

Audio Transcript, Stop 7: 1980-1999

Welcome. My name is Richard-Raymond Alasko. I'm an appraiser. Appraisers are professional valuers. They have a method for estimating what the worth of a property is. And I've worked with the works of art at the Northwestern Law School for, well, since the 1980s.

In the 1980s, a group of bronzes were made a gift to the law school by the family of Arthur Rubloff.

You're standing in front of a couple of my favorites. The first one that I want to tell you about is the stalking lion. Stalking.... prowling and looking toward the target. And this sculpture was modeled by an artist named Fratin.

Fratin lived in the first part of the 19th century, and he was one of the earliest of the animal sculptures. We call them animaliers. It was a part of an evolution of artists responding to actual exam, actual sight, actual experience of animals, as zoos developed in Western Europe.

The stalking lion here was done in bronze. Now the sculpture is made first in clay and then it is cast in bronze. That model is used to create a mold. And then the bronze is poured into the mold, and then it's finished off.

And in this instance, it's finished with what's called a rubbed patina. And this patina, rather dark, is rubbed in order to show highlights, to catch glinting light and to add force and a sense of dynamic movement to the sculpture.

The lion was very popular. In fact, it continues to be popular today, but it was very popular for public monuments simply because of its relationship to its symbolism and representing strength and authority.

Everyone knows the lions in front of the Art Institute, the Guardian Lions, and I'll bet most of you also know the two lions in front of the New York Public Library, Patience and Fortitude. Well, their progenitors came from the French artists like Fratin who did this sculpture.

Another sculpture that I really want you to enjoy is this gilt example of a mounted rider. It's a depiction of Joan of Arc, which was done in the 1870s.

Again, it's bronze, but it has this gilt, this washed gilt surface which glints, catches the light and really has this, this sense of movement.

I love the flag. You know, I'm the kid that enjoyed watching parades, hearing drums go by and seeing flags furled.

And here we have this image of victory, highly popular in the 19th century, especially in the 1870s as a sort of a rallying figure. Joan of Arc embodied the spirit of French values. A monument such as Joan of Arc was highly popular.

This is a reduced version of the sculpture. It has this succinct elegance which I hope that you enjoy. And that elegance is from the horse's wonderful prance, as well as this upright, straight backed Joan of Arc, who symbolizes for the French their sense of self identity.

When I look back at the Rubloff family's generous donation, I think how wonderful and what foresight the gift suggests, because these sculptures are in a learning environment and they're meant not just as aesthetic works, but they are meant also to be here as part of our identifying with whom we are.

Northwestern is at least the way I experienced it, a real bedrock institution, part of the of the moving spirit of the city of Chicago.

Reflecting on the generosity of the Rubloff family, the Rubloff gifts, and of the values, particularly the values of self-identity and strength represented in just the two bronzes that I've talked about...

Think about what are your own values? What are your own identities? How are they visually expressed, and are they expressed within the art collection of the Northwestern School of Law?

Before going on to core stop eight, I hope that you'll stop up and visit the sponsored stops of the Muslim Law Students Association and the Middle Eastern Law Students Association on the third floors of the Rubloff building. You can access these artworks by taking the main elevator, located in the northeast section of the building.