

PENELOPE JENCKS:



Sculpture



PENELOPE JENCKS: Sculpture

Boston University College of Fine Arts
School of Visual Arts

808 GALLERY
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Provincetown, Massachusetts
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Swarthmore, Pennsylvania
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“The Symbolism of Size in the Work of Penelope Jencks”

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“Penelope Jencks' Figures on a Beach”

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“Some Observations on Scale and Material in the
Recent Sculpture of Penelope Jencks”

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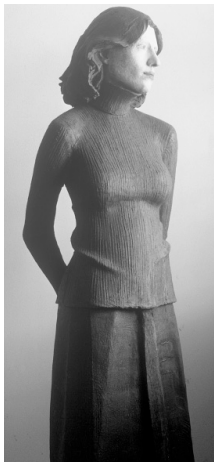
THE SYMBOLISM OF SIZE IN THE WORK OF PENELOPE JENCKS

By Wendy Doniger

THE SWEEP OF SCALE is what surely strikes the viewer of this show first, the range from the disturbingly outsized human models to the tiny detail of the figures on the less-than-dollhouse-sized beaches. Only on second glance does one begin to see that the range of human emotions conveyed and provoked by these figures is equally broad. If the giant statues represent a child's view of grownups, the new terra cotta miniatures, so carefully observed down to the ears of the dog in the water (Plate 16 *Homage to Goya* (detail)) and the shadows carved into the clay (Plate 14 *Dunescape: Two Women*), represent the grand, wide screen vision of someone who has finally grown old and wise, mastered life, seen the world for what it is, and looks down on it with compassion and tenderness.



Homage to Goya (detail), Plate 16



Jane 1975
Life-size, terra cotta

The earliest sculptures in this show, from 1969, are the self-portraits (Plates 27 - 33); “sculpt what you know,” to paraphrase what teachers always tell budding writers, and young artists also do self-portraits because they don’t have enough money to hire a model. These first pieces represent just the head and shoulders. But how expressive and passionate those heads and shoulders are: yawning (or is it screaming?), angry, strained to the point where the sinews of the neck stand out like ropes, or with lips parted to expose the teeth (in one case, wide open to expose the uvula). They are merciless in depicting not only the artist’s physical features, often stretched to the point of grotesque distortion, but a psyche seething with fury or despair. And this unsentimental, no-holds-barred gaze remained when she began to make life-sized figures (and, eventually, over life-sized figures) and nudes.

By 1975, during the first of several stays at the MacDowell Colony, she was making large standing terra cotta figures. This was a watershed for her. She had previously made life-sized terra cotta figures sitting and lying down, but making them stand up was much more difficult technically, largely due to gravity, the bad habit that clay has of returning to the earth from which it came. The making of colossal terra cotta figures at that time seemed to be a lost art. The French did it in the 19th century, the Chinese much earlier than that (the great terra cotta warriors and horses from the Han dynasty in China were discovered in 1974, just after Jencks started making these life-sized terra cottas; Annie Dillard described them wonderfully, as they were being born out of the earth),¹ and people are making colossal terra cotta horses in India to this day.² But it was not happening in Europe or America. This was terra cotta incognita.

When Jencks started making these sculptures there was no one to show her how, or even to say, “Oh yeah, you’re doing one of those colossal terra cottas.” Instead, people said: “It’s going to break, it’s going to explode, it’s going to collapse, you can’t do it.” So she made it up as she went along. Jencks had never been taught, in art school, how to deal with clay in this way. She could not use an armature, since clay will explode if fired with foreign bodies inside it. Instead, she built the clay up around a long pole stuck into a base and, when it was done, pulled it straight out the top, as the soul escapes from the skull in Tibetan Buddhism. For the soul/pipe to escape she needed a studio at least twice as high as the standing figure, and she had that at MacDowell.

The first sculptures were originally life-sized but after they were fired they were, much to her dismay, considerably shorter; clay shrinks about an inch to the foot when you fire it. So when, in 1978, she started the first pieces for the *Beach Series I* (Plates 19 - 26), she made them larger than life-size before firing so that, after firing, they would be life-sized. Perhaps this preliminary stage made her see the power of these larger-than-life figures, inspiring her to make figures that remained oversized even when they had shrunk in the oven. And when they got bigger, as if reaching their majority, they began to shed their clothes. Earlier, she had refused to make nudes because art school had taught her to look on the human body as a cluster of lines and forms and shapes, a still life. She felt she had lost the ability to see the humanity in the body, the sexuality of it. She felt that, paradoxically, when you put clothing on the figures they become people. (Pornographers have always known this: women are sexier in a filmy negligee than when they’re buck naked; clothing maketh man, and woman, too.) Alphonse Allais may have had this in mind when he said: “Somebody points at a woman and utters a horrified cry, ‘Look at her, what a shame, under her clothes, she is totally naked!’”³ But the clothing that frees your humanity is also what trips you up and traps you; the disrobing figures from the much later *Beach Series II* are entangled in their clothes as the marble figure of Laocoön was imprisoned in the labyrinth of sea snakes, and as all sculpted figures are trapped in the medium of the clay or plaster (or marble).

Gradually, the women began to strip. One figure, from 1979, is wearing a gown that is open to reveal her breasts and the genitals, open almost like the image in an anatomy text, the skin peeled back to reveal the organs; she is far more naked than she would be naked. Another standing woman holds a cloth around her legs—though not high enough to cover her crotch (Plate 20). This image later develops into a statue of a woman whose upper half grows out of a column, like a mermaid or a Mélusine—half woman, half something else even worse.⁴ Or perhaps it is the image of a woman turning into a pillar, perhaps a pillar of salt, like Lot’s wife. Or she may be the female counterpart to one of the Hermae of Greece, stones that marked boundaries and were carved with just a suggestive part of a human being, the face and the genitals, the essentials.



Beach Robe, 1979
Life-size, terra cotta

Nude and semi-nude figures first appear in the *Beach Series I*, shown in New York in 1981, though there are still, also, a fully clothed figure and a woman, seated, nude but with a jacket that covers part of her breasts and shadows her crotch. There is a nude male figure with a

rich mat of body hair carefully captured in clay. In 1982 the show was moved to the Rose Art Museum at Brandeis, and the knowledge that she could have access to the Museum's pool inspired several additional figures. A floating man (Plate 22) lies spread-eagled on his back in the water, perhaps in happy abandon or, perhaps, dead (like the narrator of the film *Sunset Boulevard*). This ambiguity reminds us of what may lurk beneath the everyday, the yawn that may be a scream, the bather that could also be a corpse. The most mundane or even beautiful surface, like the surface of a pool, may conceal things too unnerving to look at face-to-face.

The figures spread out over the sand are all individuals, each in her own space; they do not look at one another. They are not smiling. And they are not all young. They do not have the idealized bodies of our time, or any time. Each is an individual, warts and all. The woman who modeled for the figure with the open gown was sixty years old. These are bodies that people have lived in for a while. Even without their clothes on, they are real people. Their bodies show the scars of life, and it is this that makes them individuals.

During this period, Jencks began accepting the first of her public commissions. (She is presently working on a monumental granite sculpture of Robert Frost, seated on a rock, for Amherst College.) The commissions made it possible to work on major figures in a far more



Eleanor Roosevelt, 1996
Bronze and granite, 8' x 6' x 3'

expensive medium, bronze (which she had previously worked with on only a smaller scale). The first major bronze, in 1982, was the statue of Samuel Eliot Morrison, "Sailor, Historian," boyishly perched on a large rock on Commonwealth Avenue at Exeter Street, in Boston. This was a time for multitasking: Jencks made all the figures for the *Beach Series I*, and the Samuel Morrison figure, and raised her children, and was teaching at Brandeis. Then came several more commissions, including, in 1986, the sculpture of a student sitting on a rock, holding a book, outside Farber Library, at Brandeis. In 1996, she made the one for which she is perhaps best known, the one that Philip Hamburger, writing in the *New Yorker* in 2003, referred to as "the peaceful, beautiful eight-foot-high statue of Eleanor Roosevelt that stands in Riverside Park at Seventy-second Street." (He went on to remark, "Jencks' people sit on rocks.") Everyone loves this statue, and the artist put much of herself into it, which, paradoxically, made it possible for her to capture a particular essence of her subject. She found, as she worked on

the sculpture, that she identified with Eleanor Roosevelt in a way that she had not with her dead white male subjects.

Between Morrison and Roosevelt there were also commissions for more anonymous bronzes in other cities, where she returned to the grouped figures she had done in terra cotta, but now working in bronze. In 1984 in Toledo, she installed a family group. She had taken the train from Boston to Toledo, and when she disembarked she saw nothing but families greeting and hugging one another, and decided to use the family as the subject for her commission.

But her own family had been part of her art right from the day she brought her first child

home from the hospital, barely a week old, and made a sculpture of the baby's head (when other women were just mixing formulas or trying on nursing bras). For the next twenty years she continued to portray her three children, fastidiously paying them for their modeling time (when other children had paper routes or baby-sitting gigs). (Her children are now, in various guises, standing, walking, or sitting from Toledo, Ohio, to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and scattered throughout eastern Massachusetts). At the other end of the family spectrum, one of her most remarkable recent small bronzes is a group consisting of a aged woman falling and being caught; the woman (who is also modeled in one of the colossal plaster images) is her mother. Sculpt what you know.



Descent, 1998
Bronze, 6" x 8" x 1.5"

And at the same time, 1982–5, she began to make colossal terra cotta heads and torsos, which, by 1998, led to the full colossal figures in plaster (*Beach Series II*, Plates 1 - 9). In contrast with the relatively smooth-surfaced and realistic bronzes, the larger plaster pieces retain the slaps of the palette knife and are less realistic. (The later bronzes also take on this rough surface, and look like clay magically turned to bronze, like figures in mythology suddenly cursed to petrify.) They keep reminding you that they're made of plaster, as if you couldn't bear to see a realistic, smooth person of that size; as if that would be too threatening. Even so, the size of the figures is terrifying, as is their ungainliness and raggedness. They resemble not gods but mythical giants, creatures as earth-bound as we are but older and hungrier, like the starving, desperate creatures that have used up their own worlds and have invaded ours to prey upon us. What flesh they have hangs upon them but does not soften them; they are pendulous but not plump. We cannot bear to look upon them as living creatures, and so the roughness of the plaster rescues us and reminds us that it is "just" art, as we tell ourselves, in nightmares, that it is "just" a dream. But these nightmares' creatures move straight from the artist's unconscious into ours, and lodge there, to trouble us in memory long afterward.

The recent small terra cotta *Dunescapes* (Plates 14 - 18) grow out of ideas that Jencks began to develop back in the late 1970's, when she was doing the first beach series. At that time, she began a series of small-scale nudes as dunes or dunes as nudes, nude dunes or dune nudes, noon dudes. The dune looks like a great big woman, towering over the little normal people, like James Thurber's cartoon of "Woman and House," the woman becoming a house to tower ominously over her intimidated husband. Somehow this early work was lost. But nothing is ever entirely lost, and now she has salvaged these lost terra cottas out of memory, and returned to them (and will hold on to them this time, we hope).

Several of the *Dunescapes* are based on a Shakespeare Sonnet (64) that Edwin Dickinson loved

and that Jencks' father heard him recite at the top of his lungs in front of the ocean which was all roiled up after a hurricane. It contains the lines:

When I have seen the hungry ocean gain
Advantage on the kingdom of the shore,
And the firm shore win of the watery main,
Increasing store with loss, and loss with store;
When I have seen such interchange of state,
Or state itself confounded to decay;

Ruin hath taught me thus to ruminat—
That Time will come and take my love away.

Two of the *Dunescapes* are called *Hungry Ocean* (Plate 18), and one is titled *Interchange of State*. This late work, the *Beach Series II* and the *Dunescapes*, span the extremes of scale: enormous plaster figures and miniature terra cotta scenes. The large figures bring out what was always latent in the earlier figures, the darker, murkier, scarier aspects, but exaggerated by the size. The monumental figures of *Beach Series II* are the terrifying and unpredictable superhuman creatures who not only inhabit the child's early life (and the mythologies of the world) but remain to haunt us in our adult existence, even if only in our unconscious. The bronze disrobing man at first seems headless, or perhaps trussed up by a torturer, until we realize that he is just someone taking off his shirt. Or is he?

Like the some of the earlier pieces, too, the small bronze studies, including several disrobing figures, are meant to be seen in water, now not a pool but the shallows of the ocean.



5 *Figures on the Beach*
1990 Bronze, 4" - 7" high

On the other hand, the extraordinary miniatures of the *Dunescapes* break new ground in many ways. In scale, the figures are tinier even than those small bronzes that she has made all along as models for the colossal figures; and the delicate edges of the waves express a new fragility, "state itself confounded to decay." In subject, now landscapes frame the human figures, even puffy clouds, like clouds in a child's drawing, floating blissfully above it all. And in cohesion, these figures, by contrast with the earlier beach series and the large bronze groups, really are together, in close human contact: the woman is caught as she falls, the pair of swimmers are holding

hands, the man is asking the woman an “Unanswered Question” (a reference to a piece by Charles Ives), though even there, though he is looking at her, she is very definitely *not* looking at him. (The tiny dog is alone.) And they are also all a part of the earth; the figures seem to come straight out of the mud or the water, like the Chinese horses breaking through the surface of the soil. Or like a vision breaking out of the mind of the artist.

1. In *For the Time Being* (New York: Viking, 2000).

2. In Tamil Nadu, as many as five hundred large clay horses may be prepared in one sanctuary, most of them standing between 15 and 25 feet tall (including a large base), and involving the use of several tons of stone, brick, and either clay, plaster, or cement. They are a permanent part of the temple and may be renovated at ten to twenty year intervals; the construction of a massive figure usually takes between three to six months. Stephen Robert Inglis, “Night Riders: Massive Temple Figures of Rural Tamilnadu” (in *A Festschrift for Prof. M. Shanmugam Pillai*, edited by M. Israel, et al. Madurai: Madurai Kamaraj University, Muttu Patippakam, 1980), 298, 302, 304. See also Wendy Doniger, “Presidential Address: ‘I Have Scinde’: Flogging a Dead (White Male Orientalist) Horse.” *Journal of Asian Studies* 58 (4), November, 1999, 940–60.

3. Cited by Jacques Lacan, 1986 seminar, “The ethic of psychoanalysis,” cited by Slavoj Žižek, “How Did Marx Invent the Symptom?” 28–9.

4. Recall the words of King Lear:

“Down to the waist they are Centaurs,
Though women all above: / But to the girdle do the gods inherit,
Beneath is all the fiends’;
There’s hell there’s darkness,
there’s the sulphurous pit,
Burning, scalding, stench, consumption.”

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON SCALE AND MATERIAL IN THE RECENT SCULPTURE OF PENELOPE JENCKS

By Jonathan Shahn

When I was a child, I was this little sort of streamlined body . . . and here were these lumpy, huge bodies. A little child looking up at these large incomprehensible body parts. . . . I was trying to recreate the grown-ups I had known when I was a child . . . they have become my own race of giants . . .

One of the more absorbing preoccupations for many sculptors who work with the human figure is the question of scale. Both large and small scale—over life size and less than life size—can be used in many ways and imply diverse shades and varieties of meaning. Some very unusual employments of scale are seen in certain works of Penelope Jencks over recent years. With a vision particularly her own, she has created a series of enormous figures of quite intense intimacy, while concurrently fashioning another series of tiny, yet powerfully monumental figure-in-landscape works in fired clay.

The artist has summoned from her childhood memories of summers at the beaches of Cape Cod, images of a world of giant naked grown-ups; expressing what seems to be the mixture of terror and fascination a child could feel at being surrounded by these huge-seeming monuments of flesh. Walking around and through this grove of pale, lumpy and oddly proportioned figures, and being able to see them only in part at any time because of their closeness and size, recreates with great intensity the powerful impression that these seemingly limitless adult bodies could make on a small child. But as one puts more distance between oneself and the sculpture, the figures begin to assume a more benign appearance, and the elegance of the forms and the artist's mastery of the gestures become more apparent. Here we see large, over life-size scale assuming a different or even opposite function from that of monumental figurative public art, being both painfully intimate and formally powerful, even seeming to move back and forth between these two modes, or two kinds, of vision.

In a way, there is something about these little things that I did that can seem bigger by making them very small. . . . when they are that size, I can imagine them being very big, but somehow, when they get bigger, I have a harder time imagining them—they wind up looking small . . .

In some of the very small terra cotta figure-in-landscape pieces, a different sort of scale-use seems to be at work. Here the tiny figures confer power on the surrounding shorescape, generating vastness through the difference in size between the land and the figures themselves, creating a sort of infinity of space in a very small format. But this vast space itself is compromised, or contradicted, by the vague allusion to recumbent human form in the dune shapes that form

the far background. Another kind of scale-relation has come into play, and with these hints of otherworldly, heroic-sized figure forms; the scale is altered still differently, the human figures turning ant-size. Of course, in looking at these small pieces of Jencks's done with such a light, deft touch, we are only vaguely aware of these notions of scale, being more aware of the rightness of the work.

I also moved into plaster, because I couldn't make terra cotta figures that large . . .

For some figure sculptors, the materials they use, the old standby materials, are like members of the family. Each has its own character and peculiarities, and can lead you in a different direction, obliging you to a certain kind of relation. Often the material can bring the artist to certain forms and ideas; at other times the idea/form can push the artist toward a certain material. And although this seems obvious, it's always worth thinking about the relation between the forms and the substance used, and how the deep familiarity of the sculptor with the material binds the concept and the medium together.

Plaster, applied directly, is unique among materials in that it is a combination of a soft pliable substance, applied freely, and a hard resistant one that has to be hacked, scraped and abraded or smoothed. In the monumental-scale direct plaster pieces we have a sense of a battle between these two functions of plaster. Nothing seems easily arrived at by a linear route, but rather the result of a long struggle, and their strength comes from many changes, rethinkings, cuttings-back, rebuildings; finally ending up as a piece of sculpture that has the look of having been many other sculptures in its life. We can see or feel their history in the final work. This can often be the case in sculpture made directly in plaster, and it often shows up in the physical qualities of the plaster surface, which, in its absorbent whiteness, can have some of the appeal of a good watercolor paper, inviting the sculptor to make various graphic markings part of the work.

I was doing terra cotta figures because I thought that they were very connected to the beach, because they are made of terra cotta and sand . . . the body shapes look like dunes . . .

Terra cotta and bronze have in common the fascinating property of transforming yielding, pliable material, usually clay and wax, into permanent hardness, capturing forms in mid-gesture, eternalizing and altering the qualities of softness and speed of modeled works in clay and wax into hard, enduring objectness. Jencks' tiny bronzes, and the small terracotta figure/landscape pieces discussed above, employ the characteristics of these materials/techniques sensitively, but without letting these same characteristics become the subject of the work. There is great restraint in the way this is done. This prolific and powerful artist has a long experience and great mastery in using fired clay and bronze in numerous large-scale, even monumental, works, yet is also able to use the same materials in a most intimate and sensitive way.



PLATE I. *Beach Series II – Three Figures*, 1988–2002



PLATE 2. *Beach Series II – Disrobing Man*, 1998–2005

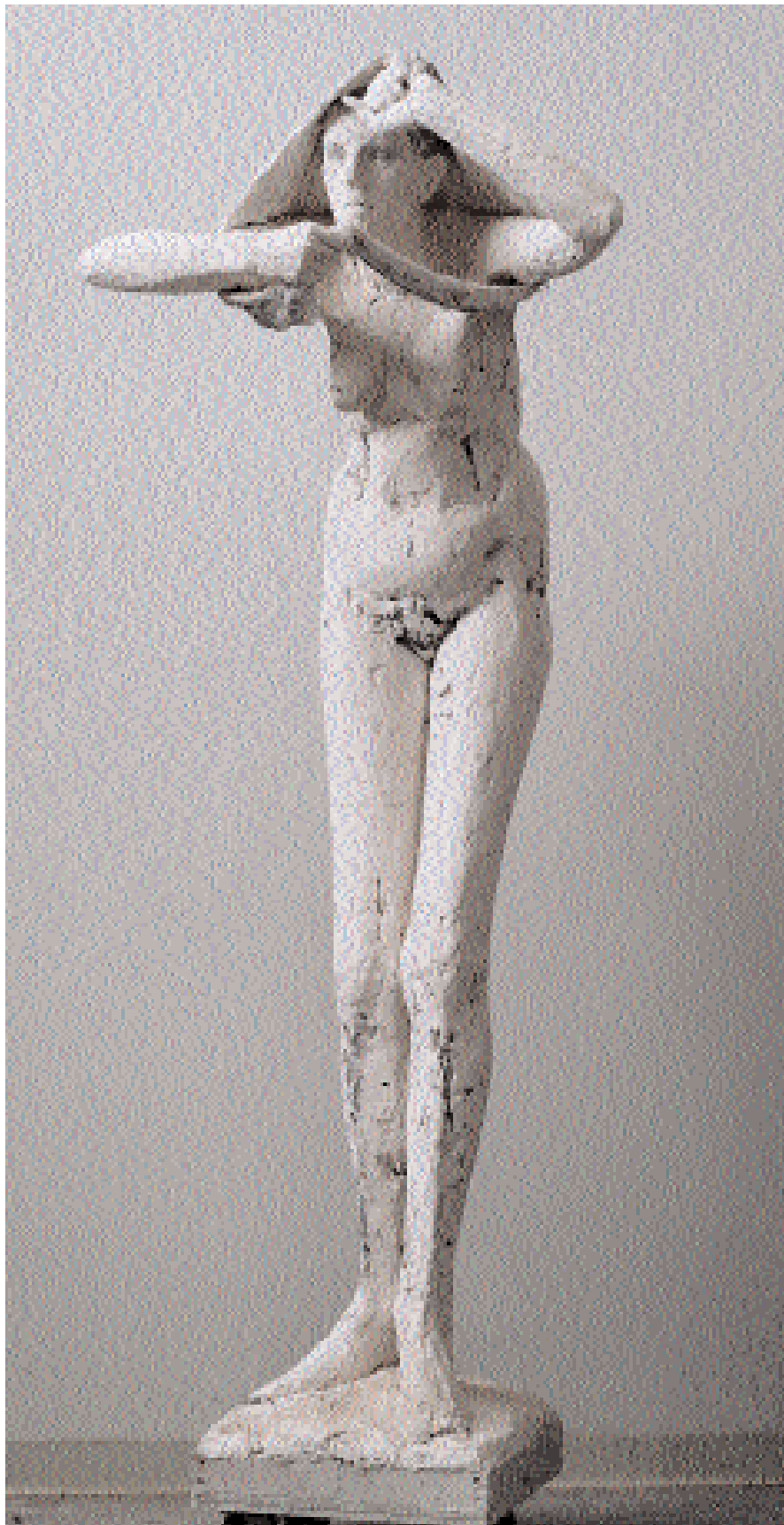


PLATE 3. *Beach Series II – Disrobing Woman*, 1998–1999



PLATE 4. *Beach Series II – Gesture* (detail), 1988–1992

PLATE 5. *Beach Series II – Walking Woman* (detail), 1990–1997

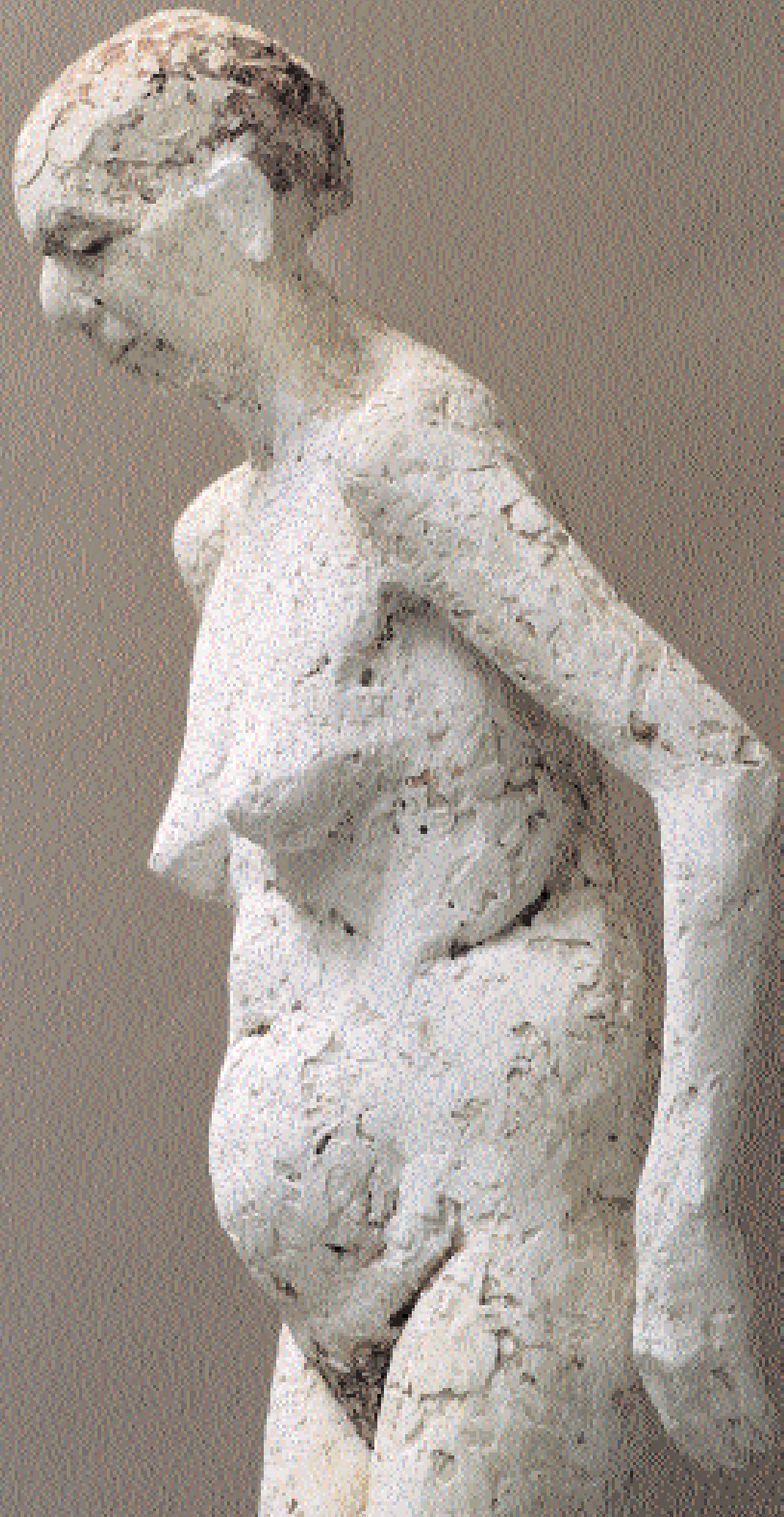




PLATE 6. *Beach Series II – Watching Woman*, 2004–2005

PLATE 7. *Beach Series II – Kneeling Woman*, 1998–2000





PLATE 8. *Beach Series II – Reclining Man*, 1989–1990

PLATE 9. *Beach Series II – Gazing Woman*, 1989–1990



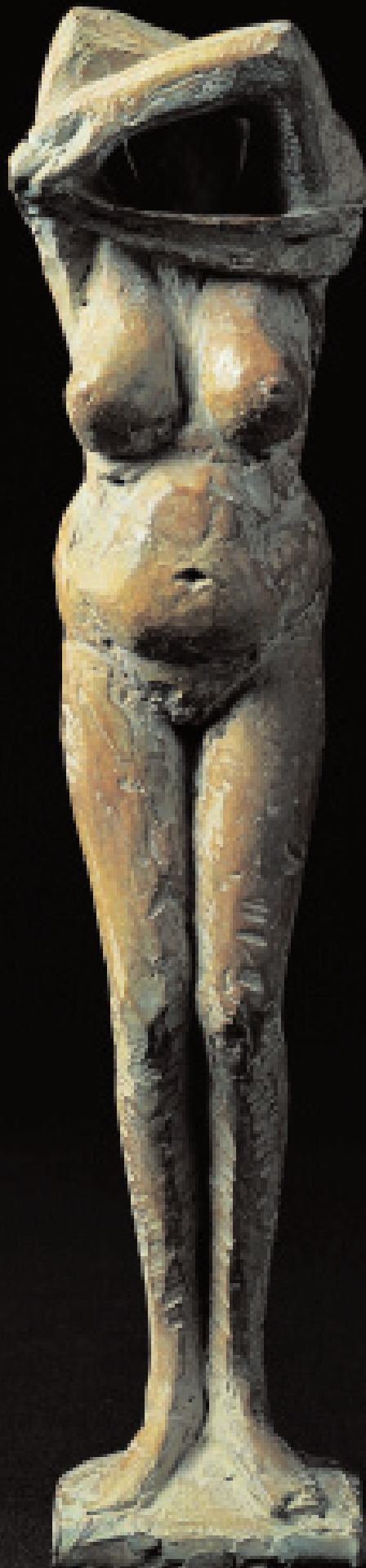


PLATE 10. *Disrobing Woman II*, 2004



PLATE II. *Stuck*, 2005





PLATE 13. *Plaster Table (I)*, 1998–2005

PLATE 12. *Plaster Table (II)*, 2004–2005

PENELOPE JENCKS' FIGURES ON THE BEACH

By Hayden Herrera

DURING THE DECADE that followed World War II, a group of Cape Cod families had frequent beach gatherings at which the adults wore no clothes. The occasion might be an evening picnic or a midday swim. For children the anticipation of these events was exciting: because our parents were busy with writing, painting, or composing music, most of the time we were left to our own devices. No one was prepared to ferry us to tennis lessons or little league games—that would have been considered bourgeois. The idea of family “togetherness,” much touted in more conventional circles, was not for us. Privacy, creativity, and individualism were the order of the day. Over the years, the young people became like a tribe. We knew a lot about each other, but very little about that other tribe, the grownups—except what they looked like naked, which we did not want to know.

Penelope Jencks' *Beach Series II* gives solid substance to her memories of mingling with those naked adults on broad stretches of private beach beneath high Truro dunes. Her over life-size plaster figures are imagined from a child's perspective: they seem huge, remote, ungainly. To a young girl, the physical peculiarities of adults past their prime held a certain fascination. But sags, bulges, wrinkles, and hairs can fill a young person with pity and disgust. Jencks' imperfect nudes embody these conflicted feelings. They retain the shock value of body parts that she, as a child, could not avoid seeing close up. At beach picnics, everyone drew close and as food was handed across legs and buttocks and genitals, it was hard to avert your eye. I remember my mother, having forgotten to bring a knife, simply pulling tomatoes apart with her fingers and handing the dripping pieces around. Seeing her fingers covered with pulp, I lost my appetite for tomatoes. Surely there was anger in my aversion. Why, I thought, couldn't our parents be more normal? Why couldn't they have prepared sandwiches instead of feeding us bluefish cooked in foil over the fire?

Some of this anger is conveyed in Jencks' *Beach Series II*. They also suggest, as she puts it, the “otherness” of grownups. As representations of a group of fathers and mothers, her figures ought to be nurturing and protective. But these are not the kind of adults who would welcome a child climbing into their lap. We children knew not to make demands or to interfere: our parents were engrossed in conversations about art, literature, psychology, and the dreadful state of American culture. For all we knew, some of them might be exercising their powers of seduction. Whatever they were thinking about, it was clearly not about us.

But there was a flip side to this neglect. We were free to do what we liked. While our naked parents sat or lay in the sand discussing neuroses, politics, Buddhism, and Existentialism, we might be cartwheeling off the tops of dunes or splashing across a string of sand flats that were fast disappearing beneath the incoming tide. This kind of freedom meant that no one imposed an identity on us: we were expected to muddle through on our own. Perhaps our parents thought

that this separateness would make us into more independent and original human beings. There was, however, one idea they did impose—the importance of beauty. They were constantly pointing out the shapes of clouds, the light on the ocean, the way the late afternoon sun lit up the beach grass. They taught us also that it was good and pleasurable to be close to nature. This closeness might be implied in the way the clay out of which some of Jencks' figures are modeled seems to come straight out of the sand.

Thus, while Penelope Jencks' beach sculptures speak of the loneliness and anxiety of being a child amid a group of undressed grownups, they also deliver a more positive message: they embody our parents' urge to be natural, to relish beauty by immersing the body—shorn of false clothing—in sun, water, the sand. No doubt these values had much to do with Jencks' becoming an artist in the first place.



PLATE 14. *Dunescape – Two Women*, 2005



PLATE 15. *Dunescape – Back Shore*, 2005



PLATE 16. *Dunescape – Homage to Goya*, 2005



PLATE 17. *Dunescape – Ocean View*, 2005



PLATE 18. *Dunescape – Hungry Ocean*, 2005



PLATE 19. *Beach Series I*, 1981

PLATE 20. *Beach Series I – Woman with Towel*, 1981





PLATE 21. *Beach Series I – Girl on Stump*, 1981



PLATE 22. *Beach Series I – Floating Man*, 1982



PLATE 23. *Beach Series I – Dune Woman*, 1980



PLATE 24. *Beach Series I – Reclining Woman*, 1980



PLATE 25. *Beach Series I – Seated Woman with Robe*, 1978

PLATE 26. *Beach Series I – Watching Woman* (detail), 1978





PLATE 27. *Self-Portrait X*, 1976



PLATE 28. *Self-Portrait IX*, 1973

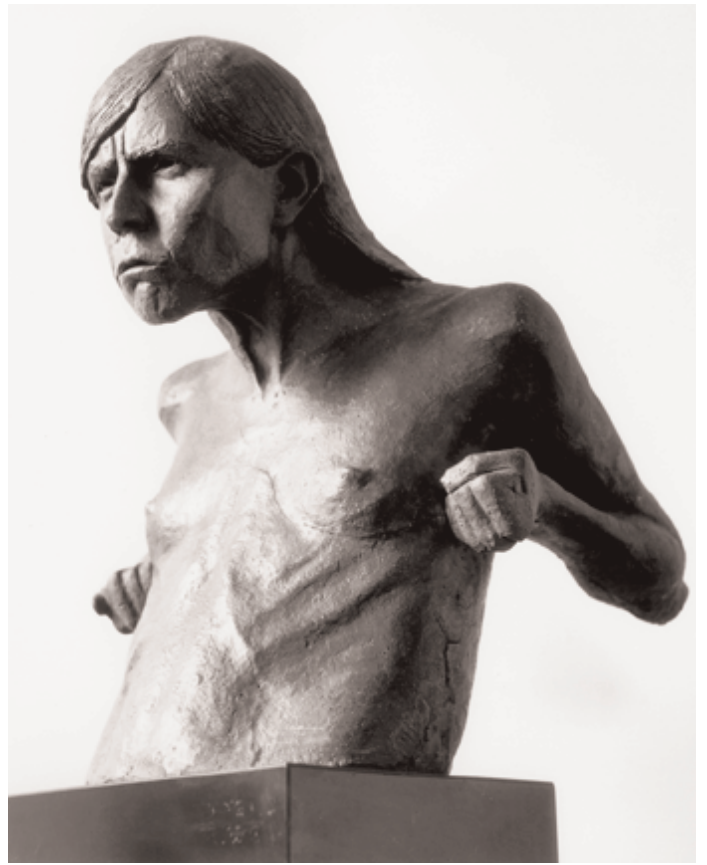


PLATE 29. *Self-Portrait VI*, 1970



PLATE 30. *Self-Portrait II*, 1969



PLATE 31. *Self-Portrait I*, 1969

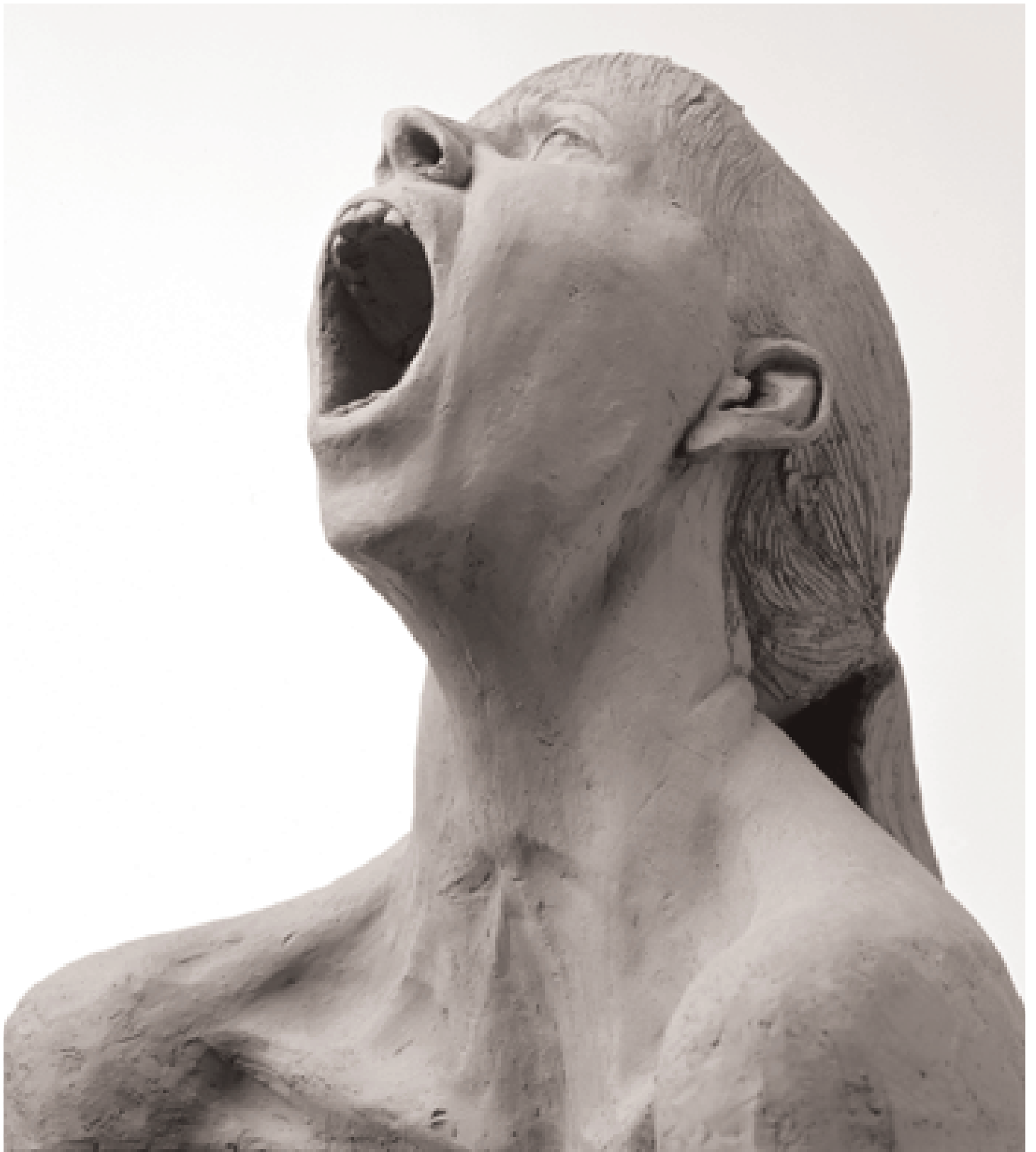


PLATE 32. *Self-Portrait V*, 1969



PLATE 33. *Self-Portrait VII*, 1972

CHECKLIST

FRONT COVER: *Kneeling Woman* (detail). Direct plaster, 68" x 35" x 30"
1998–2000

BACK COVER: *Walking Woman* (detail). Direct plaster, 111" x 31" x 31"
1998–2000

FRONTISPIECE: Studio. 2005

PLATE 1. *Beach Series II – Three Figures*
Direct plaster
1988–2002

PLATE 2. *Beach Series II – Disrobing Man*.
Direct plaster, 117" x 31" x 24"
1998–2005

PLATE 3. *Beach Series II – Disrobing Woman*.
Direct plaster, 99" x 37" x 33"
1998–1999

PLATE 4. *Beach Series II – Gesture* (detail).
Direct plaster, 105" x 26" x 32"
1988–1992

PLATE 5. *Beach Series II – Walking Woman* (detail).
Direct plaster, 111" x 31" x 31"
1990–1997

PLATE 6. *Beach Series II – Watching Woman*.
Direct plaster, 113" x 27" x 27"
2004–2005

PLATE 7. *Beach Series II – Kneeling Woman*.
Direct plaster, 68" x 35" x 30"
1998–2000

PLATE 8. *Beach Series II – Reclining Man*.
Direct plaster, 24" x 96" x 34"
1989–1990

PLATE 9. *Beach Series II – Gazing Woman*.
Direct plaster, 63" x 24" x 60"
1989–1990

PLATE 10. *Disrobing Woman II*.
Bronze, 19" x 5" x 4"
2004

PLATE 11. *Stuck*.
Bronze, 20" x 9" x 6"
2005

PLATE 12. *Plaster Table (II)*.
Plaster, 62" x 21" x 15"
2004–2005

PLATE 13. *Plaster Table (I)*.
Plaster, 66" x 63" x 25"
1998–2005

PLATE 14. *Dunescape – Two Women*.
Terra cotta, 5" x 12" x 8.5"
2005

PLATE 15. *Dunescape – Back Shore*.
Terra cotta, 5" x 11.75" x 8.5"
2005

PLATE 16. *Dunescape – Homage to Goya*.
Terra cotta, 8" x 7" x 7"
2005

PLATE 17. *Dunescape – Ocean View*.
Terra cotta, 3" x 12.5" x 7"
2005

PLATE 18. *Dunescape – Hungry Ocean*.
Terra cotta, 3" x 10.5" x 10"
2005

PLATE 19. *Beach Series I*.
Installation View, Landmark Gallery,
New York City
1981

PLATE 20. *Beach Series I – Woman with Towel*.
Terra cotta, 72" x 24" x 17"
1981

PLATE 21. *Beach Series I – Girl on Stump*.
Terra cotta, 74" x 25" x 31"
1981

PLATE 22. *Beach Series I – Floating Man*.
Terra cotta, 70" x 66" x 9"
1982

PLATE 23. *Beach Series I – Dune Woman*.
Terra cotta, 68" x 28" x 12"
1980

PLATE 24. *Beach Series I – Reclining Woman*.
Terra cotta, 58" x 26" x 9"
1980

PLATE 25. *Beach Series I – Seated Woman with Robe*.
Terra cotta, 34" x 42" x 22"
1978

PLATE 26. *Beach Series I – Watching Woman* (detail).
Terra cotta, 68" x 22" x 16"
1978

PLATE 27. *Self-Portrait X*.
Terra cotta, 69" x 20" x 13"
1976
Collection of Cape Cod Museum of Art

PLATE 28. *Self-Portrait IX*.
Terra cotta, 26" x 22" x 14"
1973
Collection of Pamela Jencks

PLATE 29. *Self-Portrait VI*.
Terra cotta, 27" x 18" x 18"
1970
Collection of Leonard and Andrea Patenaude

PLATE 30. *Self-Portrait II*.
Terra cotta, 23" x 21" x 11"
1969

PLATE 31. *Self-Portrait I*.
Terra cotta, 19" x 12" x 9.5"
1969

PLATE 32. *Self-Portrait V*.
Terra cotta, 19" x 20" x 14"
1969
Collection of George & Assya Nick

PLATE 33. *Self-Portrait VII*.
Terra cotta, 20" x 13" x 15"
1972

PENELOPE JENCKS' BIOGRAPHY

SOLO EXHIBITIONS (*selected list*):

- 1985 "Monumental Fragments" Helen Schlein Gallery, Boston, MA
1981 "Beach Series I" Landmark Gallery, New York City, NY
1981 "Beach Series I" Helen Schlein Gallery, Boston, MA
1978 "Lifesize Terracottas" Art Institute of Boston, Boston, MA
1977 "Lifesize Terracottas" Landmark Gallery, New York, NY
1976 "Lifesize Terracottas" Fitchburg Art Museum, Fitchburg, MA

COMMISSIONS (*selected list*):

- In Progress: "Robert Frost" monumental sculpture for Amherst College
1996 "Eleanor Roosevelt Memorial" Riverside Park, New York, NY
1992 "Family Group" Readers Digest Corporate Headquarters, Pleasantville, NY
1986 "Danbury Family" Art in Public Spaces, Courthouse, Danbury, CT
1986 "Student" Farber Library, Brandeis University, Waltham, MA
1984 "Family" Portside Festival Park, Toledo Ohio (Henry Hering Memorial Medal for outstanding collaboration between Architect & Sculptor)
1982 "Samuel Eliot Morison" Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, MA
1978 "Chelsea Conversation" Chelsea, MA

AWARDS:

- 2005 Agop Agopoff Prize for Sculpture, National Academy of Design
2001 Meisner Prize for Sculpture, National Academy of Design
1998 Fellowship, Bogliasco Foundation, Centro Studi Ligure, April-May
1991 "Distinguished Alumni Award" School of Visual Arts, Boston University, Boston, MA
1988 "Henry Hering Memorial Medal & Prize for Outstanding Cooperation between Architect & Sculptor"
National Sculpture Society
1987 '75, 76, 78 MacDowell Colony Residencies, Peterborough, NH
1983 "The Family; Nude, Naked & Monumental" Brandeis University
1981 "Commendation for Design Excellence" National Endowment for the Arts
1977 Massachusetts Artists Foundation Award

GROUP EXHIBITIONS (*selected list*):

- 2002 "Sculptors' Drawings" Andrews Gallery, College of William & Mary, Williamsburg, VA
2002 Il Quadrato, Galleria Associazione Culturale, Chieri, Italia
2001 & 1999 National Academy of Design, New York, NY
1998 "Stages of Creation: Public Sculpture by National Academicians" National Academy of Design, NY
1998 "Maquette to Monument: Eleanor Roosevelt" National Sculpture Society
1996 "Becoming Eleanor Roosevelt: The Early Years 1884-1933" The New York Historical Society,
New York, NY
1989 "Contemporary Sculpture" Chesterwood, Stockbridge, MA
1982 Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University, Waltham, MA
1980 "Recipients of Awards in Sculpture" Massachusetts Artists Foundation, Federal Reserve Bank, Boston, MA
1974 "Living American Artists & the Figure" Penn. State University Museum of Art, University, PA
1974 "14 Aspects of Realism" Boston Visual Artists Union, Boston, MA
1966 "Young Talent" Massachusetts Council on Arts & Humanities, Boston, MA
1966 National Institute of Arts & Letters, New York, NY

COLLECTIONS (*selected list*):

The White House, Washington, DC
National Academy of Design, New York, NY
Boston Public Library, Boston, MA
Biblioteca di Pietrasanta (LU), Italia
The City of New York
The City of Boston
Cape Cod Museum of Art, Dennis, MA
The Readers Digest, Pleasantville, NY
City of Toledo, OH
Brandeis University, Waltham, MA
Roosevelt University, Chicago, IL

BIBLIOGRAPHY (*selected list*):

- 2001 "Ritratti d'artista: Penelope Jencks" by Gianfranco Schialvino, *UTZ*, vol 2, September, 2001
2001 "Beach Series II, Disrobing Woman" *Xilografia in SMENS*, Torino, Italia
1996 Ex-First Lady's Latest First: Statue in New York City Park, *The New York Times*, Metro Section, Saturday, October 5, 1996
1996 "Penelope Jencks' Eleanor Roosevelt" by Eleanor Munroe, *Provincetown Arts Magazine*, Summer, 1996
1995 "Wellfleet Sculptor Distills Essence of Eleanor Roosevelt" by Joyce Johnson, *Cape Codder*, December 1995
1994 "Mrs. Roosevelt, Eight Feet Tall" by Philip Hamburger, *The New Yorker*, October, 1994, Vol LXX No. 34
1983 "Penelope Jencks; Sculpture" by Blair Birmelin, *The Massachusetts Review*, Summer '83

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS:

National Academy of Design
Royal British Society of Sculptors
National Sculpture Society

EDUCATION:

- 1954-56 Swarthmore College
1955 Hans Hofmann School
1956 & 57 Skowhegan School of Painting & Sculpture
1956-58 Boston University BFA
1959 Boston Museum School
1960 Stuttgart Kunst Akademie

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THE SCHOOL OF VISUAL ARTS (SVA) at the College of Fine Arts (CFA) has since its founding in 1954 emphasized working from observation, and the human figure in particular. Given this rich pedagogical tradition, it is fitting that we pay tribute to the work of distinguished alumna (CFA '58) and accomplished figurative sculptor, Penelope Jencks. *Penelope Jencks: Sculpture* is the first comprehensive survey of the artist's career to explore her lifelong interest in the human form. This exhibition, above all, is a testament to Penelope Jencks' talent and skill as an artist. It also recognizes her enduring patience and determination, in the process of organizing all aspects of this exhibition and catalogue, for which we are very grateful.

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Wojtek Naczas: frontispiece and plate nos. 3, 6, 7, and 10–18

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