

**The first time I saw this work I knew  
I had discovered a hidden treasure.**

Barbara O'Keefe, Director, The Coral Springs Museum of Art

# SI GMUND LI CHTERMAN

sculpture

The work of Sigmund Lichterman far exceeds the bar passed on by so many before him. Unfortunately time also exceeded him as many of us are left to wonder what other marvelous works might have been. Sigmund's work is stunning not just to look at but to feel. The power and vision he had to make such free works from beautiful woods should be a testament that good art can be reached without being driven by money or the need to survive.

Giovanni Rossi, Giovanni Rossi Fine Art, Inc.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ecstasy	3
dancer	5
high road	7
awakeni ng	9
the last hurrah	11
mighty one	13
moses	15
the bl essi ng	17
cl oud	19
mati ng cal l	21
narci ssus	23
earthbound	25
the gardener	27
dul ci nea	29
ki ss	31
chl oe	33
mi das	35
peacock	37
lot' s wi fe	39
short bi ography	40



*Artist's comments by Sig Lichterman appear opposite each work.  
They were taken from discussions with him about each sculpture.*



*I had the Russian Dancer Andre Eglevsky in mind. He was a marvelous dancer and after a performance of the New York City Ballet (The Balanchine Ballet Company) I stood at the doorway and was surprised when he walked out since he was small, but on stage he appeared so expansive.*



**ecstasy**

mahogany

24"h x 34"w x 36"d 1991



*I made a maquette of African Stone, called Danseur Noble. My artist friend Simon Lissim said that I made things small because I had been a dentist and I should try making things big. This pushed me to laminate mahogany. That gave me the freedom to make a bigger piece. Once completed, I thought the piece could be a maquette for an even larger sculpture.*



**dancer**

mahogany

34”h x 31”w x 6.5”d 1989



*“O you take the high road and I’ll take the low road ...” Actually it is when you are very happy walking along and life is great.*





## high road

mahogany

55 ½" x 46" x 17" 2000



*I was young, at school, and just starting to look at girls. There was an Irish girl with red hair and green eyes in my class and I was fascinated with her. I looked and never said a word, just looked. I have a feeling she was looking at me too.*



**awakeni ng**

mahogany

63”h x 18”w x 6”d 2003



*This could be me, or anybody,  
smiling with tears in his eyes. It's  
the last lap, a sad connotation.*



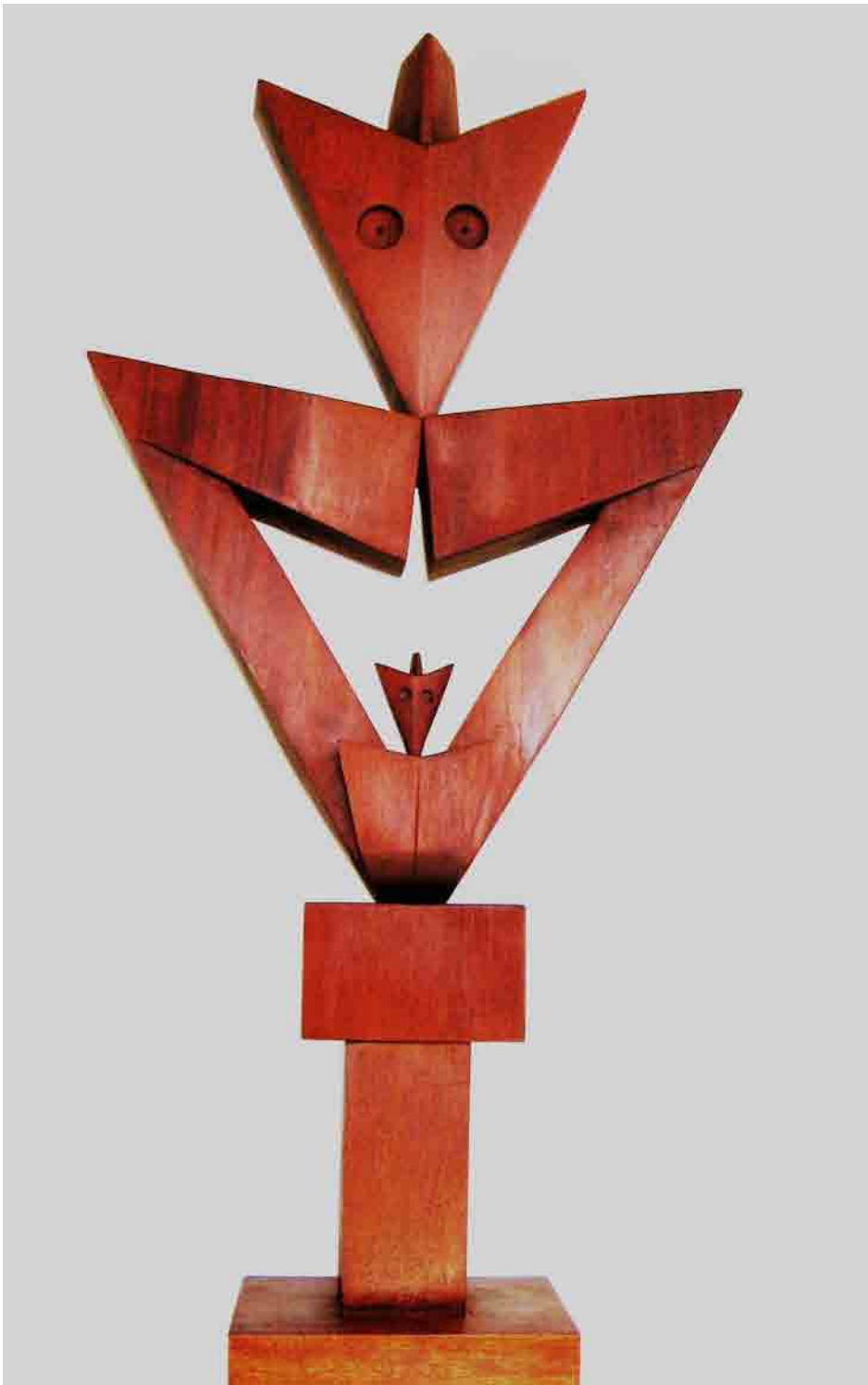
**the last hurrah**

mahogany

72”h x 30”w x 12”d 2001



*When I was a dentist, a hunter twice my size came to the office. He looked at me and fainted. I realized then that every man is a child inside. Later, when I saw Saddam Hussein hiding in the hole, I felt that he was a coward (and all the mighty ones are).*



**mi ghty one**

mahogany

66" x 31" x 8" 2000



*Made of many parts and each a sculpture in itself. The head alone could be on a stand and make a complete sculpture.*





**MOSES**

mahogany

82"h x 40"w x 17"d 1992



*The Coral Springs Museum of Art was doing a retrospective of my work. The Museum Director, Barbara O'Keefe, was there and the way she looked at me was the inspiration for this piece.*



the blessing

mahogany

53.5"h x 43"w x 6"d 2002



*I was looking at and studying clouds. I decided to reproduce cloud nine, in the form of the female figure. It's made out of one block and from a single piece.*



cloud

mahogany

15”h x 32w x 8”d 2002



*I was really inspired by a poem: The little bird stood and sang to its mate, its loud ecstatic song, singing as though every bone in its tiny body were a golden flute.*



mating call

mahogany

76"h x 26"w x 17"d 2001



*I had dental patients who dealt in exotic woods. They knew I sculpted and offered me some wood. One day after I retired there was a big rosewood tree across my driveway. I couldn't budge it. It was tremendous, maybe 400 pounds. I thought we should get someone to cut it. Finally, using my carjack, I got it upright to transport. I made the design with the wood defects part of the sculpture. It turned out to be a man hugging and loving himself.*





**narci ssus**

rosewood

Permanent Collection, The Coral Springs Museum of Art



*The inspiration occurred in Mexico where we saw a laborer carrying a big rock on his back. We watched him moving it and I thought he'd like to live a little bit and spread his arms. He's trying to spread his wings, but he can't. I found a quote in Macbeth, "who can impel the forest."*



**earthbound**

maple

48"h x 12"w x 12"d 1968



*We'd ask our wonderful gardener Vince 'why do we always have small things?' Vince would hold a seedling up between his fingers and say "a little time, a little time." He was really a man of the earth - a wonderful man. This is carved out of one piece of Black Walnut. It can be thought of as who is the gardener?*



the gardener  
black walnut  
private collection



*Dulcinea always touched my heart. The first time I saw The Man of La Mancha I had tears in my eyes. I saw it as an apotheosis. Quixote made a deity out of this prostitute and it was a glorious thing. There is a Jewish expression that "He holds her real high."*



## Dul ci nea

mahogany

36"h x 12"w x 6"d 1988



*We had friends Costya and Ethel, and he was sort of old when he had this little daughter. He gave me a picture of her kissing him, and I made made the sculpture of this primitive guy who is touched because of the kiss of his little girl. Love conquers.*





**ki ss**

black walnut  
private collection



*I gave Chloe to the Irvington Library. It is in the children's reading room. They had a reception and while they were unveiling Chloe I gave a talk. The mayor made a proclamation that this day would be Sigmund Lichterman day. I made the little girl I didn't have.*



chl oe

marble

Children's Library, Irvington, N.Y.



*The story of Midas, a mythological story, was that everything he touched turned to gold. He was cursed by his treachery that he should have the head of an ass.*

**Mi das**

bronze

12"h x 3"w x 3"d 1975



*Made of bronze while at SUNY. We cast outside and after this was cast I went home. The next morning it was frozen solid in the ground. It took some digging to get it freed. Because I was size limited and it was cast as one piece, I melted globs of bronze and welded them onto the tips of each feather afterwards.*



peacock

bronze

27"h x 16"w x 5"d 1981



*I bought a piece (about 130 lbs) of alabaster. I made Lot's Wife looking at Sodom & Gomorrah, but it was after Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Subconsciously I was looking back at all the horror and devastation. During WWII I was in the medical corps and shortly after the bomb was dropped I was in Japan. We walked through some of the aftermath in Hiroshima but were stationed in Fukuoka.*





Lot's wife

alabaster

private collection

# Sigmund Baer Lichterman

November 27, 1909 - September 10, 2006

Sigmund Lichterman was born in the coal mining town of Pittston, Pennsylvania, in 1909, when horse and buggies were the means of transportation. He began sculpting as soon as he was given mashed potatoes in his high chair and continued to experiment with different media throughout his life, using what he found readily available, including Ivory Soap.

After attending the University of Pennsylvania, he eventually established a dental practice in New York where his skills in casting and working with metals were honed. He said "dental school gave me a good foundation for sculpture - plaster impressions and casts, wax carving, gold casting, soldering, and ceramics - all the basic principles." Serving in the Medical Corps during World War II found him stationed on the island of Tinian (from which the Enola Gay took off) in the South Pacific.

Armed with a boy-scout knife, he wanted to carve something. Before World War I, the Germans imported "coca bola" to use as every fourth tie for a narrow gauge railroad used to transport Tinian's only crop, sugar cane, to the mills. Sig found the old railroad bed and dug up some "black and shriveled" pieces of wood that he discovered were unusually beautiful, fine grained and hard - perfect for carving.

Returning after the war to his practice and to sculpting in New York, he formally studied with Jose de Creft and Seymour Lipton at the New School of Social Research. Works from this period were created primarily from a variety of woods and stones, including marble, granite and alabaster.



During the 1960s Sig took bronze casting, arc welding and design workshops at SUNY Purchase and in the 1970s, began showing his work across Westchester County in New York State. His several awards from this period include a medal from the White Plains Armory show. Newspaper articles about him followed, including a mention in People Magazine.

Retiring to Coconut Creek Florida in 1984 with his wife Betty, he began to laminate wood, primarily marine mahogany, and create blocks from which to sculpt. He now had the space to work on a larger scale taking full advantage of a community wood studio. Many of the pieces made in this technique have been exhibited at The Coral Springs Museum of Art, the Ft. Lauderdale Museum of Art, The Broward Community College, and in several other exhibitions.

Varied in media, style, and approach, much of Sig's early work was carved from the original tree stump or piece of stone which suggested subject matter based on its form. In casting he created from both idea and material. His later works were constructed from ideas that could be easily expressed in larger shapes. His total body of work shows a progression towards the more abstract.



Sig in his 96th year laminating mahogany for a new work.



**published by Sig Lichterman Works 2007**  
photos of ecstasy, dancer, high road, awakening, last hurrah,  
moses, mating call, narcissus, earthbound and the gardener  
by Bob Bagley, Bag End Studio  
design and additional photos by Susan Vladeck  
editors Shelley Parriott, Riva Danzig and David Olmsted

**[www.siglichterman.com](http://www.siglichterman.com)**

Copyright © 2007 Sig Lichterman Works

