebration for Fremont County, Wyoming. Jackson suggested a work portraying Clayton Danks, world champion bronc rider in the early years of the twentieth century, on the champion bucking horse Old Steamboat. Together the two living rodeo legends had won the world championship at the Cheyenne Frontier Days "Daddy of 'Em All" rodeos of 1907 and 1909.

Jackson had formed a friendship with the old bronc rider some time before Danks died at the age of ninety in 1970, and he researched his subject in depth before beginning the sculpture. Danks' widow, Marie, helped find several photographs of Danks and of Steamboat, along with affidavits, correspondence, and material gathered from archives,



166. *Tina Jackson*. Feb. 17, 1979. Ink and wash on paper, 14 x 19". Collection of the artist

167. Harry and Tina Jackson. 1974

newspaper files, and eyewitnesses. In mid-April 1974, working from a pencil sketch, he created the original wax model in a house on the Sage Creek division of his ranch near Cody. For a base he used the cylindrical form of a Folger's coffee can. By mid-May, Franco Bertoni had flown over from Italy to make the master mold. The Jacksons, with Margot and Cal Todd, then flew back to Italy where the first bronze was cast on June 1 at the Camaiore foundry. Also cast at this time was a masterful bust of Cal Todd titled *The Foreman* (pls. 341–43). In July the work was dedicated at Riverton, Wyoming, and castings were later installed at the Wyoming state capitol in Cheyenne and the Riverton First National Bank, with part of the proceeds going to the Diamond Jubilee Celebration.

The sculpture stands perfectly balanced on its base. The horse rises from one powerful hind leg, fading into a spectacular side roll, hoofs flashing to the sky, nose tugging the rein against the equally determined rider precariously balanced on the middle of his back. A strong, sinuous line sweeping from hoof to the quirt held in Danks' right hand is the axis for some of the wildest action ever given plastic form. And yet within the violence there is, in the interplay of line and form, light and shadow, a fierce, intricate, and totally integrated split-second ballet of exquisite beauty. Jackson compares the spirit of *Two Champs* with that of *Mexican Death Dancer,* in which the dance of death and the dance of life are also inseparably and equally intertwined.

As in *A Lack of Slack, Two Champs* embodies a seemingly unresolvable opposition of forces that has its own inherent order. Energy radiates in all directions so that from every view forms are constantly merging with and reemerging from the whole. From one angle the rider appears almost insignificant behind the massive bulk of the horse; from another he dominates the action. In this constant battle the man and horse fuse into a single centaur-like figure of exploding animistic power. Illogic becomes logic; chance becomes balance.

As a Western artist Jackson now came into contact, and conflict, with the official world of cowboy art. His first problem with the Cowboy Artists of America, to which he was elected in 1970, arose over his appointment in early 1973 to the newly formed National Academy of Western Art. The academy was organized under the auspices of the National Cowboy Hall of Fame in Oklahoma City, which had severed connections with the CAA. The CAA saw the new group as a threat to its own status as the arbiter of excellence in realistic cowboy art, and Jackson was asked unofficially to choose between the two groups. He refused on the grounds that "the whole organizational and committee approach is against the free and unconquerable spirit of both cowboys and artists," and the issue ended in a stalemate, for the moment.

For two successive years, 1973 and 1974, Jackson was prevented, for various technical reasons, from entering the competition of the annual Cowboy Artists of America exhibition at the Phoenix Art Museum in Arizona, although the wax model of *A Lack of Slack,* in 1973, and a painted version of *Two Champs,* in 1974, were allowed to be shown noncompetitively. Disenchanted with the rules and regulations, Jackson never attended or participated in another CAA exhibition or meeting. It recalled his experience with the Artists' Club in New York in 1950, when he was asked to get Jackson Pollock to attend meetings. Pollock's reply was, "Tell 'em the hell with their goddamned meetings. I'm busy painting." Harry's reply to the CAA was along the same lines, but in a deliberately exaggerated cowboy verse:

For My Cowboy Artist Friends
(On Bein' Throwed Out o' the CAA)

I was proud when you ast me ta join ya
And was proud when ya tells me ta git,
Fact, I'm proud to be with er without ya
'Cuz I never bin broke ta the Bit.

Tho' yer the top Artists ta Art with
The Best in a high acclaimed breed,
Ah'm a Ridge Runnin' Fool on the Lonesome
A Stud Hoss that ain't broke ta lead.

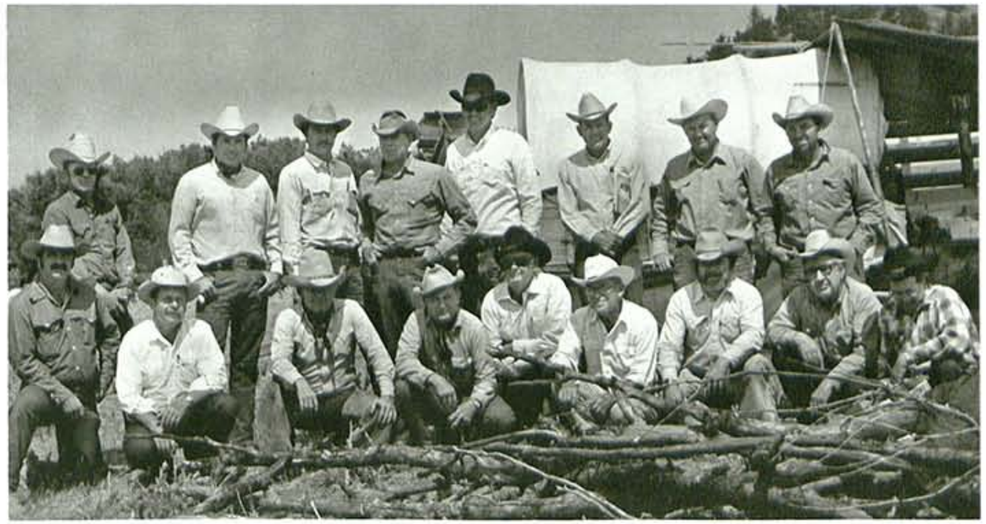
Neither Artists ner Cowboys is Herdbound
In all history we're Fence Jumpin' Fools
Fer both of our Outstanding Races
Got famous by breaking the Rules.

We're most noted fer Bustin' old Rules
But right handy at Cobblin' new tools.
Oh they'll never mistake our two Races
'Cuz we're Bunch-Quittin' Trail-Blazin' Fools.

The string is out and
the fire is lit
Friend Harry

For almost the entire year of 1975 Jackson took a leave of absence from his art to help Bill Lear obtain





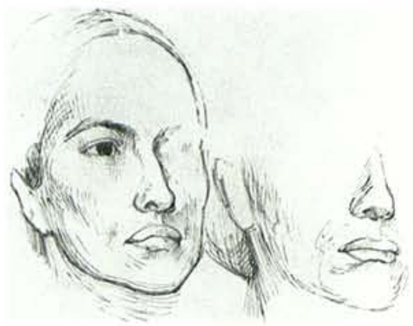
168. Cowboy Artists of America Trail Ride at the IX Ranch, Big Sandy, Mont., summer 1971. Back row, left to right: John Kittelson, Fred Fellows, Ned Jacob, Tom Ryan, Jim Reynolds, U. Grant Speed, George Marks, Joe Beeler. Front row: Gordon Snidow, Harvey Johnson, Johnny Hampton, Byron Wolfe, Charlie Dye, John Clymer, Harry Jackson, Frank Polk, Bill Moyers

funding for the proposed Lear Star 600 jet aircraft. Starting with his own contacts among art collectors and diplomats, his efforts led him through a maze of bankers, lawyers, business executives, and government officials to the ruling families of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Iran. Negotiations ultimately proved unfruitful, but the experience enabled Jackson to see international high finance at firsthand, and then to apply what he had learned to his own corporate enterprise.

By the end of the year Jackson was engaged in a major new sculptural project, the monument to Sacagawea, Lewis and Clark's Shoshone guide. Originally proposed to be placed in one of Wyoming's two niches in the Hall of Statuary of the United States Capitol in Washington, D.C., the work was ultimately commissioned for another site, surviving the political wranglings that attended its complicated history.

In the first few months of 1976 Jackson had the life and background of Sacagawea researched by Larry Pointer and negotiated financial backing for the project. Several personal crises interrupted the work, including Tina's hospitalization for severe repercussions from a car accident in April and the near death of Cal Todd. Tina's and Cal's complete recoveries were followed by the sudden, almost anticlimactic disappearance of Jackson's epilepsy and grand mal symptoms. It was as though he no longer had need of the illness that had marked his life for thirty years. Somehow, perhaps with the help of his own religious beliefs and the principles of Christian Science to which Tina had introduced him, he was freed from a condition that no amount of treatment or drugs had been able to cure.

Work on the Sacagawea monument began in late August at Lost Cabin. Within three weeks Jackson created the tiny wax sketch and the 21-inch first working study with Marie Varilek as the model. The study was finished in December at Camaiore, and looked at exhaustively for another two months, but with no further changes being made. A few days after Tina gave birth to their first son, Jesse Glen Lear Jackson, on March 4, 1977, the initial bronze in an edition of forty was cast (pls. 368–75). Jackson noted in his daybook: "It states the monumental quality and majesty befitting a statue to stand 10' high in the State Capitol and



169. Studies for *Marie*. Feb. 1979. Ink on paper, 12⅜ x 13½". Collection of the artist

170. Marie Varilek posing for clay lifesize head study of Sacagawea at Lost Cabin, Wyo. 1976

occupy a niche in the U.S. Capitol. Other models may be far more finished but this one states the basic concept and is therefore more central and important."

In negotiations with Governor Edward Herschler and other Wyoming officials the commission had now been expanded to include a ten-foot monument for an outdoor site at the Wyoming capitol in Cheyenne as well as the smaller version for the Hall of Statuary. Controversy, however, had begun to build regarding the suitability of a Sacagawea monument for the state. Although the heroine was of the Shoshone tribe, and a major portion of the Shoshone peoples had chosen the Wind River Valley in Wyoming as their permanent reservation, historians at the University of Wyoming revived a longstanding argument over whether Sacagawea actually was buried on the reservation, as had been claimed by Dr. Grace Hebard in 1907, or whether she had ever, in fact, set foot within the state's boundaries. Aesthetic considerations, then and throughout the rest of the commission's history, were set aside.

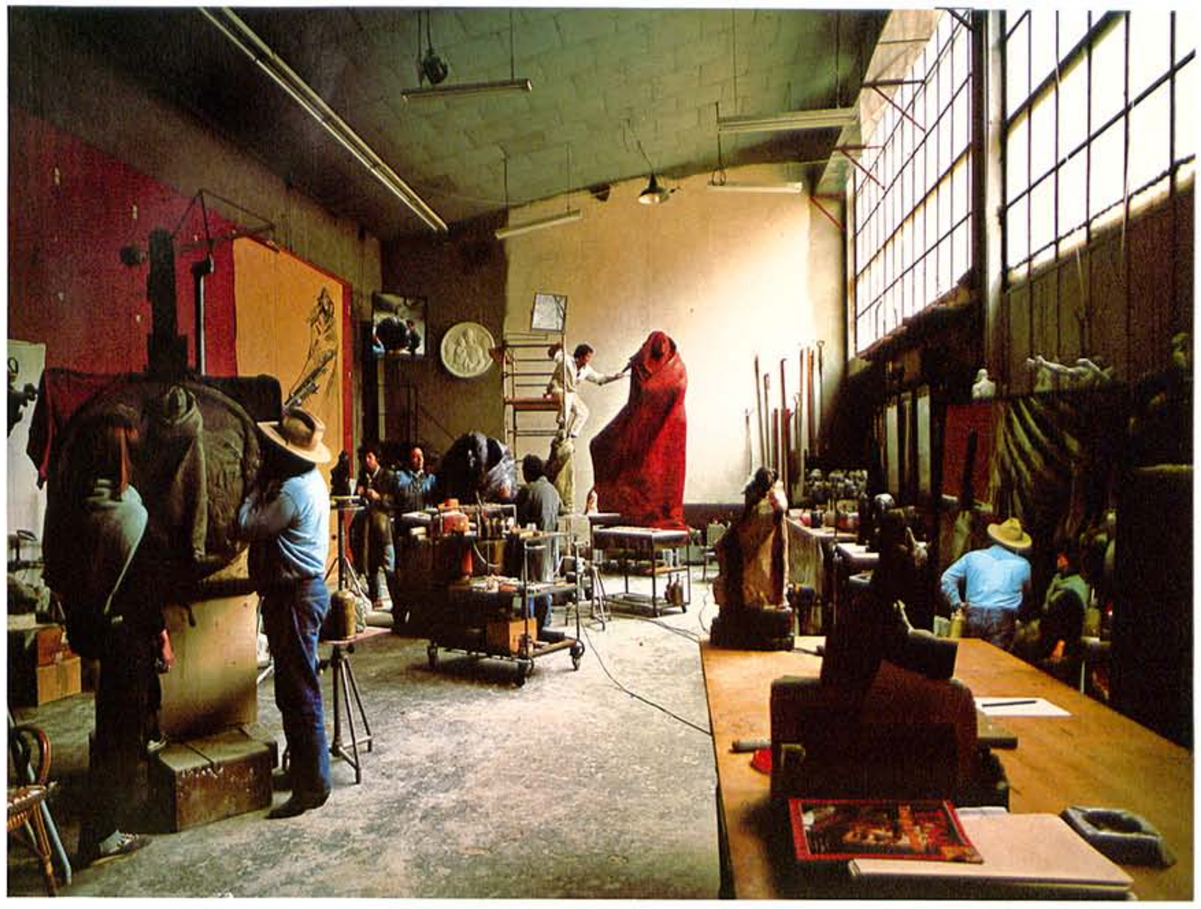
To Jackson these academic fine points were far removed from Sacagawea's true contribution to the Western states, including Wyoming, and America as a whole. Over Jackson's objections, and despite the fact that he had completed plans and was obtaining financing for the larger monument, the commission was now thrown open to competition by a special committee formed by Governor Herschler. In late 1977 the sculptor returned to Italy to prepare his own entry, in which he proposed a two-figure monumental group including Sacagawea and Chief Washakie, the Shoshone leader who was in large part responsible for the many long peaceful interludes which allowed unmolested westward movement along Wyoming's segment of the Oregon Trail.

*Washakie* evolved in February and March of 1978 through at least ten different studies. In an attempt to match the model with his solitary first working model of *Sacagawea*, the sculptor created a standing figure garbed in the full-dress regalia of the Shoshone chief. The stance was wooden, however, and the warbonnet all but overwhelmed the figure. Jackson began again with anatomical studies, for which he had Sirio Giannecchini, one of his gardeners at Camaiore, pose nude (pl. 175). Sirio had also posed for *The Trapper* in 1970. He then created another model, robing the figure in a manner reminiscent of an ancient Roman general (pl. 176). Still unhappy with the results, he finally arrived at the solution on Easter morning at 5 A.M. The figure had to be on horseback (pls. 346–48).

First a wax model of the horse was created, inspired by the powerfully stylized ceramic horses of the Tang Dynasty in China. Sirio then came in to pose on Jackson's quarter horse Victory Deck and the nude wax Washakie figure was split up the middle with a hot knife and placed on a modeled horse. As the deadline approached the work continued in fits and starts around the clock.

Solving one problem created another. The standing figure of Sacagawea would not balance the mass of this second sculpture if the two were to be paired at the Wyoming capitol's western entrance, as Jackson envisioned. He therefore made a new Sacagawea model—spelled "Sacajawea" in pointed reference to another scholarly squabble—adding





171. Jackson's studio at Camaiore. *Sacagawea* fiberglass model being given red undercoat before final painting. 1980

172. Studies for *Sacagawea* and *Washakie* monuments. Mar. 5, 1978. Ink on paper, 9½ x 10¾". Collection of the artist

173. Studies for *Washakie* and siting of the two monuments at the Wyoming state capitol. Mar. 3, 1978. Ink on paper, 9½ x 10¾". Collection of the artist

174. Study for mounted *Washakie*. Mar. 20, 1978. Ink on paper. Collection of the artist

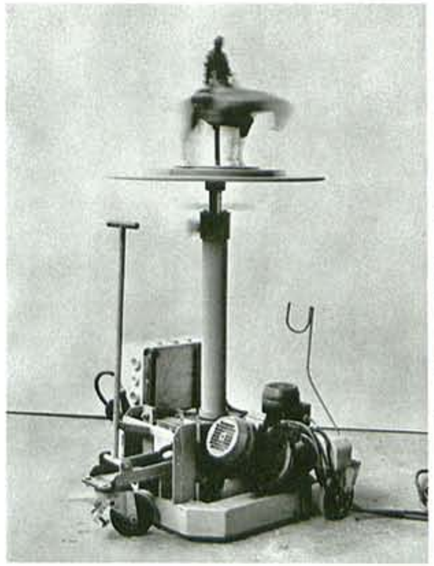
the figure of a packhorse behind the mother and child (pl. 376). In this work Jackson also reversed the flow of the robe and hair to accord with the line of Washakie's trailing headdress and the northwesterly winds that prevail at the capitol site.

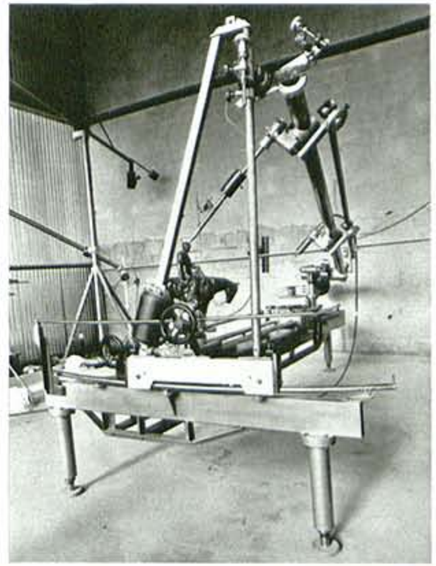
The two models, with their bulk and large, sweeping contours, are distinct from anything Jackson had done before, partly because they are studies for large-scale public sculptures meant to be seen in an open, outdoor setting. But the changes also relate to the inner development of Jackson's art. His sculpture had always defined space as three-dimensional movement. Space was created by the movements of men and horses evolving into ever more complex structures that play out the drama of existence with increasing intensity and definition. In the later works (*A Lack of Slack* and *Two Champs*) movement begins to merge with the mass and weight of the figures, and in *Washakie* and *Sacajawea with Packhorse* energy is converted into mass almost completely. Energy is dispersed slowly and majestically through the large movements of the figures, horses, drapery, and headdress, retained within the commanding presence of the figures, which occupy their spaces more fully than ever before. They are universes of



175. Wax model of nude *Washakie* (destroyed). Mar. 1978

176. Wax model of *Washakie*, second robed version. Mar. 1978



*Opposite page:*

177. Studies for *Washakie* monument with first sketch of hydraulic modeling turntable devised by Jackson. Mar. 7, 1978. Ink on paper, 9½ x 10¼". Collection of the artist

178. Hydraulic turntable for modeling, fabricated by Franco Bertoni

179. Three-dimensional pantograph, built to Jackson's specifications, for creating reduced and enlarged versions of existing sculptures

180. Jackson and Bertoni work with pantograph on reduced wax model of *Cowboy's Meditation*

human consciousness and courage, the wisdom of age in *Washakie* and of regeneration in *Sacagawea*. For Jackson the two works were "revealing something of my inner self. My soul can be seen in their strength. What I call my soul is the Lord's. I've made Medicine again. There is only that to do; all else is illusion."

These larger issues had little effect on the committee that met in late March of 1978 and chose a more conventional work by another sculptor. Though bitterly frustrated by the decision, Jackson had reached a new level in his work and later produced bronze editions of both *Washakie* and *Sacajawea with Packhorse*. The original idea for a monument of Sacagawea was stymied for just four months, when a new commission revived the work that was to become Jackson's major public sculpture.

The disappointing Wyoming decision was also overshadowed by more important losses. Jackson's mother had been hospitalized for some time, and on May 13, 1978, Ellen Jackson died in Deerfield, Illinois. Tina's father, Bill Lear, died on the following day in Reno.

Alongside the monumental *Sacagawea* and *Washakie* there evolved another idea for public sculpture, for making Jackson's art "available to the people, the cowboys who inspire me. Now I've found the means to do just that," he noted in his daybook. The means was the "series concept," as Jackson called it, which involved scaling down his most popular works to be sold at lower prices, with the number of castings in each edition determined primarily by the market demand. It is the antithesis of the technique of regulating scarcity on which modern commercial galleries and dealers rely. Sculptors of the nineteenth century and earlier often made as many fine quality castings as possible. The production of different versions of the same work in various sizes was also a common practice for such artists as Auguste Rodin and Augustus St. Gaudens. Jackson revived the practice and improved on it with new technology.

*Two Champs II* (pls. 335–37), a smaller version of the initial work, appeared in 1977 in an edition of 100 patinaed and 50 painted bronzes. The viability of the series concept was confirmed by the even more striking success of the scaled-down *Marshal II* in 1979 (pls. 318–19). The entire edition of 100 patinaed and 50 painted castings was subscribed within two weeks. Jackson was already at work on the still smaller, twelve-inch *Marshal III* in an unprecedented edition of 1,000. "It all feels terribly

181. Wax study for *Sacagawea*. 1979. 7½ x 5¼"

right," he wrote in his daybook of April 12, 1979. "A sculptor in ancient Athens addressed 5,000 fellow citizens of that city-state with single works. By the nineteenth century through bronze editions and etchings and the new process of lithography artists addressed a greatly enlarged audience. But now in the past 70 years, because of the miraculous expansion in communication, education, travel, and purchasing power, the artist has the absolute duty to expand his contact to a far greater audience again. The deep, deep sense of tranquility and even a quality touching upon bliss indicates to me that I am on the right track and am doing something that is awfully in time with what my fellow man wants and on a scale which is appropriate to our time."



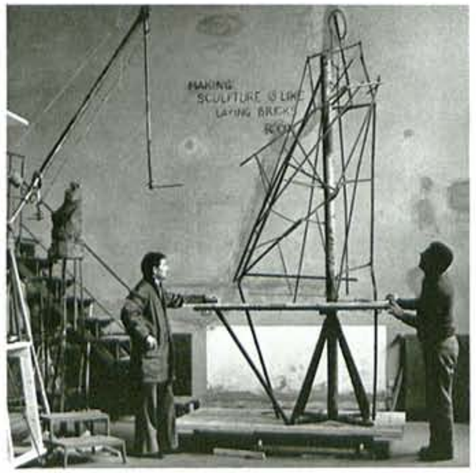
182. Fiberglass cast for *Sacagawea* monument. 1980. 115 x 63 x 57½"

183. *Sacagawea II*. 1980. Patinaed bronze. 18 x 8 x 6¼"

The increase in production and maintenance of quality was eased considerably by advances in technology, including a three-dimensional mechanical pantograph operated by compressed air which was designed to the sculptor's specifications (pl. 180). The pantograph, which was used extensively by Rodin, Barye, and other nineteenth-century sculptors, facilitates the creation of an enlarged or scaled-down wax model in preparation for the artist's own final work. The contours of the original finished bronze are transferred by a paired stylus to a new model in the same proportions but a different scale.

As work on the *Marshal III* wax model progressed it became apparent to Jackson that the exacting transfer of proportions to the smaller volume would retain everything but the spirit of the original. The torso of the mounted figure tended to thicken visually, reducing the overall effect of explicit motion. Only after he sliced the body in half and added three millimeters to the length of the torso was the proper continuity achieved. The face also presented problems. Every detail had to be reworked in order to create a unified whole. "It's only 5/8 of an inch from eyebrows to chin," Jackson recorded, "and I think I'm finding some character and the proper simple masses and planes of his face. The mouth is particularly difficult to give a hard expression to without making it into a shallow caricature."

184. Jackson finishing full-scale charcoal drawing for *Sacagawea* monument upon which the armature will be based. 1978

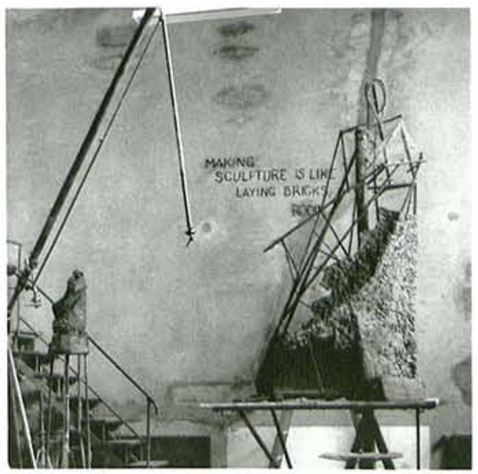



185. Franco Bertoni (right) and assistant inspecting the finished steel and wire armature

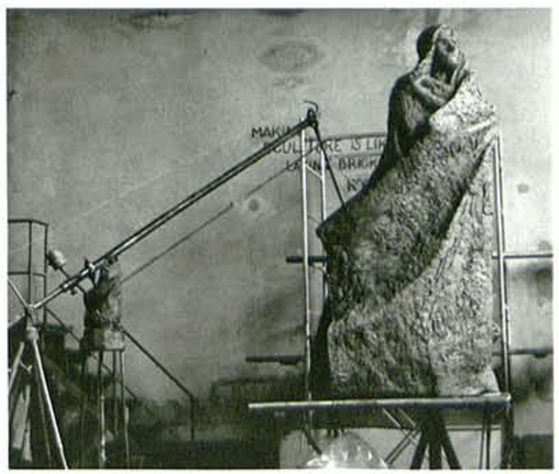
Other innovations included a new silicon rubber mold material and ceramic shell investment compound to replace the bulky investments of the past. Beginning in 1977 Jackson learned to use the method for producing a thinner bronze shell, which shrinks less with fewer surface imperfections than heavy, thick-walled bronze, allowing for consistently more faithful casts. Certain technical problems were worked out by the sculptor and Franco Bertoni as they adapted the new process to meet their needs, and by mid-summer 1979 almost the entire operation had shifted to the use of ceramic shell molds, and Jackson started exploring a new, larger centrifugal casting system which when combined with the ceramic shell method could permit editions up to 5,000.

As the smaller-scaled versions of his sculptures were taking shape and revolutionizing his operations, Jackson returned to work on the ten-foot version of *Sacagawea*. In August 1978 a new commission for the monument was offered by the Buffalo Bill Historical Center in Cody, the museum that houses Jackson's *Range Burial* and *Stampede* paintings as well as several other works.

Using his 1977 working model of *Sacagawea*, Jackson first had the figure scaled up to the full ten-foot height in the last months of 1978 (pls. 184–88). Returning to Italy in January 1979, he went to work immediately on the mass of water clay that had been roughed out on the huge armature. He was now working with a scale transformation the reverse of that for the scaled-down *Marshal II* and *III*, which produced its own peculiar problems. "The masses of the head and hair," he wrote on January 16, "were clearly roughed in enough to see that the head, though in proper scale to the model, was, as I have always observed since studying the Roman bronzes from Herculaneum at the Naples Museum and the Vatican, too large for a work ten feet tall. I cut the head down by a good two inches and it still is, if anything, a bit too big. I may cut her down some more tomorrow. This is the first time that I have ever worked on a figure of this scale and it is wonderfully exciting at the very same time I have been working with Franco on the reduction to nine inches of the *Cowboy's Meditation III* in wax (pl. 178). Modeling first on the ten-footer and then turning to model on the nine-incher is a most stimulating exercise. I must wear magnifying glasses for the *Cowboy's Meditation III* and then I must step back about 40 feet and use a large mirror from time to time to work on the ten-foot *Sacagawea*."




186. First rough layer of water clay partially applied. Bronze scale model on stand at left



187. The pantograph in position and the first layer of clay completed

The work went smoothly for a month. "February 2. Worked on the ten-foot Sacagawea from 5 P.M. until 2 A.M. Am very satisfied. Am beginning to get the hang of the drapery; it's very tricky but I must just stay simple and very basic. 'Like laying bricks,' Rodin said."

"February 10. Did some very good work. The baby roughed in yesterday and brought along more today. Will leave him fairly rough and suggested, I think." Jackson later used his and Tina's new son Luke, born on March 23, as a model for the infant.

"February 11. Photos of Indian children. One chubby little fellow is asleep and his head is tilted to the right, just what I want to swing one's eye around the back of the mother's head. This afternoon I finished changing the face of Sacagawea, based on my Lost Cabin head study [pl. 189]. It


188. Full-scale clay model after Jackson had worked on it for first six weeks

189. Clay model of *Marie* head. 1979. 8⅞ x 8⅞ x 7⅛"

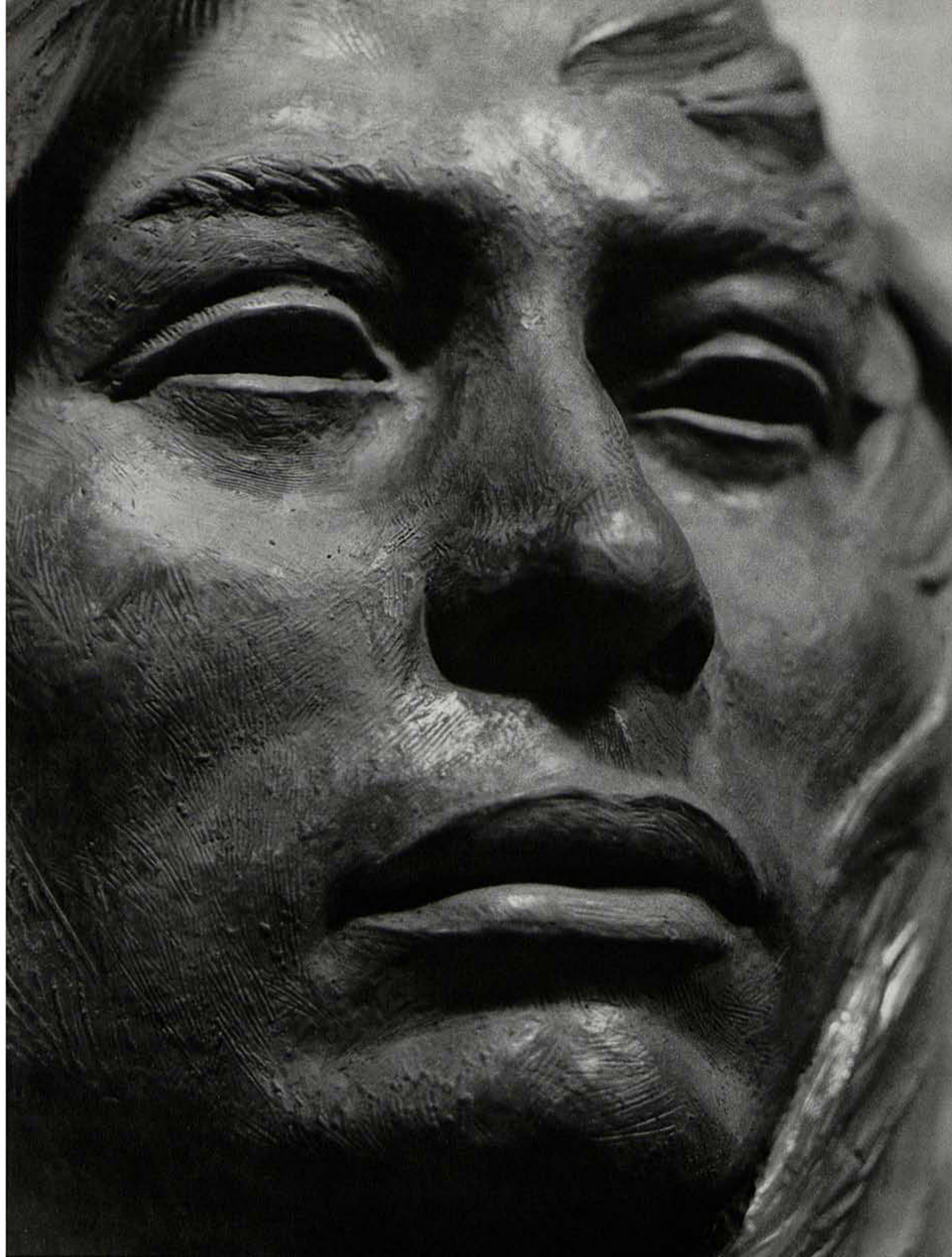
190. *Sacagawea*, detail. 1977. Patinaed bronze, 21 x 11 x 8¼

191. *In the Wind*. 1980. Patinaed bronze, 24 x 17 x 8"

works far better than the one I fought so long and never seemed to make say what it needs to say. Tomorrow I will simplify and strengthen the general facial masses in keeping with and in order to reflect and repeat the overall sweep of the entire, all-inclusive sculptural volume from her toes to the top of her head and the mass of the baby."

On April 14 Jackson "uncovered the Sacagawea to work on her for the first time in almost two months. It was heartbreaking. I had let my eye rest enough and now what I had done had no overall continuity. I was sick and absolutely ready to give up. I began really working at 9 A.M. and have gone steadily till now. It has begun to come together as never before and now I am profiting from all the work I had done in January and February. It begins to flow from head to toe and make some simpler sense."

Returning again on July 25, Jackson noted, "I must simplify, yet without letting any superficial sense of mannerism or mere stylization be suggested. That can happen so easily when sculptural simplification becomes divorced from the underlying human and spiritual vision. Never forget this order of importance and the greater the simplicity achieved, the richer the spiritual and human expression will be. Forget this priority...and the



192. Head detail of *Sacagawea* monument with final modeling in water clay. Feb. 1980

British crew preparing the fiberglass model of the *Sacagawea* monument used to create the reproductory wax from which the final bronze was cast. Feb.–Mar. 1980: 193. Plaster piece mold taken from the clay model being painted with epoxy resin layered with fiberglass gauze. 194. Plaster waste mold being chipped away from the bust section of the fiberglass model. 195. Assembly of the fiberglass sections, which were tied and then repainted from within with additional layers of fiberglass and epoxy resin

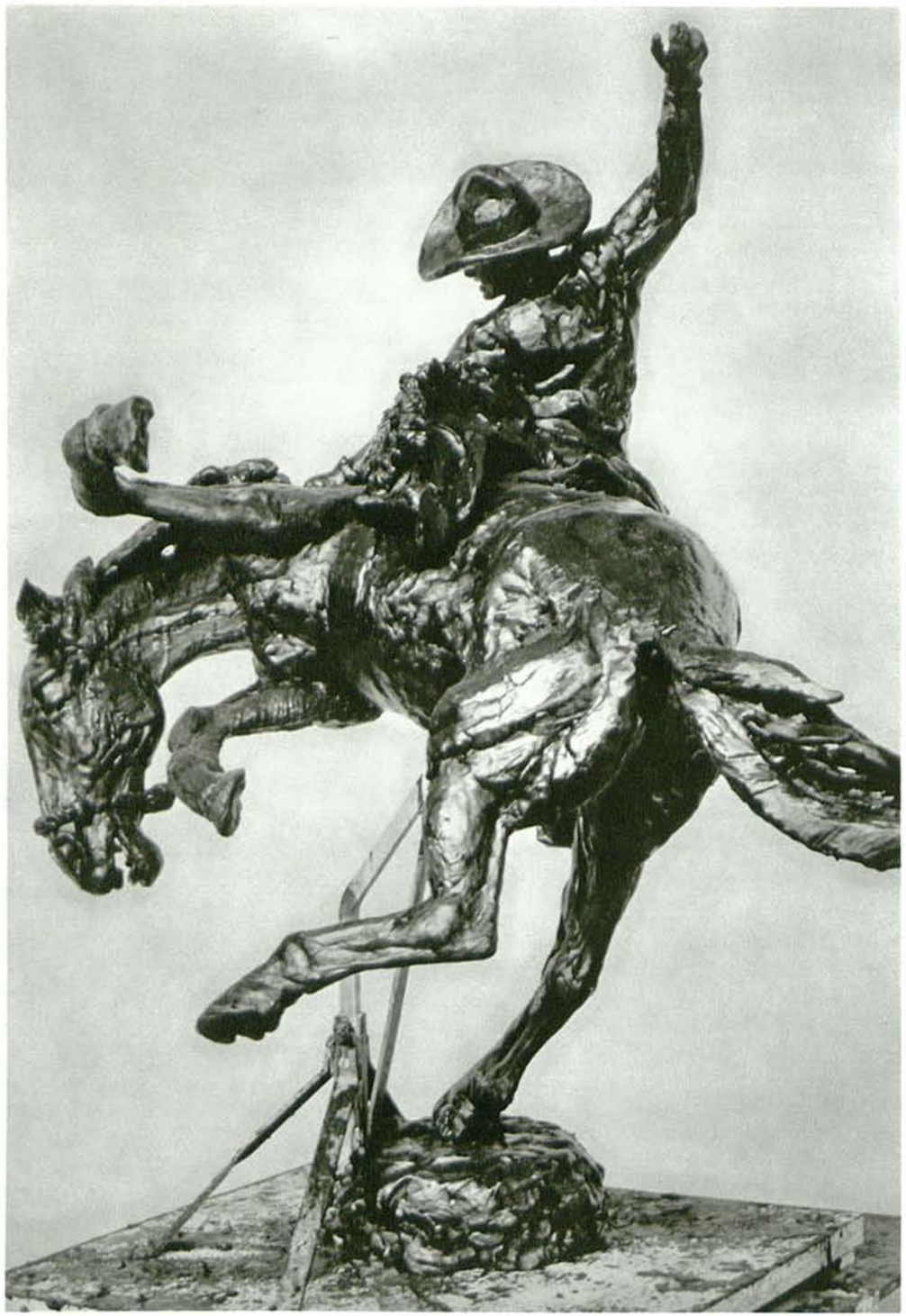


196. Jackson painting a casting of the 21-inch *Sacagawea*. 1979

more apparent and oppressive the barrenness of the work becomes."

Jackson formed the figure like a landscape, shaping and reshaping the large masses and minute details like a series of natural events flowing into a single, unified conception. The process and the image recall Rodin's conviction that, "a woman, a mountain, or a horse is formed according to the same principle." The first working model of 1977 had stated the basic concept, the formal expression of what Jackson later described as "the vast and uniquely heroic epoch of our West," contained in the single joined figure of mother and child. This concept remained at the core of the ten-foot version, but the larger figure transformed the idea into a new reality. *Sacagawea* not only signifies the earth but *is* the earth, a simple, massive shape beyond yet within human scale. She is herself a landscape, a promontory of primordial human consciousness shaped by the elements.

*Sacagawea* is also the first dominant female figure in Jackson's work. Women had always been peripheral, appearing almost subliminally in such early works as *The Family* of 1953 (pl. 62), the dancer subjects of the 1960s, and the 1966 portrait bust of Sarah, his third wife (pl. 135). Society and history were determined by the exploits and consciousness of men—a war fought by men, a land conquered and defined by men, an art created by men. Life and death were fused in struggle, combat, and unyielding accommodation to the earth. But whatever the lineaments of the story, dedicated as it was "to the cowboys that I rode with as a kid and lived with and learned untold volumes from," its theme was always the "underlying human and spiritual vision." In *Sacagawea* the vision does not change but is rediscovered in another place, in an image and form that encompasses the source of life and the history of all such images in Western art—the Madonna and Child, the robed Venus. The unity that had been so intricately achieved in the complex and dynamic balance of Jackson's other work now asserts itself in a singular thrust from earth to sky. The achievement is no less complex but its central



197. Unfinished wax model for the second version of *Two Champs*. 1979

198. Abstract underpainting of the five-foot *Two Champs* for ABC before Jackson completed the work with realistic colors. 1978

truth is the simplicity of the mass, the form that wills its own undeniable existence.

Jackson also created a number of models of heads, busts, and entire figures in different scales, some eventually finished as separate and distinct works, including the expressively painted *Indian Mother and Child* (pl. 1), the masklike, patinaed *In the Wind* (pl. 191), and the *Marie* head (pls. 358–61). These bridged the gap between the original model and the emerging monument in clay, bringing life to the total concept. For nearly eight months he ceased working on the ten-foot *Sacagawea* and devoted his time to these studies as well as other projects. "The Sacagawea unfinished head," he wrote on January 30, 1980, "is now as fine a study of Marie as the young Sacagawea as I could want to do. I am deeply pleased with the wholeness and concentrated aliveness of this incomplete work. ...There is a mysteriousness that is present in it, that indispensable quality of subtle paradox that is expressed through an almost living yet indefinable series of breaks and asymmetric variances in the modeling of the features. All this creates the vibrations of movement, weaving back and forth all over the surface of the single volume of this ball of a head. The power comes... from the center of this single mass and the tension, that creates and then supports the surface of this volume, emanates from there. All of my past 40 years of observation and practice and mind and heart-crushing, anguished unanswerable questioning are reflected in this unfinished fragment."

By February 20 the final modeling on the ten-foot version had been done, and Jackson wrote, "All the images that flow and flood and roar and finally explode and vaporize in my mind have come somehow to inhabit to some very real and central degree my clay ten-foot Sacagawea, and all I know, when I begin to know that consciously, is that God is good and I am a blind dumb fool who by His love managed, despite my great uncertainty and masses of bone-breaking, skull-cracking ten-

sions, and blocks of misunderstandings and wastes of time, to let that all-informing love, some tiny grain of it, flow into the Sacagawea."

A fiberglass replica (pls. 364–67) was then made preparatory to the bronze casting of the work in six sections, which would be reassembled, painted, and installed in the garden of the new Plains Indian Museum at the Buffalo Bill Historical Center on July 4, 1980 (pl. 378). Jackson had decided back in August that the bronze would be painted, "Hair mass: black—face, brown—robe, dark dun color, red dun with black markings on the robe." As he began working on the fiberglass model, laying in the color, his scheme changed. On March 25, he "laid the face in with a light undercoat and the hair in stark unaccented black and I was really very undecided about what I was seeing in my vision of a painted monumental sculpture. Then just the simple addition of the wide vertical stripe from her shoulder to her toe, as barely visible and rough as it was, answered my unsettled impression and I know at once that my vision is dead on the money."

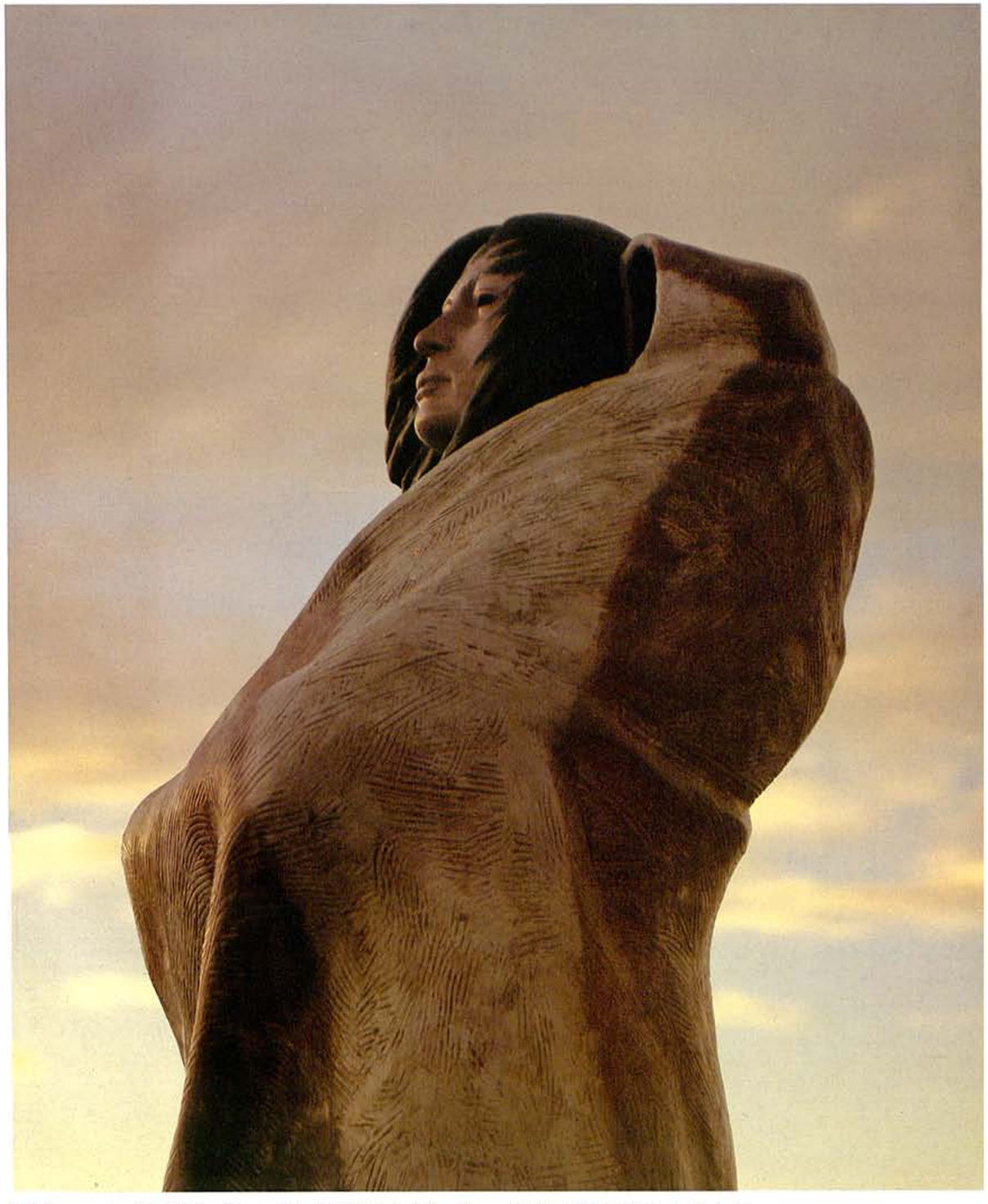
In painting the work, Jackson's solution was, in a sense, to go against the grain of the sculpture, to emphasize the vertical thrust of the figure but in a spiraling rhythm that is quite separate from, while ultimately counterpoised to, that of the swirling robes. Once freed from the absolute demands of realism and historical accuracy, he was able to project the total image as both sculpture and painting rather than just painted sculpture. The interdependence between painting and sculpture that had been essential to his work since 1958, Jackson's belief, stated in 1960, "that the two were destined to complement and aid each other in the most provocative and as yet undreamt-of ways," now reached a new level. He was now painting on the massive forms as though they were a three-dimensional field or canvas, but without destroying the sense of the visual and natural integrity of the sculpted three-dimensional image beneath. Color bridges the gap into the real world, but it does so in its own terms, or in terms of the heroic image being projected. The white blanket of *Sacagawea*, the vertical, earth-colored bands, brown face, and black hair bring the figure to life, once again, as part of but distinct from the landscape, the earth from which it rises.

Jackson had experimented with an even more radical combination of sculpture and painting in 1978, when he was finishing the five-foot version of *Two Champs* (pl. 338) for the corporate headquarters of the American Broadcasting Company in New York. While underpainting the work, he suddenly began painting abstract expressionist patterns of color on top of the realistically sculpted forms (pl. 198). An explosive array of reds, greens, yellows, oranges, and blues countered and complemented the violent action of the man and bucking horse. "But it wasn't the time for it. Not yet. I didn't have a second casting ready, so I covered the wild but unresolved work with more appropriate, realistic colors. But it will come."

Another large and sculpturally quite different version of *Two Champs* (pl. 197) was begun in 1979. This original wax model still stands unfinished in Jackson's Camaiore studio. Every coarse bone and mass of hard muscle of the horse and bare sinew of the rider is exposed. The volumes reach out from a source of primal energy within the figures. When the work is taken up again, color will come from the same source. Shortly after deciding to paint the ten-foot *Sacagawea*, on August 20, 1979, Jackson wrote: "I wish to paint the half-finished wax of the five-foot Two Champs in a way appropriate to the exploding energy of the volumes and the action.... I realize that I want to open up to De Kooning's and Pollock's influence and follow what I've begun in this new Two Champs wax."

The confrontation and interchange between painting and sculpture had begun more than twenty years before, when Jackson first created models for the *Range Burial* and *Stampede* paintings. These recent works open a new phase in which actual three-dimensional form replaces the flat canvas. Each reality exists within the other, and both within a larger concept which admits and embraces forces that can only momentarily be perceived, understood, and resolved. There are always undreamt-of possibilities revealed in this vision of "the central mystery of the ordered and the accidental, not only reflecting each other but, when seen from a certain level, becoming quite consistently integrated aspects of a larger state of being," he wrote on May 27, 1980. Each work represents a point on the circle that expands outward, "and that without end." It is both an individual and a universal circle, one on which we all exist each moment of our lives.





199. *Sacagawea*, detail. 1980. Painted bronze, 115 x 63 x 57½". Plains Indian Museum, Buffalo Bill Historical Center, Cody, Wyo.