

# Basic Detail Report

## **Title: Standing Man with Hollow Calf**

Date: 1992

Primary Maker: com.gallerysystems.emuseum.core.entities.RecordXPerson@28354

Medium: sculpture; Bronze

Description: "Standing Man with Hollow Calf" presents a symmetrical bronze figure whose legs join to form a narrow support at the foot, producing a delicately balanced appearance. The artist has stressed the lightness of the figure by hollowing out the calf of the leg, thus appearing to erode the support. This lightweight quality characterizes DeStaebler's approach to standing figures cast in bronze, as opposed to those of clay, which require heavy support at the base and are often seated. The artist finished the surface of the bronze with a warm-hued patina, which washes over the head, torso, knee, and base, further softening the apparent solidity of the cast bronze and adding to the ethereal presence. Figurative sculpture created as fragmentary, suggesting the partial remains of an ancient civilization, is found in modernist sculpture from Auguste Rodin to Alberto Giacometti, whose figurative work, with its partial forms and weathered surfaces, often echoes a classical antiquity, as does the limbless torso of "Standing Man with Hollow Calf".

DeStaebler's statue thus assumes both a timeless quality, through associations with antiquity, and relates to modern culture, through its inherent abstraction. In "Standing Man with Hollow Calf", the artist has also heightened the metaphorical associations of fragmentation to the modern psyche by covering the statue's featureless face with patina in the form of a mask. Aspects of "Standing Man with Hollow Calf" also relate to DeStaebler's location in the San Francisco Bay area. In the 1950s, when most American art centers saw the emergence of Abstract Expressionism in nonobjective styles, Bay Area artists, such as Richard Diebenkorn and David Parks, created a distinctive figurative style using an Abstract Expressionist brushstroke. During the height of Minimalism in the 1960s, the human figure was still being painted in the Bay Area by artists such as Nathan Olivera and others, and DeStaebler's own abstract sculpture from that decade was based in landscape imagery. DeStaebler's move to the figure in the 1970s reflected this milieu, and he, like Olivera, brings an Expressionist painting aesthetic to the coloring of his figurative sculpture, as seen in the gestural application of patina to the surface of "Standing Man with Hollow Calf". Critic Donald Kuspit has noted that the association of the artist's figures to ancient commemorative stele gives them a spiritual dimension: He wants to create a modern religious art, utilizing archaic forms for an "archaic" purpose: the articulation and remediation of suffering. This generates the illusion of release from time and space we call "eternity." DeStaebler's archaic figure symbolizes the process that leads to the eternal effect that uncovers the eternal presentness of the primitively memorable and the effect itself. It is about the impacted sublimity of our feelings for those we cherish, most of all, for ourselves. It is at once sublimely and primitively reparative narcissistic art of memory.(1) In

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"Standing Man with Hollow Calf", DeStaebler has created an image of man that is very contemporary, with spontaneous splashes of color across its surface, and, as Kuspit has so beautifully articulated, an image whose form resonates with the qualities of archaic figures from the dawn of civilization. LG Bibliography: Ted Lindberg, "Stephen DeStaebler: An Exhibition of Recent Bronzes", exhib. cat. (Vancouver: Emily Carr College of Art, 1983); Dore Ashton, "Objects Worked by the Imagination for their Innerness: The Sculpture of Stephen DeStaebler," "Arts Magazine" 59 (November 1984): 140-144; Stephen DeStaebler, "Keynote Address," NCECA Journal 5 (1984): 9-13; Donald Kuspit, "Stephen DeStaebler: The Figure", exhib. cat. (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1988). NOTES: 1. Kuspit, Stephen DeStaebler, p. 15.

Dimensions: 75 1/4 x 18 1/4 x 23 3/4 in.