

STEM-BRANCH AND STEM-ROOT
FORMATION FOR SCULPTURE

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THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MASTERS DEGREE
IN FINE ART (MFA) SCULPTURE.

BY

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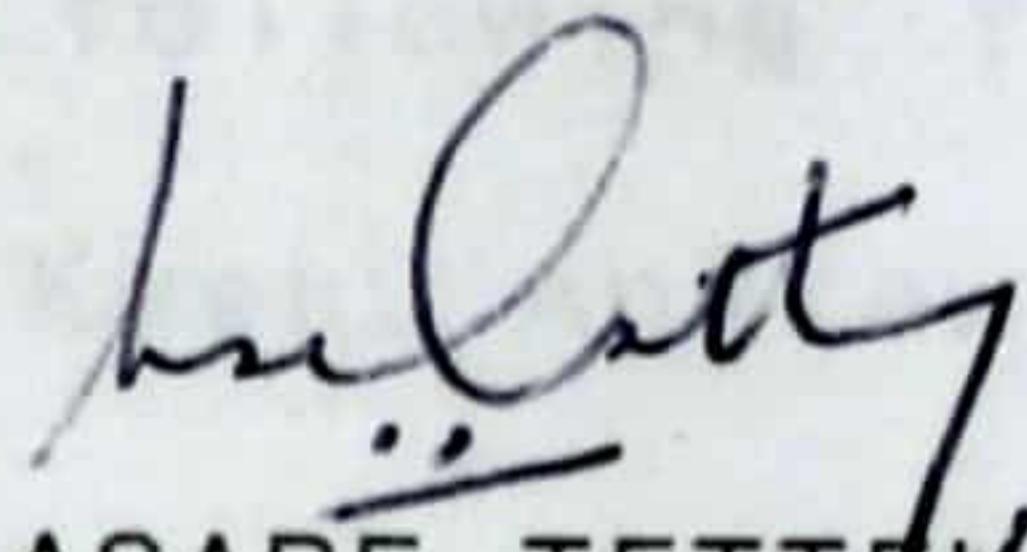
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JULY, 1996

CERTIFICATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

It is certified that this thesis is the candidate's own account of his research.



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Kumasi

F.M.O.- M.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

In Ghana, the art of carved sculpture in stem-branch and stem-root is not popular. The technique is practised only by some sculptors who trained in Art Schools. Even then the majority of these trained sculptors who produce stem-branch and stem-root sculpture do so once a while, when they come across the stem-branch or stem-root which suggests clearly a recognizable image. They carve the stem-branch directly following the suggested or representational image in the medium, which in most cases, amongst these practicing sculptors could be once or twice in a decade. What is interesting about this technique is that jutting out branches and roots from a main stem most often serve as heads or arms of human or animals, leaving the bulk of the wood, the main stem, for the artist to create something with. This can be a very difficult task, a tedious and slow problem-solving process, to the extent of limiting the artist to working with a particular piece of wood with which he can express himself. Therefore he is left with the choice of expressing himself within defined limits - the freedom of expression, within boundaries.

Carving stem-branch and stem-root is not practised widely by sculptors. Reasons could be -

1. Such wood pieces are not easily available like real logs
2. Some sculptors find such wood difficult to use - a big problem to identify forms or image in wood.

Wood sculpture in Ghana in the past has laid much emphasis on block wood carving rather than other processes. But in recent years, when development projects, farming and bush fires are fast transforming the environment, and wood lots are fast depleting there has been simultaneously a growing demand for the creation of large monumental wood sculpture to decorate hotels and other state buildings. These have generated a fresh approach to the carving of large wooden works. The answer to this may lie in the stem-branch and stem-root approach because of the added advantage of extended branches that could create limbs for movement. Unfortunately this technique is less popular with sculptors in Ghana.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

There abounds in Ghana, tree stem with branches and stem with roots for sculpture work. However, only limited amounts have been used, as sculptors go in for the solid branchless block of stem. There is the need to examine these less-extensively used parts of trees and determine how best they can be used in sculpture making. The less-extensively used parts are stem with branches and stem with roots as the solid wood are now scarce - they are being used for timber and secondly they provide the opportunity for the sculptor to lessen his burden.

OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

The main objectives of this research are:

- a. To identify selected stem-branch and stem-root from trees which could be used in sculpture making.
- b. To demonstrate practical approaches to achieve action, rhythm and freedom, carving with the less used parts of trees.
- c. To exploit the limitations of the wood as imposed by nature, which sets the sculptor not only thinking and planning but also provide freedom of expression.
- d. To carve less but to achieve a lot in terms of rhythm, movement and function.

JUSTIFICATION OF OBJECTIVES

Wood sculpture has been directed towards the use of branchless stem of trees or wood blocks, which are extensively used for other equally important purposes - timber and firewood thus becoming more expensive. There is the need to diversify into other parts of tree left-overs which if not used as firewood are left to rot. Interestingly, these tree left-overs give freedom for maximum expression and train the eyes to see movement in the stem-root form before the actual carving, therefore making maximum use and giving full expression to the material, the forms, movement, thoughts and skill.

HYPOTHESIS

It is assumed that stem-branch and stem-root have not been fully utilized and that they can be used extensively as a sculptural media through experimentation in carving.

DELIMITATION

The project limits itself to the use of tree stem-branch and stem-root as a medium for carving in sculpture.

METHODOLOGY

1. The researcher will undertake a review of literature to know what has already been done in wood sculpture based on tree stem-branch and stem-root technique.
2. Personal interviews will be conducted with the three practising Ghanaian sculptors on issues relating to the material used in the research.
3. Experiments then would be conducted with three samples of stem-branch and stem-root with different defects or limitations to determine the most suitable type of approach for the project.
4. With the materials identified, two preliminary experiments will be conducted to explore methods of creating designs focussing on -
 - a. the forms recognized in the tree stem-branch
 - b. a suggested image in material; and
 - c. movements created by forms in material.

THESIS OUTLINE

The thesis has been divided into five chapters, each dealing with a specific activity. Chapter one deals with the introduction, statement of the problem, the objectives, assumptions, justification of the objectives, delimitation of thesis, research methodology, and the thesis outline.

Chapter two reviews the related literature.

Chapter three discusses three experiments with stem-branch and stem-root with various defects to determine the most suitable approach for this project. It discusses experiments appropriate for creating designs based on real shapes of tree stem-branch or stem-root; design based on a recognized image suggested in material and others based on movements created by forms in material.

Chapter four tackles the main project, using the experiences and discoveries made in the preliminary studies to create a sculpture each from stem-root, and stem-branch using designs based on forms in the materials.

Chapter five discusses the results, conclusions and recommendations. The chapter ends with a bibliography.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Material and Method

No extensive and elaborate literature exists on the nature and uses of stem-branch and-root for the process of carving. Many sculptors agree that such carvings occur as occasion presents itself in most sculptors lives. Few indeed have done it frequently.

Ofotsu Ceasar-Wood Carving from Tree Branches and Roots.¹
(B.A.(Art) degree Report, College of Art U.S.T. Kumasi. 1980)

The above literature states that:

"Carving from tree branches and roots is simple and unaffected by the formal theories of aesthetics. The form is exhibited in the wood and little or nothing at all need be done to convey the carver's message".

This information to the researcher is not wholly true, because not all material readily suggests images. In most cases design based on an inner feeling evoked by forms in the specimen was developed. Where the suggested forms are available they would be made use of. Carving from tree branches is affected by aesthetics: the initial choice of tree branch is an aesthetic decision.

The report provides comprehensive information on the creation of sculptural works from stem-branch and stem-root which is vital to this project. This includes portions related to nature and treatment of wood, tools and how they are used; and some aspects of creativity.

The report states that the core has the pith, where growth starts. The grain is the actual fibrous structure of the wood which runs the length of the tree in direction and arrangement. Branches and knots produce interesting forms when utilized in carving. The report continues with characteristics of the trees - stating that the Sapwood is soft and easily attacked by pest: Heartwood is hard and difficult to penetrate by pest.

It also states that seasoning by kiln-drying or drying under controlled room temperatures prevents cracks and decay. Smoking or dumping of wood in ponds of water are treatment methods to get rid of destructive insects.

Although the above information on seasoning is relevant, it is more ideal for the timber industry where loggers can control and monitor the behaviour of logs from the day of felling it till they are processed into logs. The situation is different in this project.

Wood logs are located when some amount of deterioration has already taken place. The logs may be too large, oddly shaped and heavy so that the idea of kiln drying may not be easy. Other forms of seasoning may be possible after some initial carving has been done on site to reduce weight. Some wood pieces located may be very

difficult to identify by name. The agents of destruction (pest, insect, burns and fungus) play a very useful role not only in reducing the weight of these huge woods but also by adding new forms to them. The activities of these agents on the sapwood of stem-root make their uprooting easier without damaging the root forms.

The information on seasoning will be of great use, especially when the wood gets to the controlled studio environment.

Another area the report talks about is the tools and how they are used. It states that adze, gouge, Chisel and parting tools are the basic tools one would need when carving stem-branch. The large fluther and shallow gouges are what would be needed most when carving to reveal forms. The flutter because of its shape is first used to cut away bigger chunks of material at a faster rate. This would be followed by the different sizes of shallow gouges to get the required forms and surface finishing. The parting tool is used occasionally for undercutting to differentiate or mark the end of a form and the beginning of another. These tools will no doubt be useful to the Sculptor in addition to the chain saw because of the bulky nature of his material to supplement the efforts of the other tools during blocking.

Under creativity the report states:

"Nature is his vital source of inspiration and creation. By deliberate and conscious efforts the carver strives to liberate from stem-branch their suggested forms. The dynamic nature of root and branch forms provide and satisfy movements

from varying angles for crawling, running and upright motives. Very little or nothing need be done to these forms to complete or successfully convey the carver's message"².

The above literature shows the extent to which the author researched into creativity in roots and stem-branches. He experimented with material which suggested a recognizable image. The process proved very easy and the finished sculpture very good. However this suggestibility occurs very easily in very few cases, in most cases you might have to work out the images after several days of hard work. It is learnt from the above that carving from stem-root or stem-branch is possible through the recognition of forms and also by designing to fit the forms. One need to work hard to achieve his end.

Kojo Fosu: 20th century Art of Africa
(Artists Alliance, Accra, Ghana, 1993).

According to the writer:

"Vincent Kofi found direct inspiration in organic shapes. As noted in his works some follow the dictates of the natural conditions, including the cylindrical shapes of tree-trunks which he so often used for his sculpture. In his technique, natural cracks in wood were retained, sometimes to provide an aspect of body anatomy. Extended parts of branches were also included as relevant parts of anatomical expressions"³.

The above draws attention to experiments that could follow the dictates of natural conditions - including the shapes of stems,

roots, branches, natural cracks, burnt parts and insect activity to play essential role in the project.

Direct inspiration is gained from the experiences the writer provided which would be used to express the feeling evoked in the project material; the difference being that Vincent Kofi occasionally carved stem-branch and not the root-stem. The other dimension is that the material being used show extensive branching system of stem and root as compared with Vincent Kofi's.

Kojo Fosu further talked about self-expression as exemplified by Dr. Kobina Bucknor in the book. He states that:

"In the expression of the sculptural idiom there is no inhibition whatever to the artist's self - expression. Also conventional rules of perspective, proportion and realism give way to stylistic representation, where as certain features of expression are exaggerated to emphasize the central theme of the subject"⁴.

Talking about another artist Fakeye, Kojo Fosu states:

"Art is a feeling, not mathematical. If the adze is used to chop away wood to reveal the image, it is not because of the chemistry of the grain of wood. Rather it is because the form of the image sometimes calls for an adze and sometimes it calls for a chisel. The material is not to be allowed to act as a stumbling block"⁵.

The above literature on Bucknor and Fakeye is related to the thesis in the sense that it shows the importance of the artist's freedom of expression in creativity. It confirms the supremacy of the artist's feelings over the material and the conventional rules in art. As such designs would be developed based on emotions evoked by forms in material and not on suggested images in material alone.

Dona Meilach: Contemporary Art with Wood
George Allen and Unwin Ltd, London, 1968.

On inherent forms and suggested image the artist Albert Vrana states:

"Most of my wood carving is inspired by inherent true forms and what I imagine in the branching habit of limbs or roots. This piece waited on the carving stand in my studio for almost a year before I decided the best way to use the interesting branching of the tree. I work all over the wood and not develop any area ahead of another. I think of carving like peeling "6.

The literature is related to the aims and objectives of the report as inspiration is being derived from inherent forms in material. The material was however not allowed to obstruct the free expression of emotion evoked by the material. In addition time spent on studying material was reduced, where conventional rules of perspective and proportion gave way to distortion and exaggeration.

Interview with Twerefah Sefah Sculptor Centre for National Culture, Accra by Oko-Matey the researcher.

The sculptor is attached to the Centre for National Culture, Accra, where he carves using a parasitic plant from the Ficus family locally called "Abare" in Akan. The main stem often has many roots running along from top to bottom. It is very soft and light in weight. The sculptor warned of its high susceptibility to insect and fungus attack; the state therefore imports special pesticide to protect such a sculpture commissioned by them. He admitted that although it can be carved, it is very soft, delicate and is difficult for planning an elaborate design. It requires just light surface carving to bring out the suggested form Sefah stressed. (plates 1,2)

Although such odd shaped wood with branches like Sefah has been using was used, the concentration shifted onto heavy, hard Heartwood which allows for elaborate carving to express movement in the sculpture.

Another sculptor interviewed was Kofi Setordji a trained sculptor.
Accra

He explained that he prefers assemblage of tree branches because of the following:

- 1 - That stem-branch and stem-root are too heavy to transport to the studio.
- 2 - That fungus and insect activity in the material can affect its permanency which can affect the artist's reputation

He explained, in his assemblages, he combines wood and metal

for expression. Very little carving is done because he selects branches that fit into his design and makes sure that their natural surfaces are maintained. (Plates 3,4)

Though some of the surface-effects are being maintained to enhance sculpture, the whole stem-branch or stem-root would be carved without dismembering it.

From the above, it becomes clear how other sculptors approach their stem-branch and stem-root carvings. This opens up other avenues of approach to this sculptor.



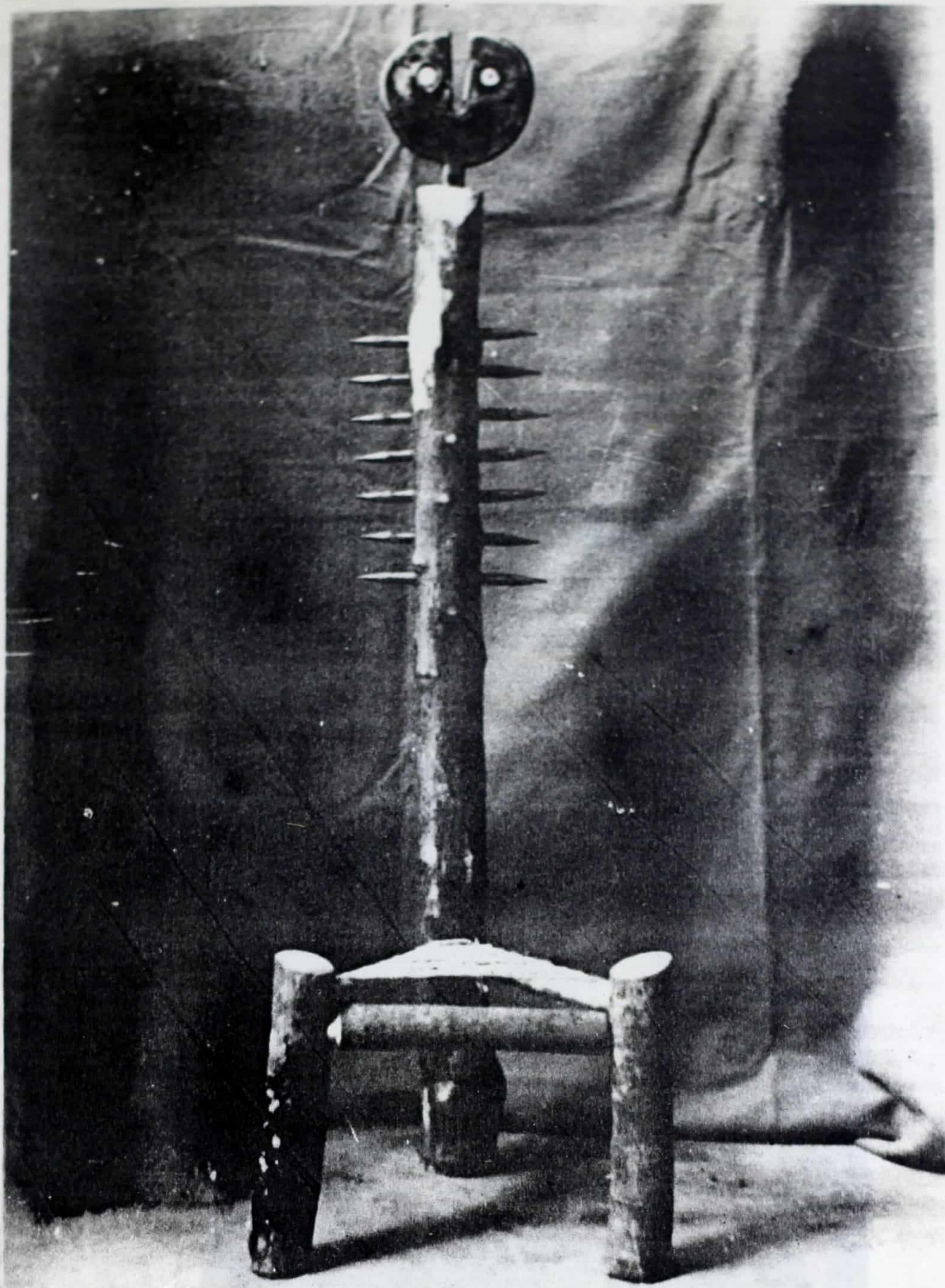
Plate 1 Twerefo Sefah, Untitled



Plate 2 Twerefo Sefah Grandfathers Legacy



Plate 2a Twerefo Sefah Grandfathers Legacy (Detail)



CHAIRMAN
1994
CONSTRUCTION
Height: 108cm
Photo: WIZ

Plate 3 Kofi Setodji, Chairman

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Plate 4 Kofi Setodji , Chairman

CHAPTER THREE

REFERENCE

PRELIMINARY EXPERIMENTS

1. OFOTSU CEASAR: WOOD CARVING FROM TREE BRANCHES AND ROOTS.
(B.A. (Art) degree Report, College of Art, U.S.T. KUMASI, 1980) 1-9.
2. IBID., 15.
3. KOJO FOSU 20TH CENTURY ART OF AFRICA (ARTISTS ALLIANCE, ACCRA, GHANA, 1993) 148.
4. IBID., 117.
5. IBID., 106.
6. DONA MEILACH CONTEMPORARY ART WITH WOOD (GEORGE ALLEN AND UNWIN LTD., LONDON, 1968) 99.

CHAPTER THREE

PRELIMINARY EXPERIMENTS

Since tree stem-branch and stem-root are left at the mercy of environmental hazards, they are acquired with various forms of defects namely: infestation with fungus or insect invasion; fire burns and so on. It is necessary therefore to explore the suitability of each wood piece found and how the defects can be exploited to enhance the project.

Hard wood has been recommended by experts in wood carving for its density and high degree of smooth cuts that the tools offer.

A stem-branch or stem-root, which is naturally seasoned with its bark and sap preferably ripped off leaving the heartwood, was selected for the project. The selected stem-branch or stem-root must have at least two or more roots or branches attached to the main stem or branch. It should not be from the Ficus family which has too many branches running from top to bottom along the tree and soft tissue which is very difficult to carve. The sculptor must preserve and make use of the several branches or roots of the stem-branch or stem-root as part of the final work.

In order to determine the durability and suitability of the wood for the project, the researcher conducted experiments on three stem-branches and two stem-roots with different defects.

Experiment 1: To determine the suitability of wood medium for the project.

In the following experiments, three samples of stem-branch and stem-root with varying defects were examined. In each case, designs were carved out from the specimen, using carving tools. The nature of the wood during and after the activity was observed and analyzed.

Experiment 1A: Fungus infested Stem-Branch

Aim:

To find out how successful fungus infested wood can be used for carving.

Description of Specimen:

A tree stem with three branches. There is fungus activity at the base extending upwards in between the branches.

Method of Design:

The partially rotten, heavily fungus infested specimen was observed by researcher critically not as a log but aesthetically as pure form. The lines, planes and patches of colourations created by artificial and natural effects evoked a feeling of love. The artist cleared the rotten and weak fungus infested parts of specimen with the adze. After that, themes, ideas and forms expressing different shades of the initial emotion started registering in his mind.

The frontal and side views of the prepared specimen were sketched showing the important defects and patches of colouration of the wood. (Plate 5) Action lines were drawn through the sketches to guide the designer to develop a suitable design. (Plate 5). Having listed some of the themes on paper a selection based on mother and child (for further development) was made, since he enjoys working on that theme (plate 6). This theme best expressed the feeling he first had.

The artist agrees with Henry More¹ that compact and seated figures have an emotional and physical action where things are just about to become one, compared to free standing not compact figures. In addition seated and reclining figures he believes have enough varieties to occupy any sculptor for a life time.

The Design:

The artist seldom makes detailed sketches because he believes a sculpture piece must have life of its own and not a reproduction or copy of an original two-dimensional design. Working with a sketch can be boring if you form the habit of trying to reproduce everything you have on the paper. He hates direct carving because solving the initial problems of movement and form on paper serve as a motivating factor, which urges him on to the wood. Mindful of damaging, unpredictable defects, the interesting grains of each wood and its colour patches, the researcher always would cherish

¹ Ann Elliot & David Mitchinson: Henry More New Delhi (Balding + Mansell International Ltd., England, 1989, pg.37)

the freedom of abandoning the sketch at anytime to please his emotions and creativity, especially where it is hindering his feeling of expression and look into the changing wood for solution to problems not envisaged before. Thus the wood, like any object, can pass from a dead, silent existence to an active, living state.

Carving:

The artist scaled up the sketch (plate 6) onto the specimen, and using wood carving tools namely the adze and gouges carved the sculpture as in plate 8.

Analysis of Results:

Plate - 8 is an Acacia wood sculpture titled Mother and Child, depicting a mother breast-feeding a baby. The work executed by the researcher in 1994 is about 1.1 meters tall and 0.9 meter at its widest part.

In the composition a semi-nude figure (the Mother) is perched on her exaggerated, large flat foot, partially hidden, uncomfortably bent left leg. The right leg though longer and bent at the knee is prominently portrayed in a twisted big foot, as a result of a twist in the long branch which is rotten at the base. Both figures are roughly carved and shown almost naked with white patches on face and right shoulder of the mother. An attempt at scooping the fungus infestation between the woman's belly and right leg on one hand and the baby on the other, created very interesting openings or hollows.

Even though there was no inhibition what-so-ever to self-expression the long training in European programmed art schools made it difficult for him to forget the conventional rules of perspective, proportion and realism. Thus his sketches lack the bold exaggerations of certain features as achieved in the finished sculpture piece (plates 7,8). This bold expression to emphasize the theme of the subject was made possible by following the dictates of the natural defects in the specimen. Where there was no material for the left leg the exaggerated flat foot of the left leg was partly shown behind the mother, connected by a thin layer of wood, giving the impression that the woman is sitting on the exaggerated leg. Regarding the long branch used for the right leg, there were two alternatives, either to cut it short or create a very long leg out of it. A scoop of the rotten material around the base of the long branch, left very little material there resulting in a twisted foot. The desire for exaggeration to achieve full expression of universal truth is satisfying to the artist and carving stem-branch with such defects enables him to experiment freely with such defects.

In Ghana even though signs of poverty can be located everywhere it is seen more in the lives of peasant farmers, who are seen in the fields barely clothed most often with the women carrying their babies. Such a woman is depicted in the in the drawing, which does not reveal her very dark rough skin. But in the sculpture the semi-clothed, rough textured skin is achieved with the deep rough cuts of the gouges, coupled with the decaying

dark tone of the wood to express prominently and emphasize concepts of poverty. The distorted exaggeration seen in the woman's legs are deliberate so that the mother can protect the naked baby from external forces. It shows emotionally the pain a mother is prepared to endure to protect her baby. The negative spaces open up the action to lay bare the mother's efforts at holding or protecting the baby with her left hand and lower limbs which seem to complete the carving and which however, gives the sculpture effective sculptural qualities. The negative spaces between mother and child suggests exposure to harm the opposite of the mother's wish providing her baby her limbs and body as protective armour.

The rough textured skin and over exaggerated distortion in the mother's limbs are cruel reminders of injustices in our midst. But the mother's resolve to stand against all odds is seen in her calm gaze and the way she clings to the baby. A feeling of Love is expressed in the mother's readiness to protect her baby in the face of a hopeless situation arising out of poverty. The sculpture is actually a reflection of what the artist has witnessed at first hand from the life of his people. Daily the people are engaged in the struggle for survival, tilling and reaping from the land.

The author achieved balance through the rhythmic interplay of a series of horizontals in position of right breast, the hand holding it and left foot, which break the vertical pose. The highly angular shapes of the woman's limbs symbolized hard work. The negative spaces are allowed to meander through giving the impression of a sensors graceful rhythm.

The artist observed that the nature of the stem-branch, size of the whole specimen and more importantly the negative spaces left as a result of clearing away of the fungus activity did not impede, rather it strengthened, his desire to express his ideas through distortions giving way to a natural expressive style not recorded in his initial design.

To avoid frustration when carving a fungus infested wood, damaged and weak parts must be cleared first before a design suitable for the wood is developed.

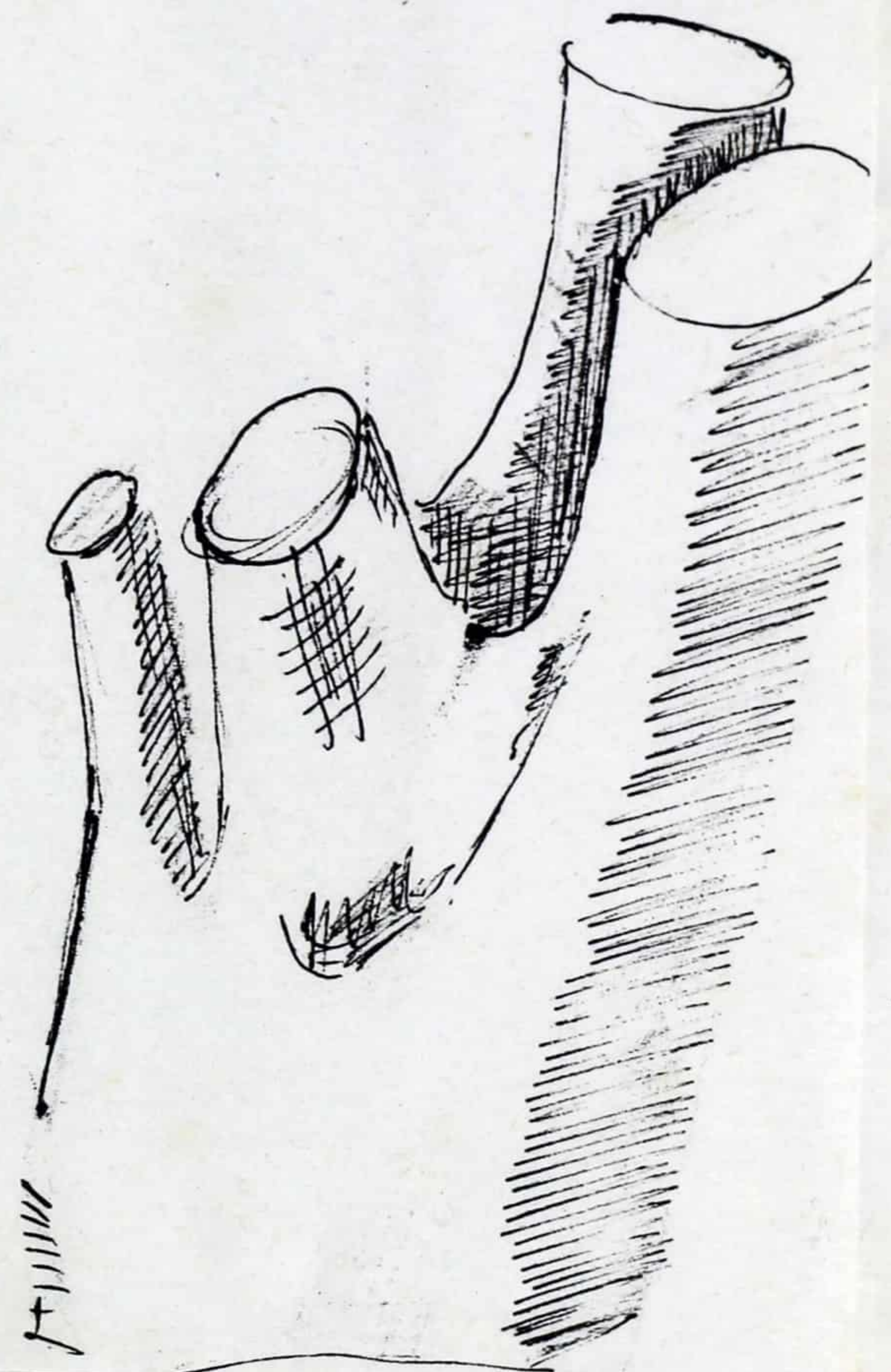
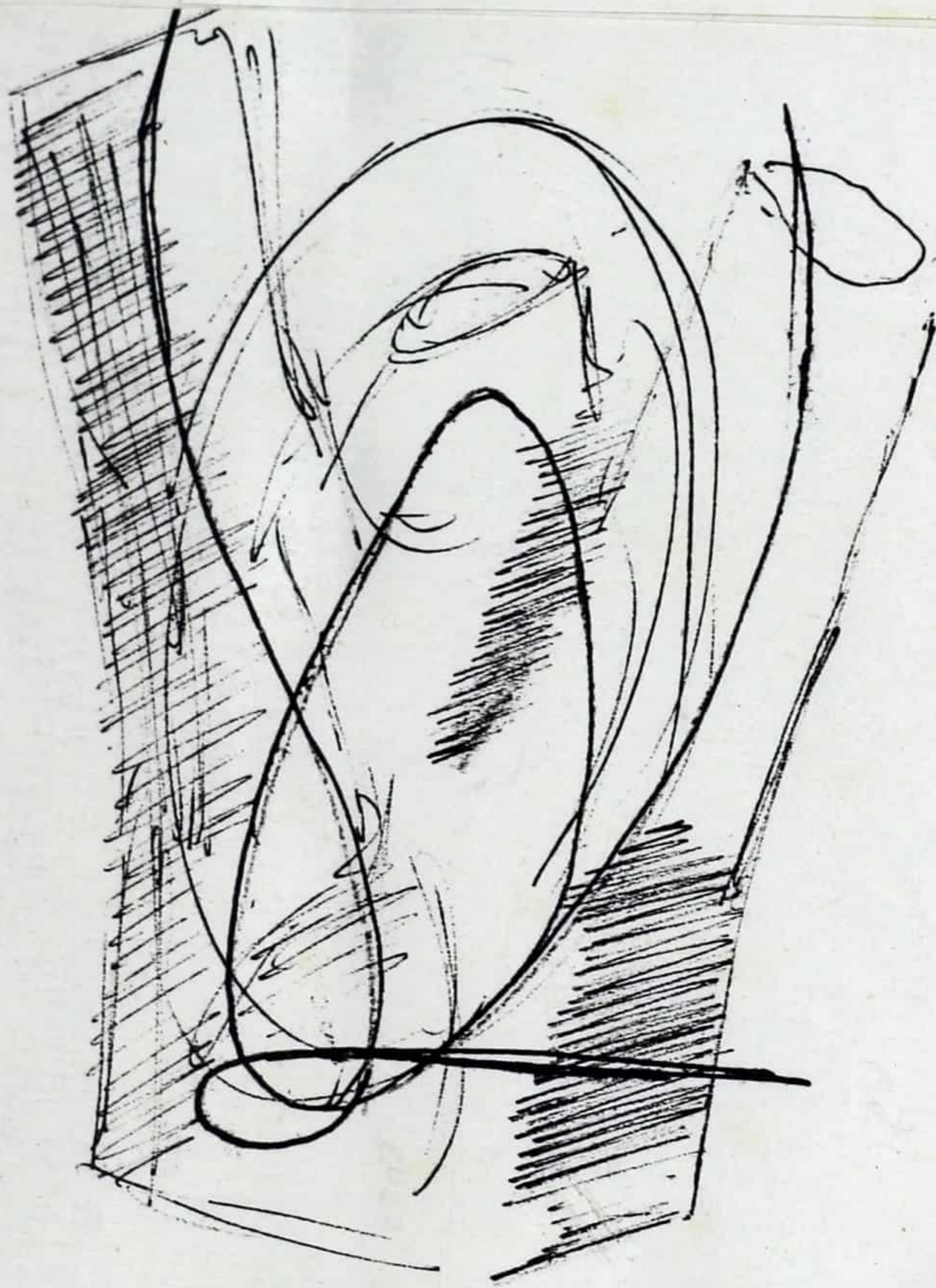


Plate 5: Sketches of fungus infested wood carving



Plate 6 Designs for Fungus infested wood carving



Plate 7 Finished Sculpture, Mother and Child

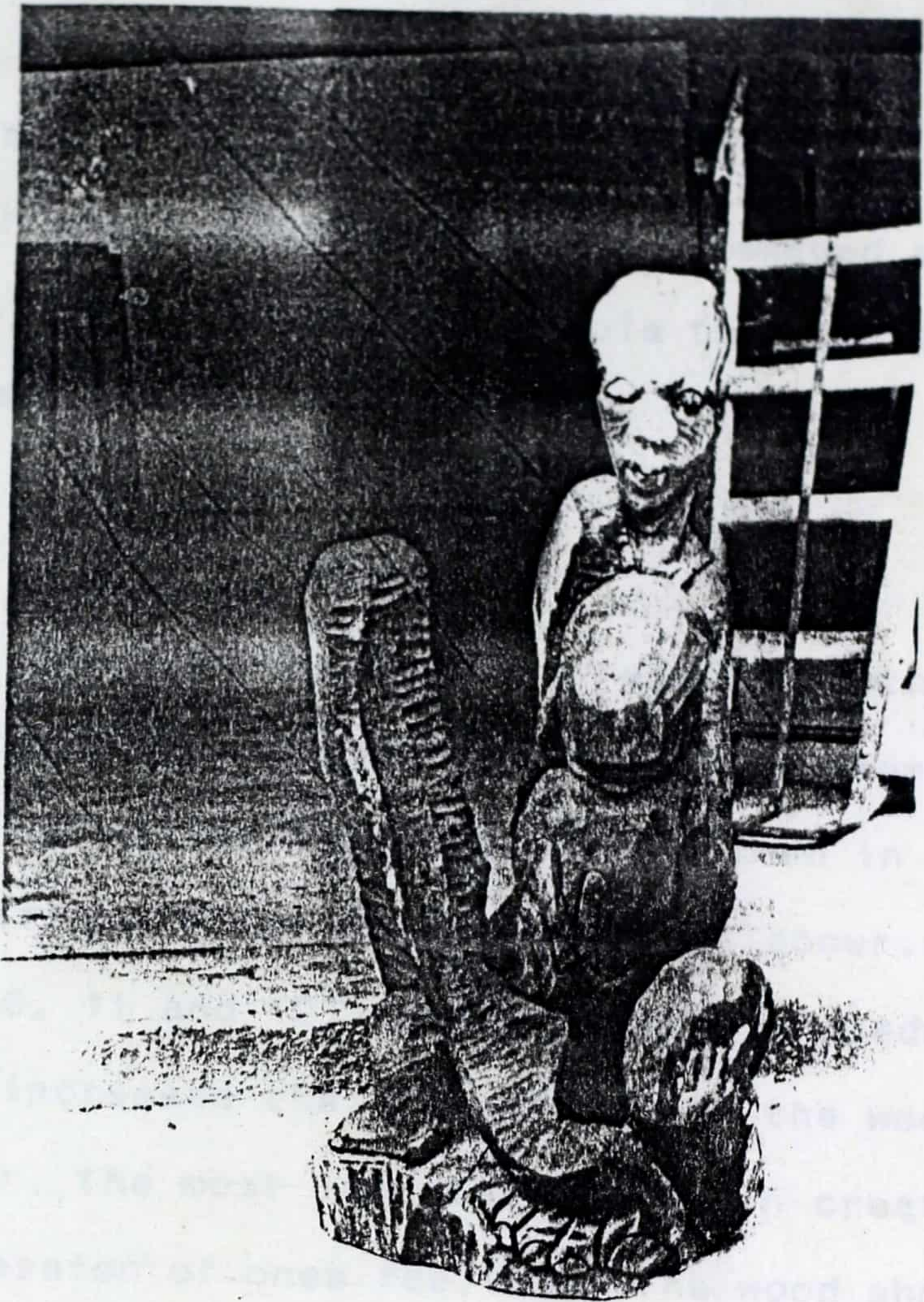


Plate 8 Finished Sculpture , Mother and Child

Experiment 1B: Insect infested Stem - Branch

Aim:

To find out whether the damaged parts of insect infested wood could be a source of inspiration in wood carving.

Description of Specimen:

A tree stem with short branches seriously damaged at the top by insects (plate 9). There is also a deep hole through the pith of the stem and branches.

Method of Design:

A close study of the specimen gave the researcher the feeling of destruction that may have engulfed the whole specimen. Several themes that came to mind whilst cleaning the specimen in a pond of water were very inspiring. These centred around labour. Sketches and designs (plates 10, 11 and 12) following same procedure as in experiment 1A. This increased the urge to tackle the wood.

To the researcher, the most important issue in creating wood sculpture is the expression of ones feelings. The wood should pose no hindrance to self expression through bold distortions, and use of natural forms of the specimen to achieve a full expression of the researcher's urge.

Analysis of Results:

Plate 14 is a sculpture piece from an unknown wood, titled labour. It measures 1.3 meters tall and 0.5 meter at its widest

part. A naked woman in labour with a big stomach, kneeling on her slightly suggested right knee. The whole figure is tilted to one side. The right hand bent at the elbow shows its fingers pressing hard on the stomach showing signs of pain. The left hand, stretched out is bent at the elbow above the head, with its opened palm touching the back of the head. The twisted mouth is created from the insect-infected area in a manner suggestive of screaming. The figure has a long neck on a twisted and elongated torso giving it a graceful bent. The back view shows the woman seated as if on the baby's head. This is not normal. Some of the insect activity on the left palm, face and left thigh have been maintained to give the feeling of decay to symbolise fear and death associated with child birth. There are gouge marks on the limbs. The breasts are long and flappy over the protruding stomach.

Two areas of the composition conspicuously show insect activity. These were incorporated into the design as mouth and fingers of the woman. These created an emotional stress and pain on the face. The positioning of the baby's head is to draw attention to the mystery of child birth. Child birth amongst the poor is not only painful but could result in death. Because we associate decay, destruction and death to insect activities, the appearance of these insect infestation on a sculpture piece gives these same feelings of decay, destruction and death.

The various parts of the composition are closely knit together. The work does not look realistic because of the elongated left hand and neck; the simplified round head and unnatural shape

of mouth, less detailed nose and eyes. Traditionally people in pain or agony place their arms on their heads. As the situation gets worse the woman has stretched out her neck, arm and whole body backwards towards one side. Thus the elongated neck and stretched left arm seek to express the same feeling of pain. This may not be recognised by everybody since it is not a communal symbol but rather a symbol that relates to the artist's own personal creative vision. Kojo Fosu's 20th Century Art of Africa, has this to say on symbolic imagery:

"However, unlike the traditional sculptures which constitute the inspirational models for their own works, and are also expressed in the same structural language, the symbolic imagery which these contemporary artists create are not always recognizable by the general public in their respective societies"²

In plate 14 a line from the left elbow through the trunk into stomach creates a graceful linear curve which throws the figure out of balance. However, this balance is checked when the line is extended into the left knee. The angular left arm and leg joints project into the opposite spherical head and stomach. There is also a rhythmic repetition of shapes which could be seen in the left arm, and stomach stretching into the left leg.

² Kojo, Fosu: 20th Century Art of Africa (Artists Alliance, Accra, 1993, pg. 142-144)

The work shows the pains associated with child birth which is expressed through exaggerated gestures of the mouth, twisted body and stretched hand which create the feeling of tension. The tension and pain become more intense when one looks at the position of the baby's head. The artist observed that, apart from the insect defects that created opportunities for bold distortions, the defects themselves having been programmed into the work increased the expressive quality of work. For instance the presence of insect activity around the woman's mouth and fingers of the left hand intensified the feeling of decay and suffering.

Conclusion:

Insect activity on the surface of material, when considered in the design, enhances the expression quality of the sculpture.

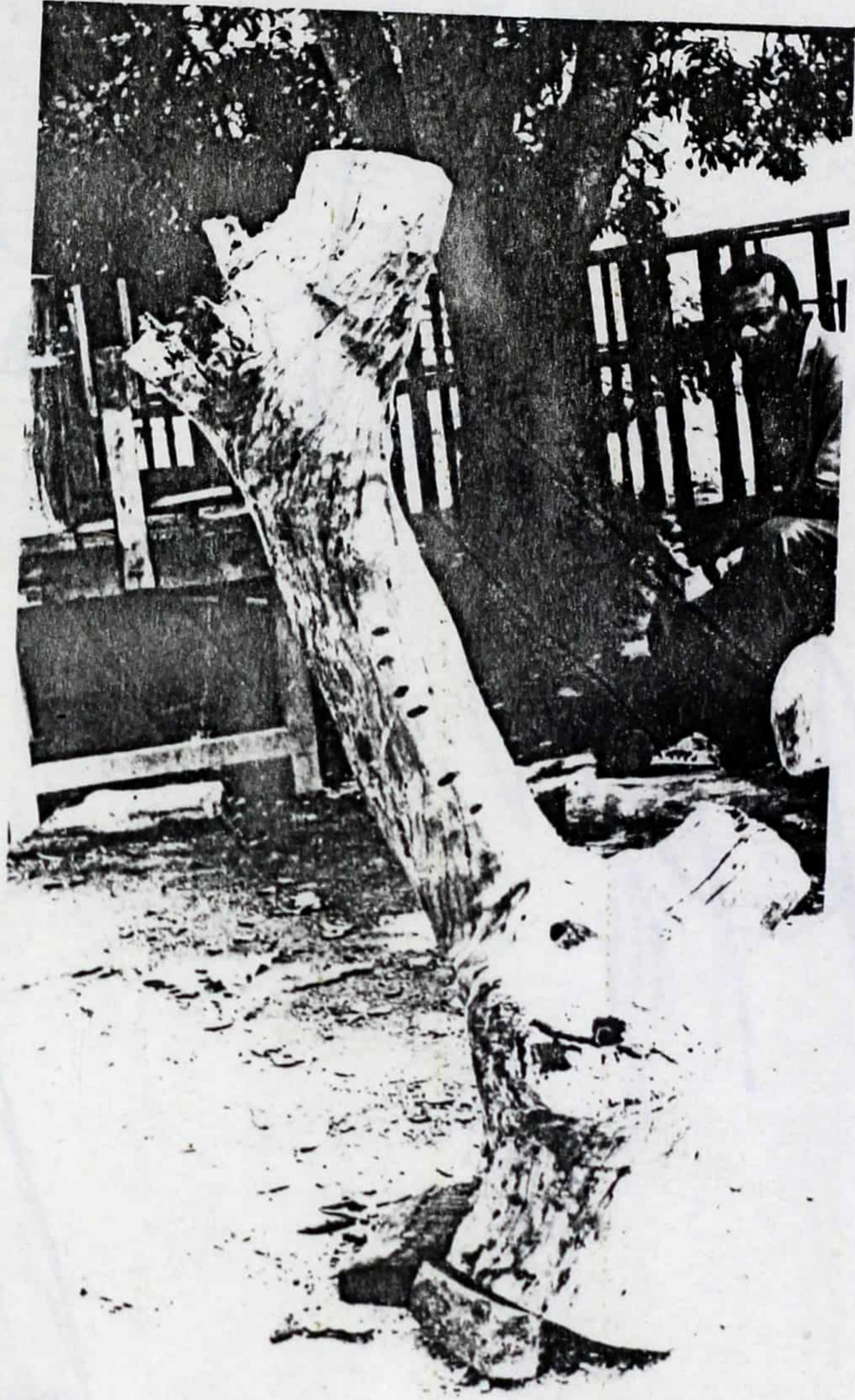
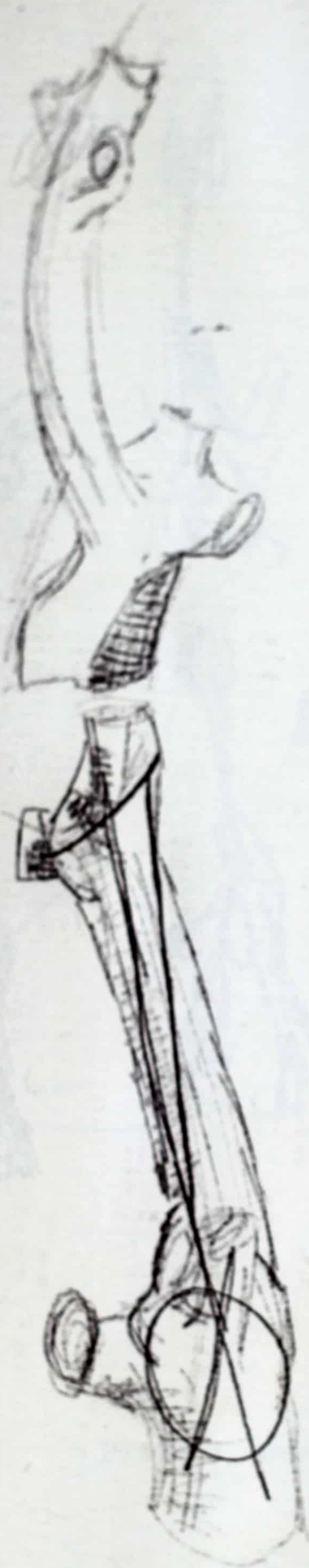


Plate 9 Photograph of insect infested wood



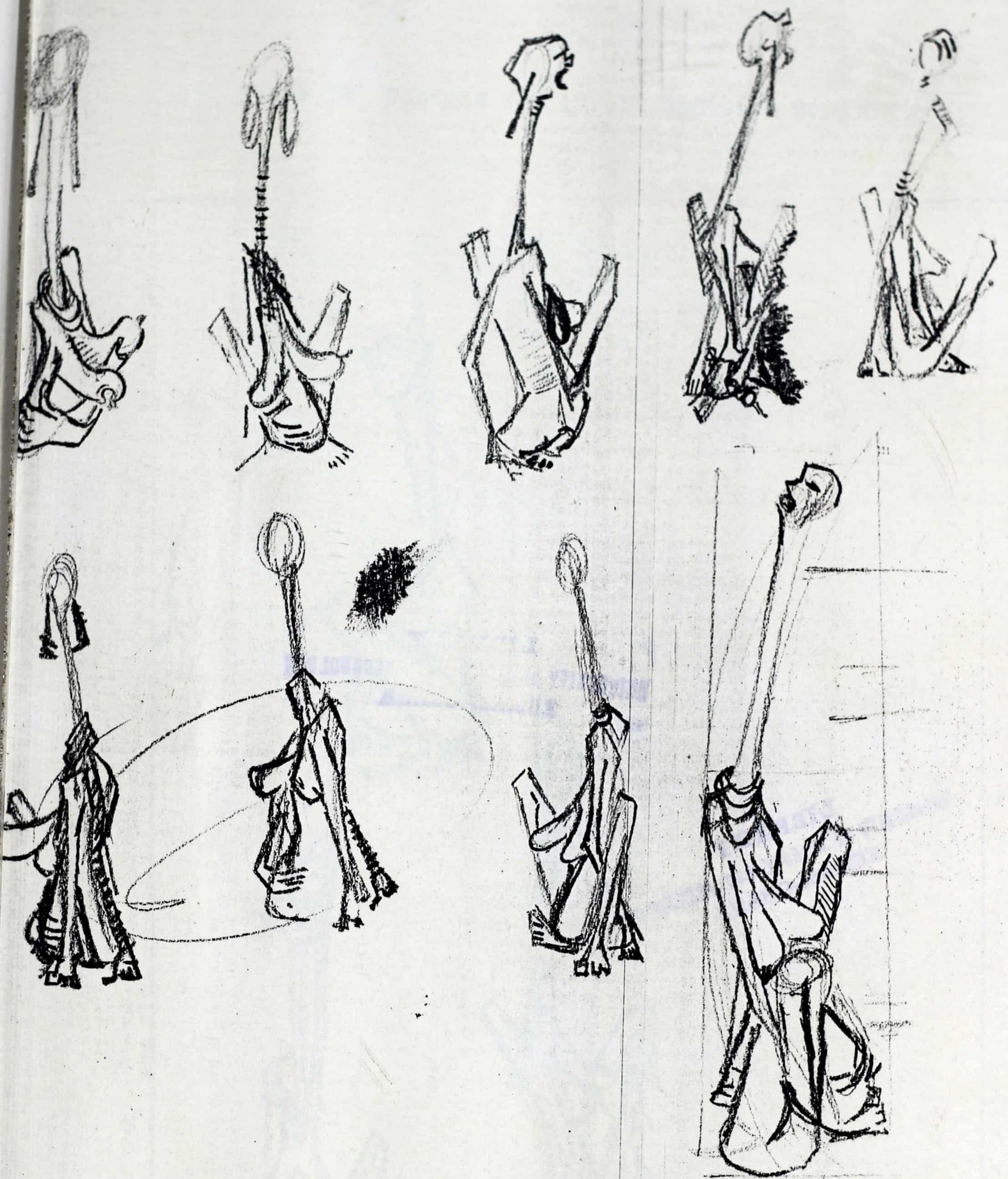


Plate II Designs for insect infested wood

Plate 12 Designs for insect infested wood carving.

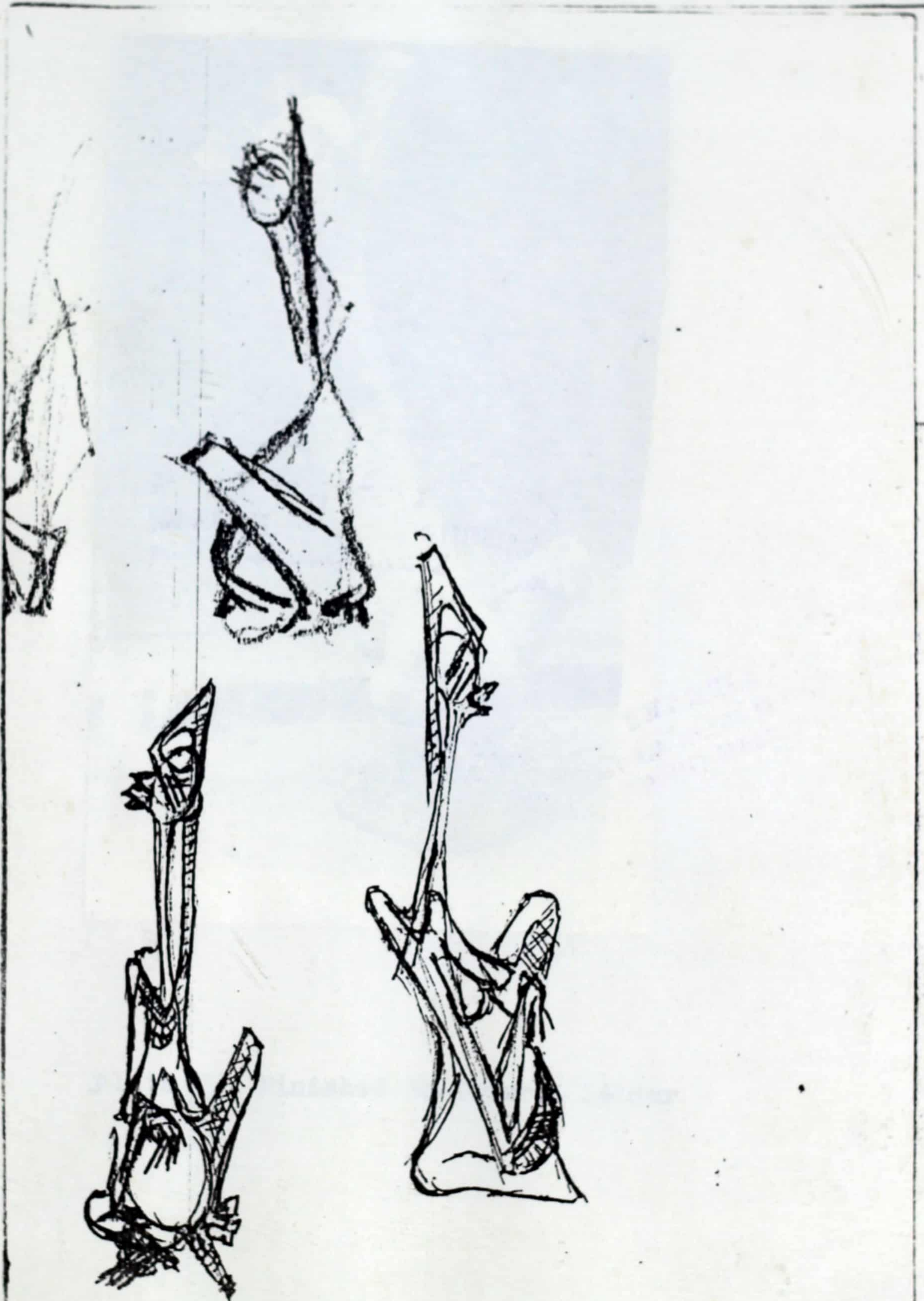




Plate 13 Finished Sculpture, Labour

Experiment 1c: Partially - Burnt Stem-Branch

Aim:

To find out if the defects created by the partial burning of the wood could be exploited for self-expression in wood carving.

Description of Specimen:

A tree stem with a short branch with some partially burnt parts. The very serious burnt parts are in the middle section of the wood specimen. The figure of a woman with a veil covering the head is suggested in the wood. (Plate 15)

Method of Designing:

This specimen was mounted on the carving stand in his studio for almost six months before the artist decided the best way to carve it, this was because the researcher wanted to carve an image suggested by the specimen. In the end and when he decided to carve a very tall, slim seated woman carrying a pot (plate 17) a passer by, who knew very little about art approached him with the suggestion that he sees a veiled woman carrying something. Immediately an emotional feeling to set free this visualized form took control of him.

Sketches of the frontal and side views of the specimen were made based on a woman wearing a veil and carrying a gourd. (Plates 16 & 18).

Analysis of results:

Plates 19 and 20 show a tall, standing veiled woman carrying a gourd. The work was executed by him in 1994 from Acacia wood. It stands about 1.8 meters tall, and 0.45 meters at its widest part.

The sculpture piece, a tall slim woman in a loose full dress with a cloth partially covering the right hand, is also wearing a loosely tied veil over the head hanging around the neck. She carries a gourd with both hands which has been rendered to maintain the dark charcoal colour. The face and chest areas, down to the base are also darker in tone because of the charcoal effect, whilst the neck and back of the piece maintain the natural colour of wood. The woman seems to be moving with her right foot ahead, with slight turned neck towards her right side. The wind is calmly blowing her dress off her body.

Much carving was done from the head to the mid point of the specimen to bring out details of the suggested forms. Here the charcoal effect of burns was scraped down to reach the real wood layer, which reveals the dark grain.

The lower part was left intact as it gave an interesting drapery effect that reflects the artist's feeling and vision of graceful beauty.

The veil, and clothes are held very close to the body and look very real. There is variety in the treatment of folds and drapery of the cloth and veil. This is shown in the laborious attempt by the creator to mould the veil to follow the suggestive natural flow of the cloth and dress. The rhythmic play of spherical head partly

covered by the veil, repeated in the gourd also partly covered by both hands and cloth. Part of the veil is hanging loosely beside the head as the cloth hangs loosely around the gourd. The different sizes of shapes, the spherical head, the gourd and the black burns, the natural colour of wood and clothing create a perfect harmony in the entire design.

The tall figure with a gentle movement, a slight turn, coupled with a calm facial expression, long neck and contrasting treatment of dress and veil captures the creators feeling of love and gracefulness in the African woman.

The burnt defects in the specimen enabled the artist to express forms that combine abstract and representational elements to portray powerful emotions. This is made possible because the scraped burnt parts created irregular patches which were integrated into the work.

The artist also observed that waiting to see an inherent suggested image in the stem-branch could take several years. Sometimes where this is achieved within a shorter time the quality of work will depend on the artist's experience and inspiration prompted by the suggested image.

The artist learnt that such irregular effects created from scraping the burnings increased the expressive quality of sculpture.



Plate 15 Photograph of Burnt wood



Plate 16 Sketches of Burnt Wood



Plate 17 Designs for Burnt Wood Carving



Plate 18 Designs for Burnt Wood Carving



Plate 19 Mother Africa



Plate 20 Mother Africa

Experiment 2A:- Carving a stem-root

Aim:

To determine the behaviour of a stem-root as a carving medium.

Description of Specimen:

A short tree stem with several roots attached (Plate 21). There is fungus activity at the base of the main stem.

Method of Designing:

The stem with many roots attached evoked a feeling of violence or struggle because of the many roots jutting out. The researcher, in this particular specimen had an inner desire to carve a suffering mother and yet to show love. Sketches of two adjacent sides of specimen were made (plates 22 & 23). Lines were drawn through the sketches to guide the artist to develop several designs around the theme (plates 22 & 23). Unimportant parts like mothers buttocks; babies torso and legs were deleted. The mother's limbs and trunk were distorted to show stress and pain. The design at this stage was enough motivation for the artist to tackle the wood (Plates 24 and 25).

Analysis of Result:

Mother Africa the title of the work is a wood sculpture in Acacia, carved in 1994 by the researcher. It is 1.3 meters tall and 1.6 meters at its widest part (Plates 26 and 27).

The work portrays a semi-nude woman carrying two babies.

Whilst one baby is loosely tied to the mother's back with a designed cloth, the other, with only the head visible, is resting on the mother's thigh supported by her right hand. The mother is in an unstable pose, kneeling on the right leg with the left one powerfully launched into the air. The upper part of the mother's body, torso, neck, head, and left arm, all add up to give a picture of an over-stretched body, falling backwards with a slight tilt to the right. Most of the roots have been developed into disjointed, scattered legs, and drapery for the three figures.

The baby at the mother's back looks more active and covered with a heavily textured cloth incised with motifs. This baby seems to be falling out of the very loose cover cloth but the mother's attention is rather on the other. The other baby is too quiet and the emotional stress and intensity on the mother's face show that there is something wrong with this second baby.

Because the roots were many and of varied thicknesses, lengths and scattered, a few of the smaller ones were left intact without carving them to play a role in the overall design. Their divergent projections increased the feeling of struggle and suffering expressed by the work.

The projection in the sculpture, with its scattered nature, typical of root sculpture, is a solid work with weight and volume. The sculpture occupies space and can be viewed from different angles. The upper part of the mother looks real whilst the limbs making up her lower part and children look distorted.

The slight twist in mothers torso, and the arm holding its own

head, thrown backwards, is the expression of suffering. The symbolic imagery created are not always recognizable by the general public in this society.

Whilst the baby at the back of mother is active as expressed by the throwing about of its distorted limbs the other baby is depicted only by the head with its other parts suggestively concealed in the mother's cloth. The suggestive, disjointed feet, torn cloth and distorted legs are to show the restlessness and suffering of both mother and children. The mother's action of throwing herself about in a helpless situation is also a symbolic image.

Even though the artist in the past has made every effort to organize his designs along side the principles of art and may therefore unconsciously depict these in his recent works, he does not obey all these art principles; he does not conform to conventions. He has a feeling just to express himself and therefore uses any means or form to achieve that only. A look at the piece in question shows his distortions, exaggerations, and re-arrangement of different segments of the figures in wood. The viewer who sees the artist's sculpture should be able to read into the different activities and associate them with his personal experiences.

Shapes like legs, feet, heads and drapery are repeated to emphasize rhythm in the arrangement of parts. The graceful curves of heads, torso and drapery contrast sharply with mother's angular left arm, right leg and other projecting root forms. There is

variety in the treatment of drapery, sizes of heads and limbs. The main figure - the two babies and mother - are not separated but flow into each other through limbs and cloth to show the inseparable nature that exists between them. In plate 27, a line from the mother's head through her torso into her knee throws the figure out of balance. However this balance is checked by the positioning of the baby at the back and the extension of the mother's right foot beside the baby's head. Attention is drawn to the balance of angular and rounded shapes, positive and negative spaces by the scattered nature of forms.

The scattered forms captured in the roots (legs), tattered cloth, the twisted torso, facial expression and the mother's response to the contrasting demands of the babies express the suffering of the Ghanaian woman. The artist seeks to draw the public's attention to the plight of the under-privileged women who form the bulk of the population.

Carving stem-root with its many unco-ordinated root system can be interesting if attention is paid to:

- a - the dynamic feeling evoked by the specimen
- b - Just a few of the roots and the main stem, leaving the smaller roots intact or carved to enhance the expressive qualities of the main forms.

Conclusion:

Though carving stem-root formation can be difficult, because of its many roots, very good sculpture can be realized if the artist is able to capture the feeling evoked by the true forms in the finished sculpture. These forms are the lines, planes and colour patches in the original specimen.



Plate 21 Stem-root

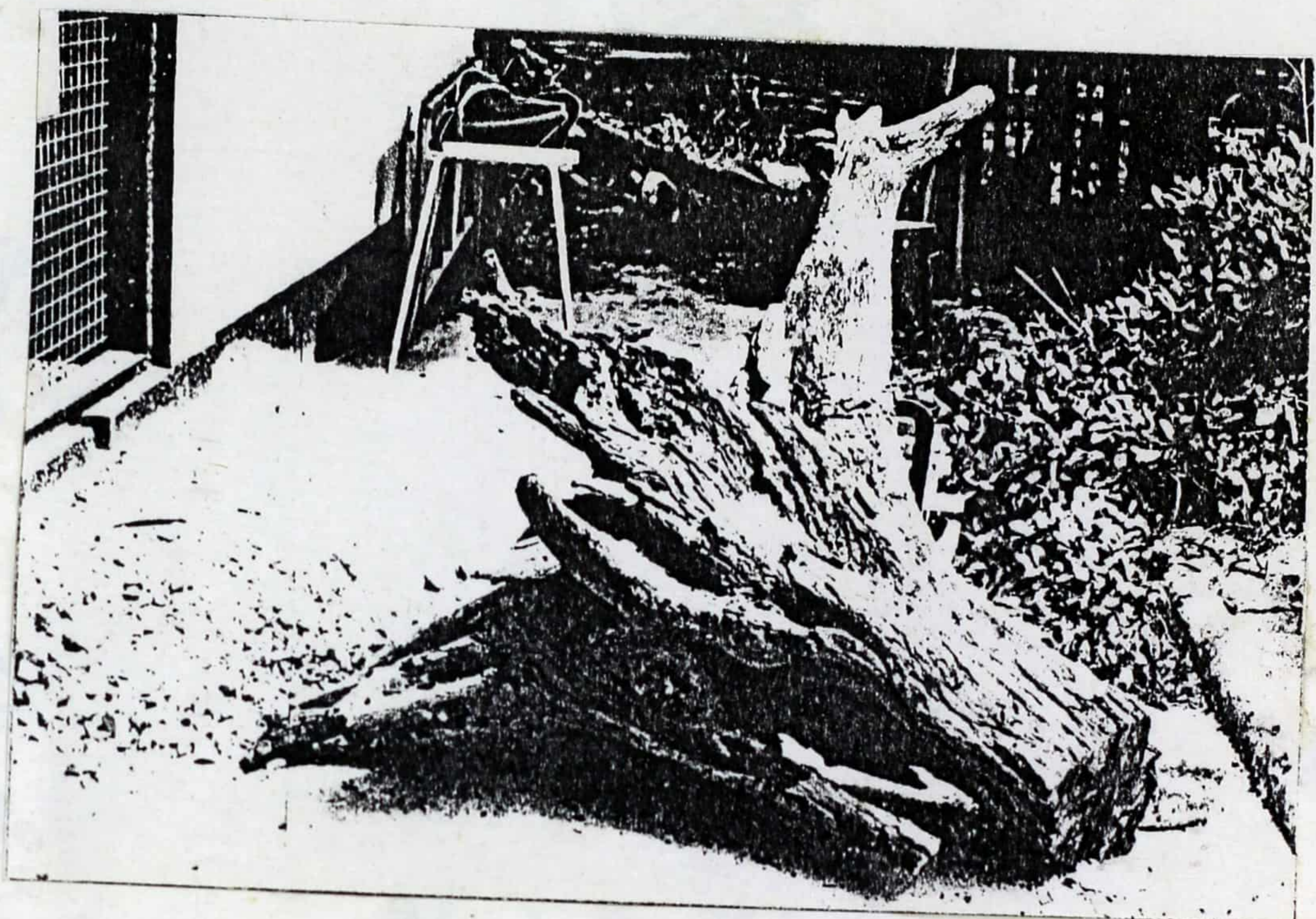


Plate 21 Stem-root



Plate 22 Drawing of Stem-root

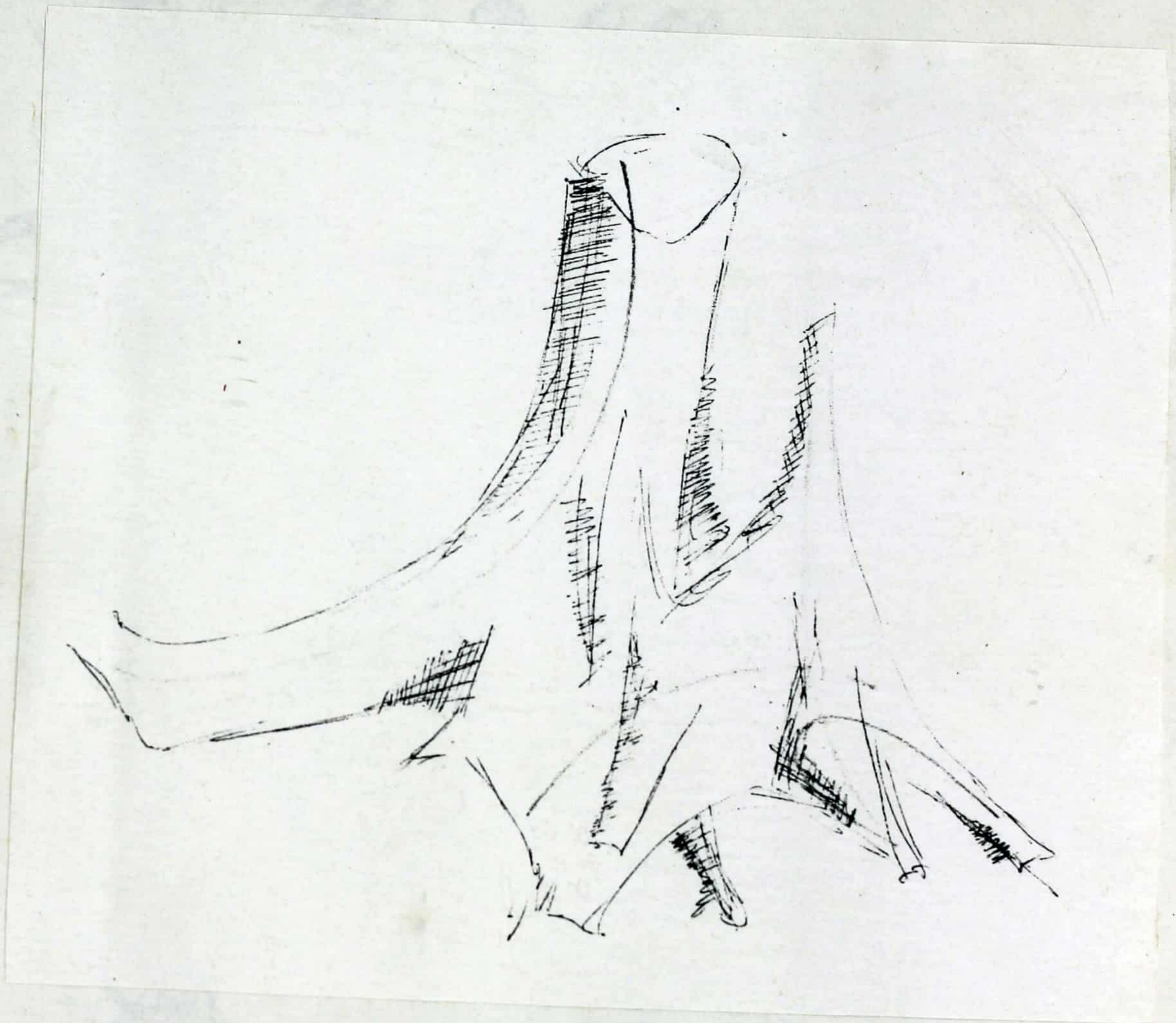


Plate 23 Drawing of Stem-root

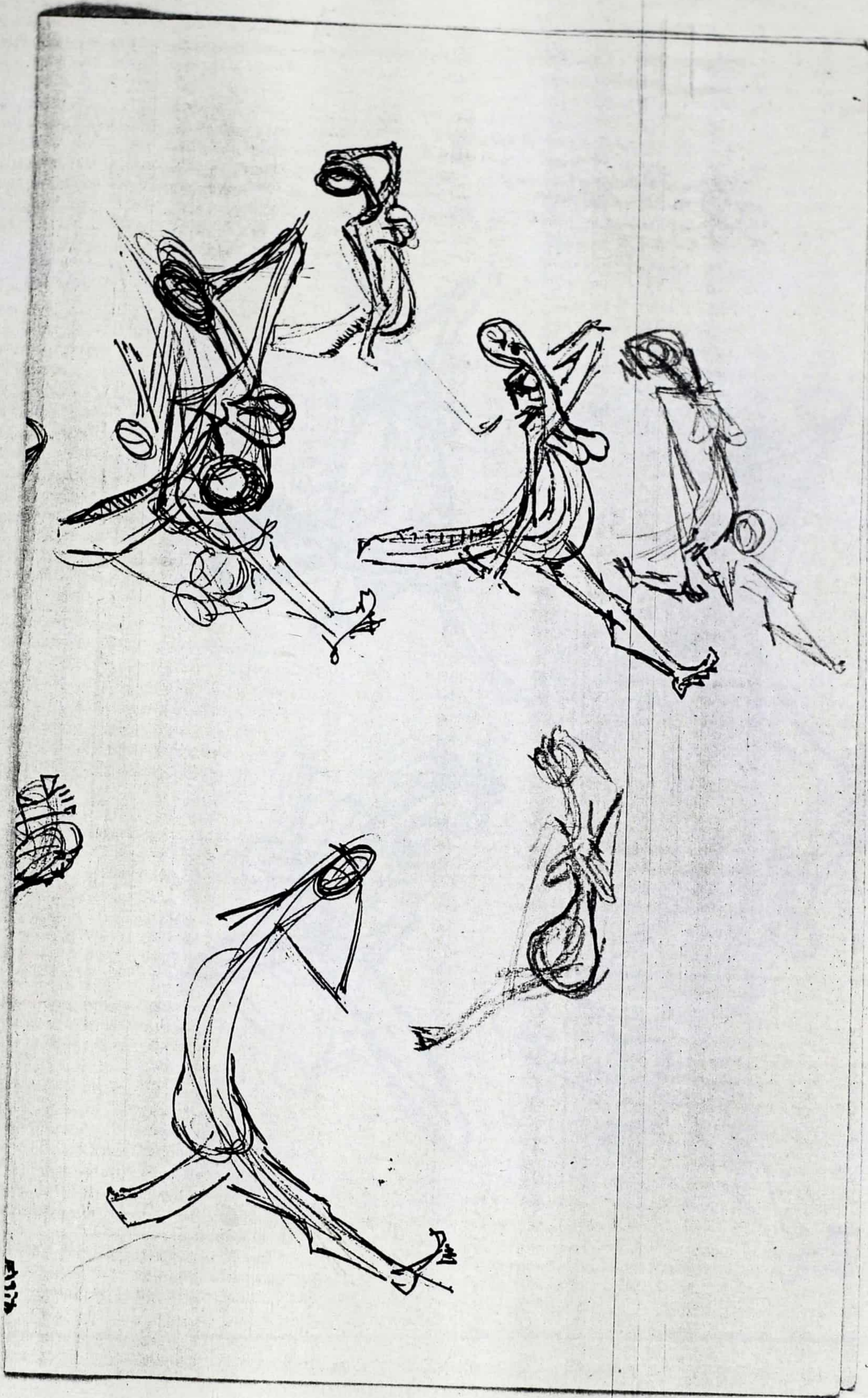


Plate 24 Designs for Stem-root Carving



Plate 25 Designs for Stem-root Carving



Plate 26 Mother



Plate 27 Mother



Plate 27a Detail Mother

Experiment 2B: Stem-branch Carving

Aim

To find out if an expression, not suggested by wood, can be carved from a stem-branch.

Description of Specimen

A "Y" shaped tree stem-branch with fungus activity at the base of the branches. The specimen is a yellowish black Acacia heartwood.

Method of Design

A close study of the specimen gave the expression of linear forms working together. Two designs from different views of the specimen were sketched and several action lines were drawn to link the various branches (Plate 28). A theme on love and hospitality was selected for the detail design to reflect the Ghanaian hospitality - that is a woman pouring palm wine for a man. The necessary distortions and exaggerations to capture the artist's feeling were introduced. (Plates 29, 30, 31 and 32).

Analysis of Results

"Palm-wine Romance" is the title of the sculpture piece (Plate 34) made by the artist in 1995. It stands 1.7 meters tall and 0.5 meter at its widest part. The carving depicts two tall and slim semi-nude figures of a man and a woman. The two figures, with the woman pouring palm-wine from a nicely textured pot into a calabash,

in the mans right hand. There is a gentle bend at the knees. in both figures, with the woman's knee sandwiched into the man's nicely. The woman's two hands, assisted by her left thigh carry the pot. The man carrying his calabash in the right hand, clenches his neck with his left hand as a way of sampling not only the quality of the wine but to get a total satisfaction and love from the woman. The man's facial expression - the open mouth and the woman's intentional no-nonsense expression, and her look thrown elsewhere - increases the intensity of this emotion. The deep gouge tool marks on their bodies and the clothes give easy identification of the class of the people. The above added to the decoration and texture on their clothes gives the feeling that the poor rural farmers in the midst of their hardships enjoy a life full of love and satisfaction. The distortions and exaggeration of their body parts - limbs, buttocks, torso, heads and faces - are in most cases very true of the under-privileged poor farmers. Here the artist has carefully researched into his subject matter and creatively treated his exaggerations to look real. Though his exaggerations can not be found in one individual they are true in life. A typical example is the deformed beggar in our community.

The presence of varieties of spheres and rounded parts like pot, calabash, heads, buttocks and breasts unite the sculpture. Cylindrical and angular forms - necks, torso and limbs - which contrast with spherical heads and pots, help maintain interest and keep an admirer's attention for a longer time. The similar poses in the figures especially the bend at the knee; the roundness of

pot and calabash and likeness of spaces between upper parts of the figures create a feeling of symmetry. Finally there are various forms of tactile values and spaces created by overlapping of lower limbs which can keep ones attention for a period.

Life in the rural setting, especially in the north, centres around farming, however their intentions about life are discussed at the palm wine bars and at home when their wives are serving them with Palm-wine. Surprisingly this same wine prepares and creates opportunities for love making. In this sculpture piece, the artist sets out to use the pouring of palm-wine to show that love or togetherness means pouring of oneself out to the other.

Just trying to give sculptural form to an inspiration or feeling derived from the original specimen and not forcing a suggested representational image (which amounts to imposition of ones ideas on the materials), gave the researcher the opportunity to express himself. The artist experienced that personal freedom of expression necessary for true creative work.

Conclusion

True art and for that matter creative sculpture is produced when the artist gives expression to the feeling the specimen evokes in him.

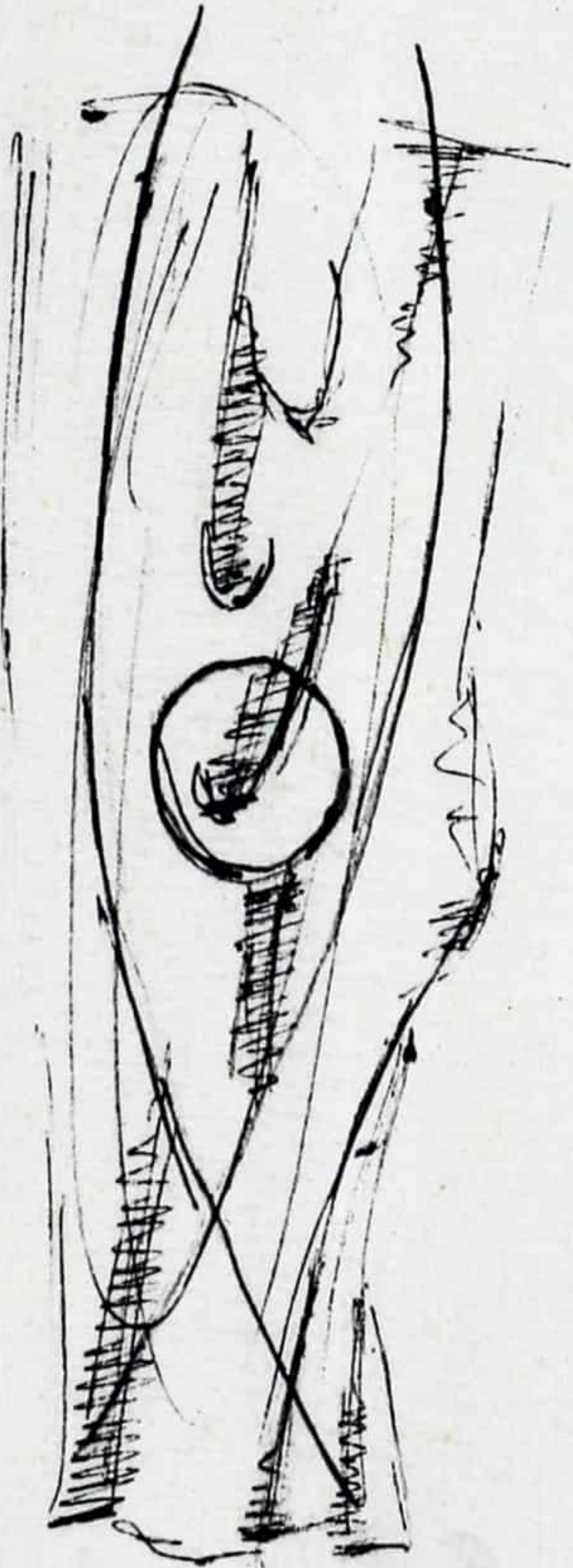
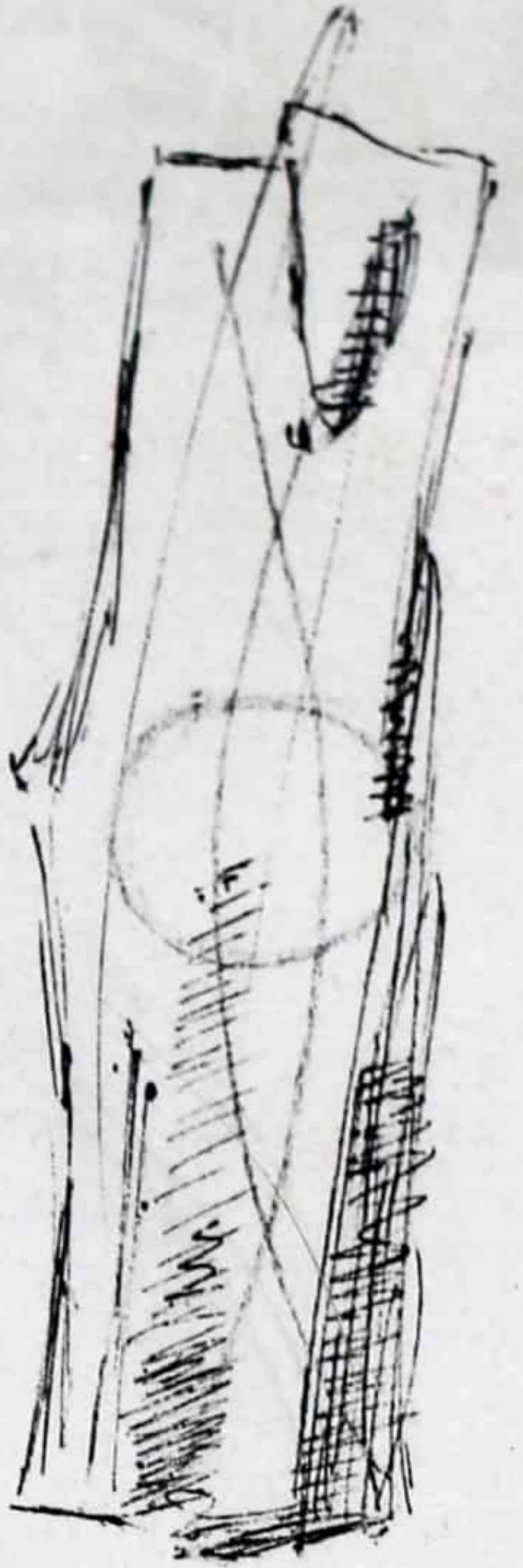
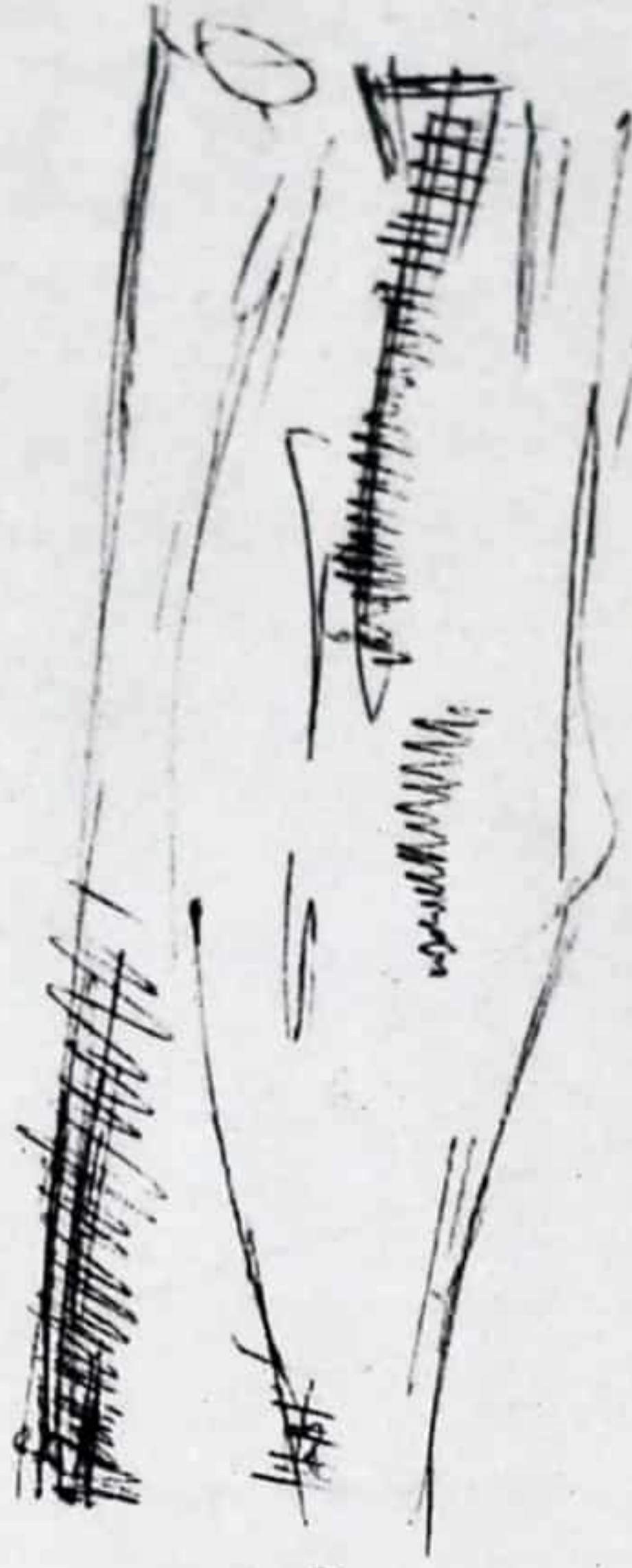
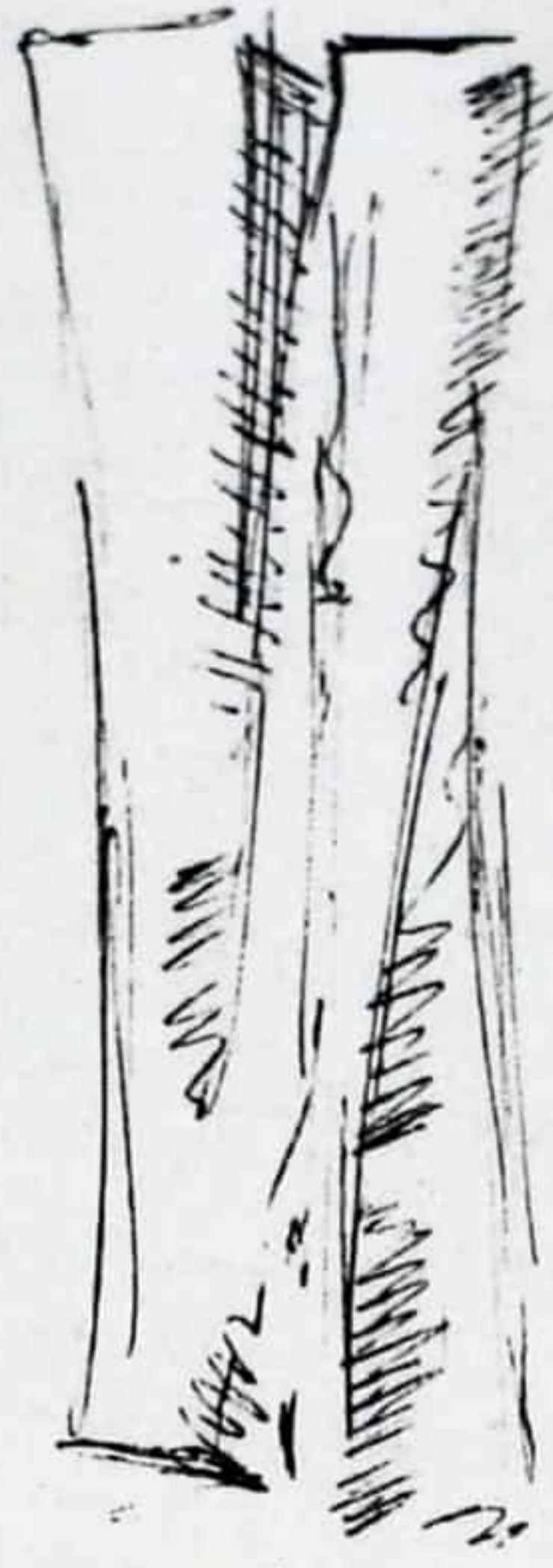
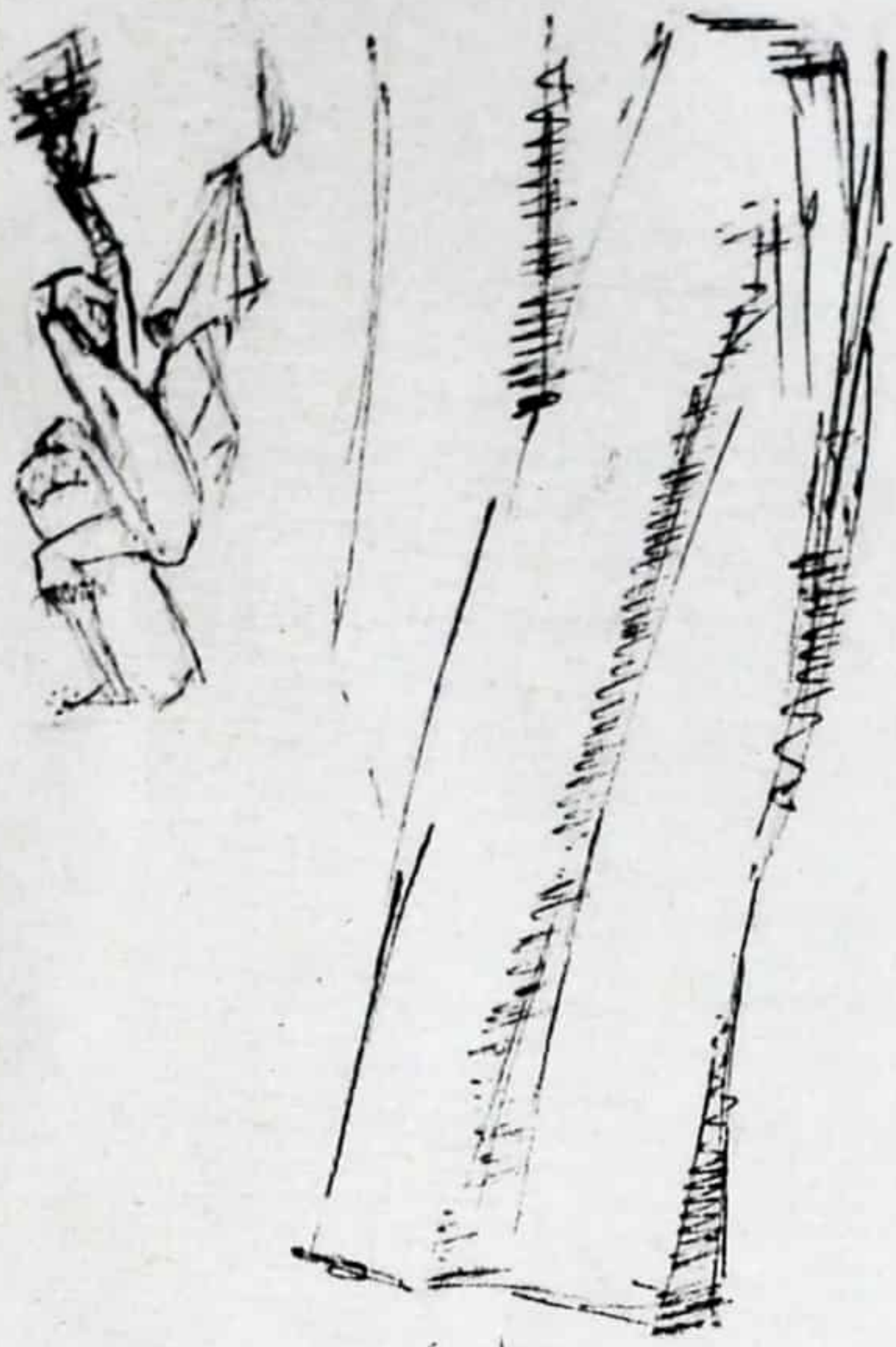


Plate 28 Drawing of a Stem-branch



Plate 29 Designs for Stem-branch Carving



Plate 30 Designs for Stem-branch Carving



Plate 31 Designs for Stem-branch Carving

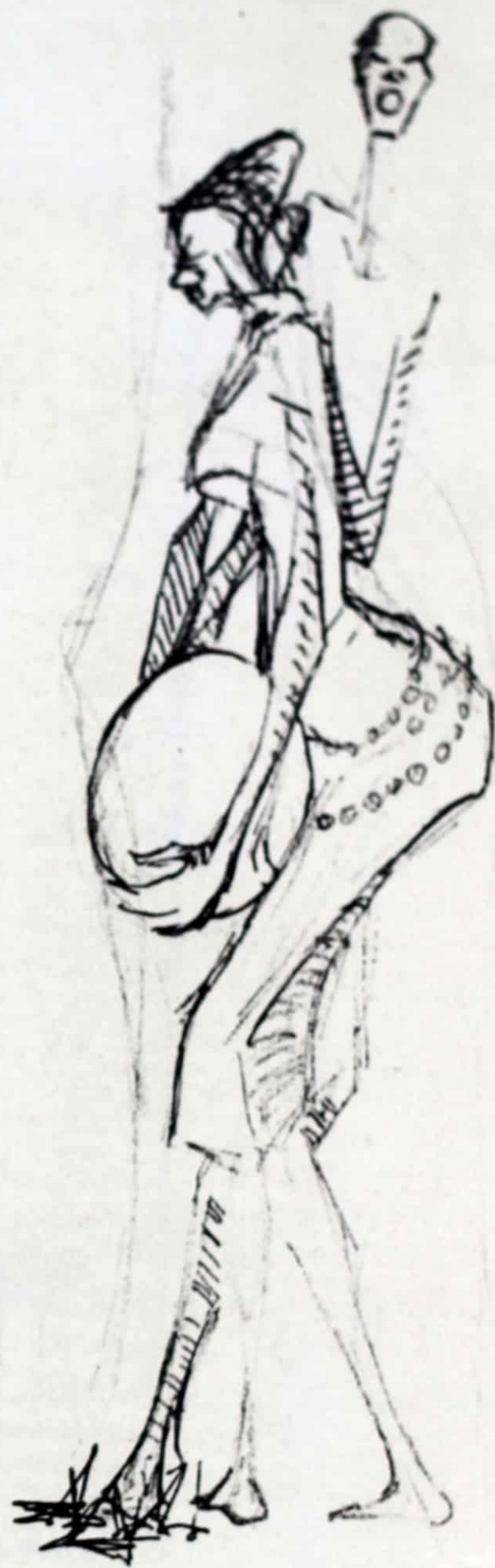


Plate 32 Designs for Stem-branch Carving

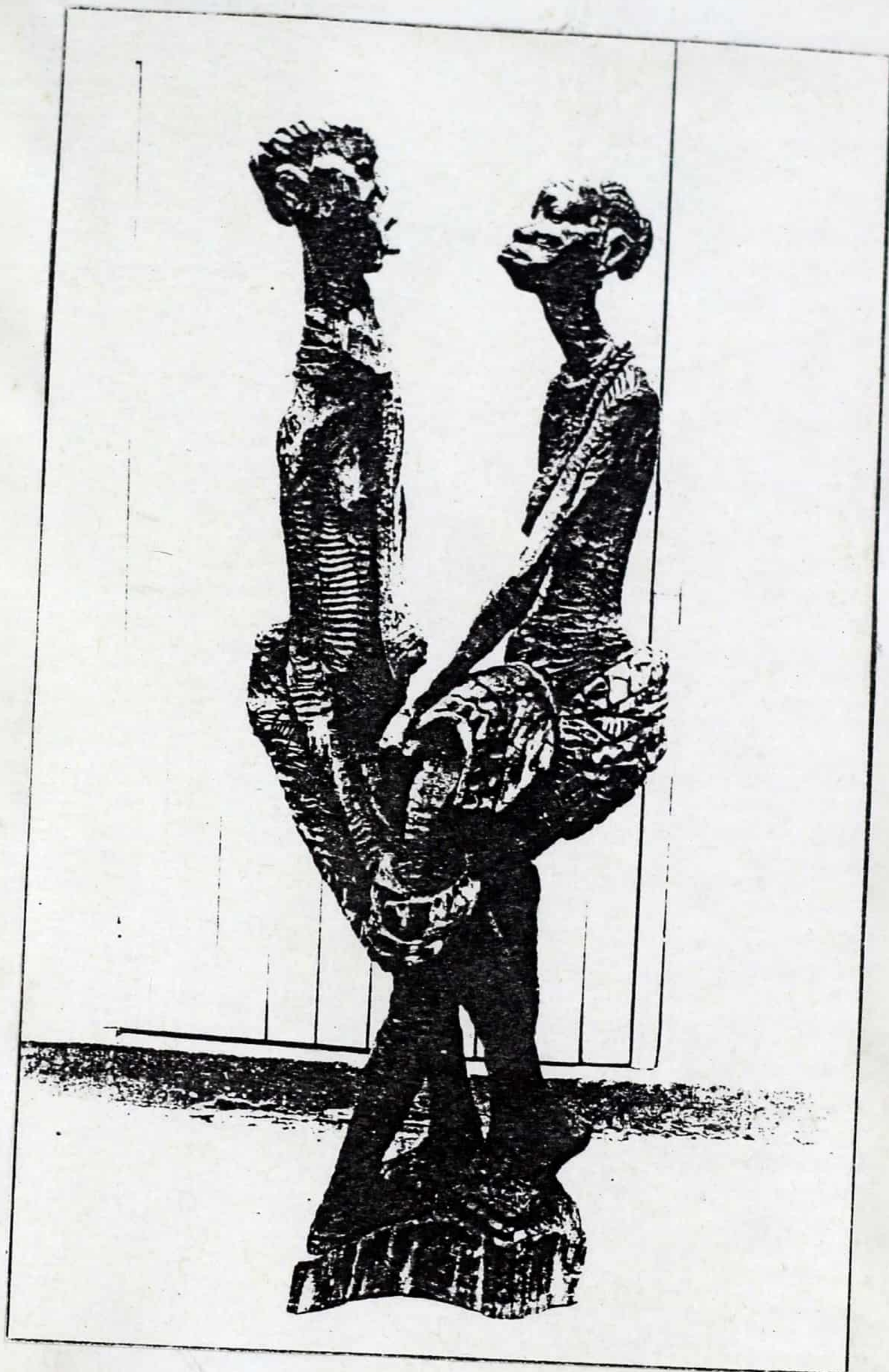


Plate 33 Palm Wine Romance



Plate 34 Palm Wine Romance

CHAPTER FOUR

MAIN PROJECT

To give meaning and substance to the project - stem-branch and stem-root carving two sculptures were carved using drawings done from experiences of the previous preliminary work with the hope of registering in full the potentialities of such sculpture.

Having successfully gone through the preliminary experiments, the researcher in this chapter applied the results in a step-by-step approach to the main project.

PROJECT 1

Description of material (wood)

A thick short stem with two branches, with two big holes located at the meeting point of the branches which shows serious termite activity in them. One half of wood is severely burnt whilst the other side is invaded by fungus that left white patches all over.

Method of Design:

When the wood was first located the image suggested, from the horizontal position, was "stability and peace". However the presence of fungi and termite activity after drawing nearer drew attention to destruction that had occurred. A feeling poles apart from "true peace" was invoked. That was "false peace"

The weaker portions covered by burns, termite and fungus activity were cleared to reveal the undamaged under layer.

Sketches were done from two views and lines drawn to link all other parts to unify the sketch (plate 36). The nature of wood along its horizontal position proposed an interesting design. A powerful idea to express the artist's emotion which centred on peace - the true peace was seen through the raising hand and "the false peace" suggested by the traditional Ghanaian consulting the oracle (two pots) to know his destiny. This was designed to make maximum use of the specimen (plate 37, 38 & 39)

Description of Work:

The sculpture is in the round, titled "the two faces of peace" carved in Cedar wood. It stands 1.2 meters tall and 1.6 meters at its widest part and was Completed in June 1996. Side one shows a man and the wife sitting behind two big pots (plate 40) The woman with her limbs and lower torso hidden behind one of the pots is also breast feeding a baby who is being supported by her left arm. The man behind the other pot is reluctantly gazing into the pot into which he is dipping his hand. Their heads have been simplified into bulky shapes. The pots carved around the two original holes in the wood still maintain some aspect of the termite activity. At the right side of the sculpture is depicted a huge bearded man carved with the head and torso only visible. The two hands are partly raised and stretched out. Part of his hair on the head is depicted by the termite activity which extends into

some vertical gouge marks made to complete the hair. The black tone left by the burning has also been scraped lightly to serve as the man's clothing. There is a big depression which enabled the artist to push back into position the bearded man's neck. This depression linked the two sides of the composition and gave the feeling of depth to the otherwise relief-like presentation of the bearded man. The two sides of the composition are linked to each other back to back, giving the impression of a very high relief when viewed from the front.

Though the sculpture is bulky, the researcher never did any serious blocking using neither the chain saw nor the adze. This was because of the nature of the wood, its holes, depressions and branches that were almost carved by nature, and the way the sketches were done just to motivate and not to be translated wholly onto the wood. A lot of changes took place from the two dimensional sketch to the three dimensional carving - reorganizing forms during the process and making use of such forms and ideas. The gradual carving in planes using the deep gouges revealed interesting grains, tones, natural beauty, texture, tactile quality, warmth, and aroma of the wood, which refined the artist's initial design. Oddly shaped forms and hidden defects which came to light out of carving were all integrated into the design until the artist successfully transferred the form in his mind's eye into the sculpture. What happened each moment during carving enabled the artist to determine the next step and how to treat his material within that short time. The formal plan was almost discarded leaving the specimen to lead him to realize the visualized form.

Appreciation:

In the sculpture the forms are compact as a result of less carving. The husband and wife, with their bulky limbs, in addition to the baby and pots, came very close together. The figures of man and wife on one side of the composition are attached to the bearded man on the other side. The forms though recognizable are exaggerated to achieve full expression. The baby, shown by a head only, clearly depicts the breast feeding activity envisaged. The mother's voluminous breast captures her dream of feeding a baby one day. The husband with the contorted limbs, face and body shows his displeasure and unwillingness to be part of the breast feeding activity. The mask like faces of figures, the decay and termite activity around pots, and charcoal burns are geared towards a mystic feeling. The precocious baby, still breast feeding, tells its own story. The story of the curse that befalls such parents who, in the search for children, consult oracles. Most of such children, infested with bad spirits, grow up to be liabilities to the society.

On the other side is a bearded man with bulky hands raised, looking into the air contemplating on the timelessness of truth in relation to a life devoted to reality. The opened palm is a sign of transparency, understanding, surrender, and friendly welcome. The beard shows age and wisdom. All these are necessary for the attainment of peace.

Rhythmic repetition in the spherical heads, breasts and pots in various sizes and shapes are united and yet bring variation into

the sculpture. The angular limbs in the shoulders of the man and wife contrast with the dominating curves and rounded breasts, heads and pots which are qualities to lessen boredom. The use of varying textures both rough and smooth, horizontal and vertical, deliberate and accidental enabled the artist to achieve a tense feeling in sculpture.

Typical of rural folks, in searching for solutions to some of their problems, they end up consulting fetishes for assistance. At some of these shrines are pots filled with magical concoctions. The visitor is made either to look into or pick from the pot. What he finds from the pot is interpreted to him by the fetish priest. Because of the magical powers associated with this practice, the receiver of the assistance is haunted by the spirits inhabiting the fetish. Most men, though skeptical about these magical powers and the dangers associated with them, are unwilling practitioners often being forced into them by the society to clear their names. The voluminous breast shows that the woman's reason for visiting the shrine is to have a baby at all cost. Whilst the man's turned face and reluctance to dip fully his hand into the pot shows his unwillingness to participate in the ritual. The bearded man's raised hand of peace sums up the whole drama - "We are what we invest in life". Leading a true peaceful life would keep us out of problems and even when we have problems the truth in us would lead us to genuine places for assistance.

The sculpture captured the researchers feeling of peace. The major contributing factors to the success of the project were,

(a) - The application of the experiences and discoveries made in the preliminary experiments.

(b)-The defects in wood effectively used to enhance the sculpture

(c)-The confidence gained in the handling of exaggeration to express his ideas.

The results shows that stem-branch can be used for self-expression in sculpture.

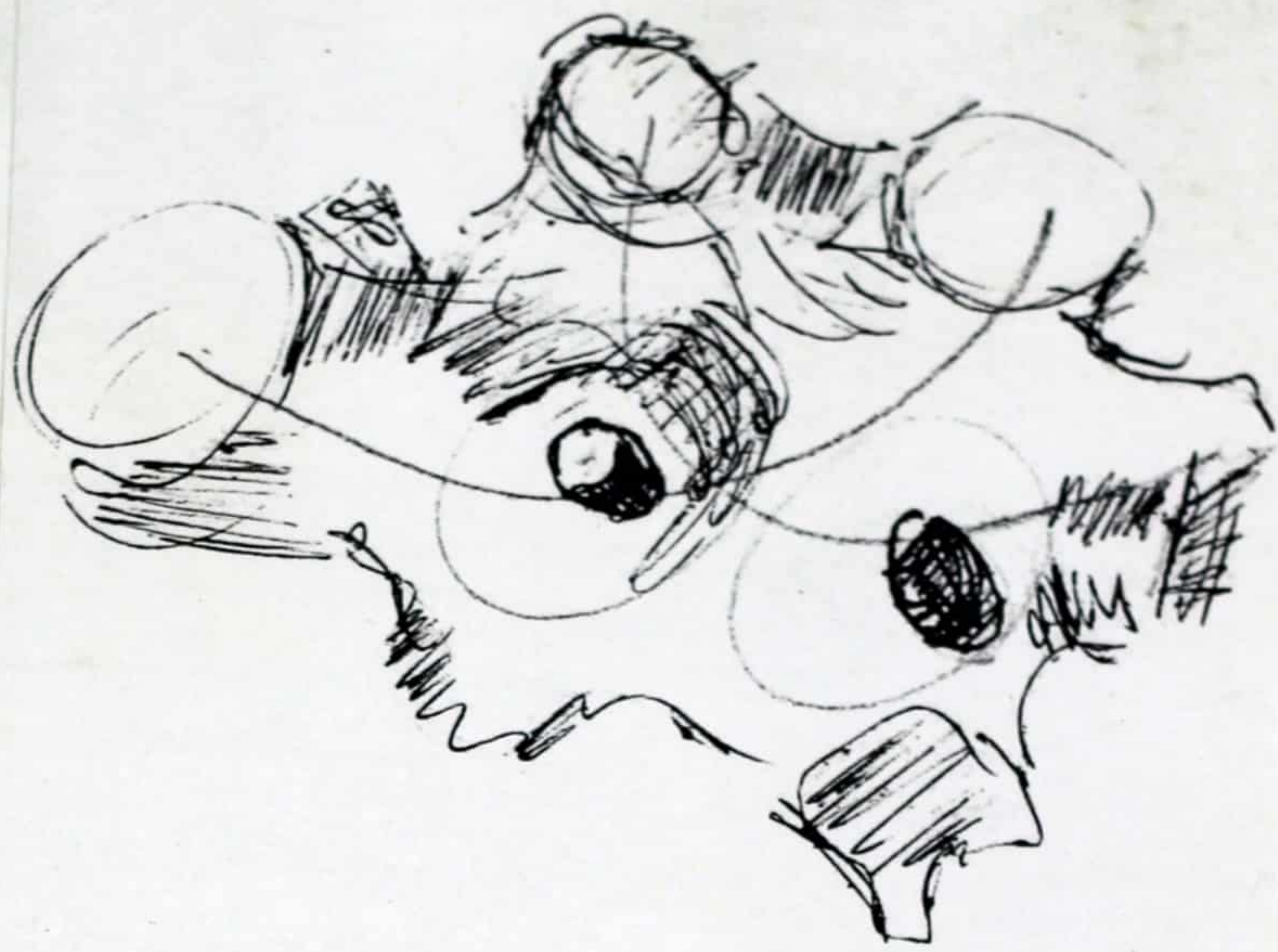


Plate 35 Project 1 Stem-branch for Carving.



Plate 36 ^{Photograph} ~~Drawing~~ of Project 1 Stem-branch



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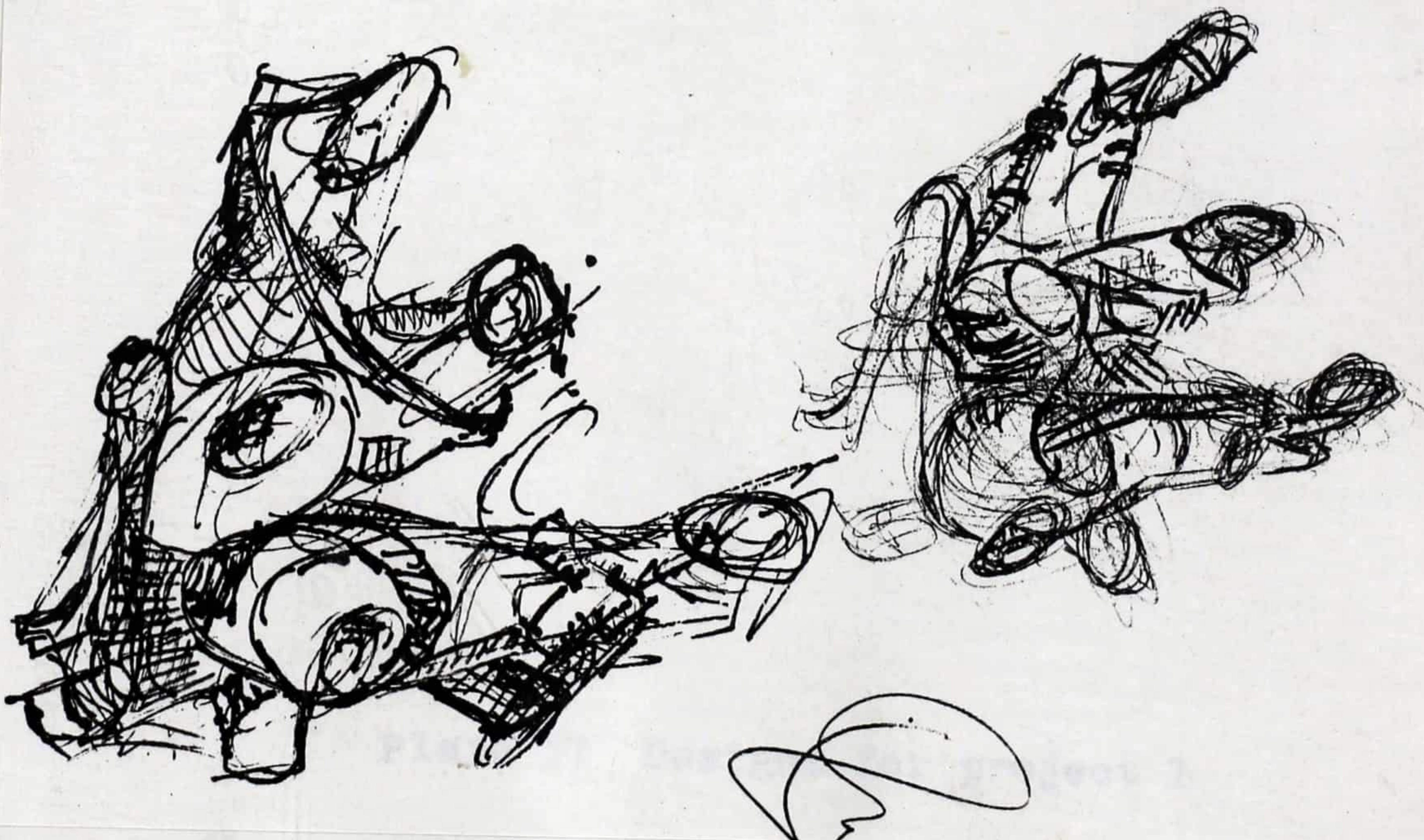


Plate 37. Drawings of Project I Stem-Branch
for Carving.



Plate 38 Designs for project 1 Carving



Plate 39 Designs for project 1 carving.



Plate 40 The Two Faces of Peace



Plate 41 The Two Faces of Peace

PROJECT II

To carve a sculpture piece from a stem-root based on the results of the preliminary studies, a short spruce tree stem with several roots attach was selected. The specimen was seriously damaged by termite and fungus activity.

The jutting, ramifying roots in the specimen evoked a feeling of disorderliness, struggle and violence (plate 42). Drawing of action lines to connect the major roots in the sketches gave very dynamic movement (plate 43). Thus the struggle formed the basis of the researcher's design development. Several ideas came to mind but that of two figures struggling was found more inspiring (plate 44 and 45).

Mindful of the nature of the limited wood mass available, with long narrow roots jutting from the very short stem, the design centered on the limbs and heads of human figures omitting the bodies (plate 46).

The wood mass available in the oddly shaped short trunk was very small. The roots too were very long and narrow. To make effective use of the limited wood the design centered on the exaggeration of the limbs and heads of the figures to capture the theme.

Description of Work:

In the composition, two men are seen struggling. Their two heads and limbs actively engaged in the struggle are very conspicuously shown. Their torsos are lightly projected because

they are not playing any meaningful role in the struggle. The large headed man from his face seems harmless but is strangling with the hands, the other who is screaming with his long neck firmly squeezed under the other man's armpit. The screaming man has his harmless hand around the neck of the man strangling him. The disjointed legs and arms are seen in all directions, some bent and others stretched out in a struggle.

There was no blocking as such since the bulk of material around the trunk was judiciously used for the torsos of the two figures. The limbs were also suggested in the many roots without disturbing their original forms. The artist tried to link the various parts through swift flowing planes using varying gouge marks and lines.

The researcher made no attempt to express all the parts of the two figures, but the important forms that intensify the struggle. Artistic works emanates from feelings and to express ones feelings, one does not depend on the use of realistic images alone but on the use of any universal language that best expresses ones ideas. To this end, the heads and limbs are exaggerated to increase the feeling of struggle as already mentioned.

Sometimes the contemplation of natural objects is the cause of the artist's emotion. The emotion felt by the artist in moments of inspiration are not for the objects to be depicted as real objects, but for objects to be seen as pure forms, that is as ends in themselves. He did not have an urge to carve a log because the wood presented an opportunity to carve a struggling men. Rather,

it presented an opportunity through the object as a means, in itself, a stepping stone to express ones inner feeling. The objects are seen as pure forms. It is through pure forms that he gets his emotion inspired.

To see objects as pure forms is to see them as ends in themselves. For once, instead of seeing men struggling, he sees lines, colour, planes and texture being organised. It is clear that he has won from the material beauty - the thrill that, generally, art alone can give - because he has identified pure forms as lines, planes, shapes and texture. Having freed the objects from all its significance as a means, he has felt its significance as an end in itself.

What is that which is left when we have stripped an object of all its associations, of all its significance as a means? What is left to provoke our emotion? What but that which philosophers used to call "the thing in itself" or the "ultimate reality". Thus elimination of pure human forms giving way to exaggeration and stylization of parts to bring home the idea of struggle which is central to the theme. The torsos were only suggested as flowing planes, lines and irregular shapes to link important forms that convey the struggle. Limbs though were featured prominently, conscious effort was not made to carve them out in realistic manner and linking them to specific figures. Since in a struggle the expressive power of forms lie not in realism but the act of expressing the movement itself without seeing the limbs well. The artist having identified his forms, accentuated their expressive

character using controlled tool marks to create lines and planes. Where necessary the natural surface of wood with cracks, insect activity and colouration were left to heighten the effect. The sharp contrast created by carved surfaces as against natural surfaces: real human heads pitched against deformed creature like limbs, create supernatural feeling in the work. Though heads, and limbs are repeated, the variety in sizes and shapes check the monotony that will have been created. Balance is brought to bear on the whole composition, through the different images expressing varying intensity of the struggle - from violent struggle expressed through heads and limbs (plate 47) to calm struggle manifested mainly as heads and torsos.

The attempt by the artist to exaggerate some of the forms into that of creatures and deities suggests that the struggle is not only between human beings, but between human and lower animals or deities. The two heads symbolize the dual nature of things in the universe. The winner and the loser, love and hate, ugly and beautiful, darkness and light. But this struggle must continue since it is the only means by which we can get closer to the ideals of life - that is becoming one with reality.

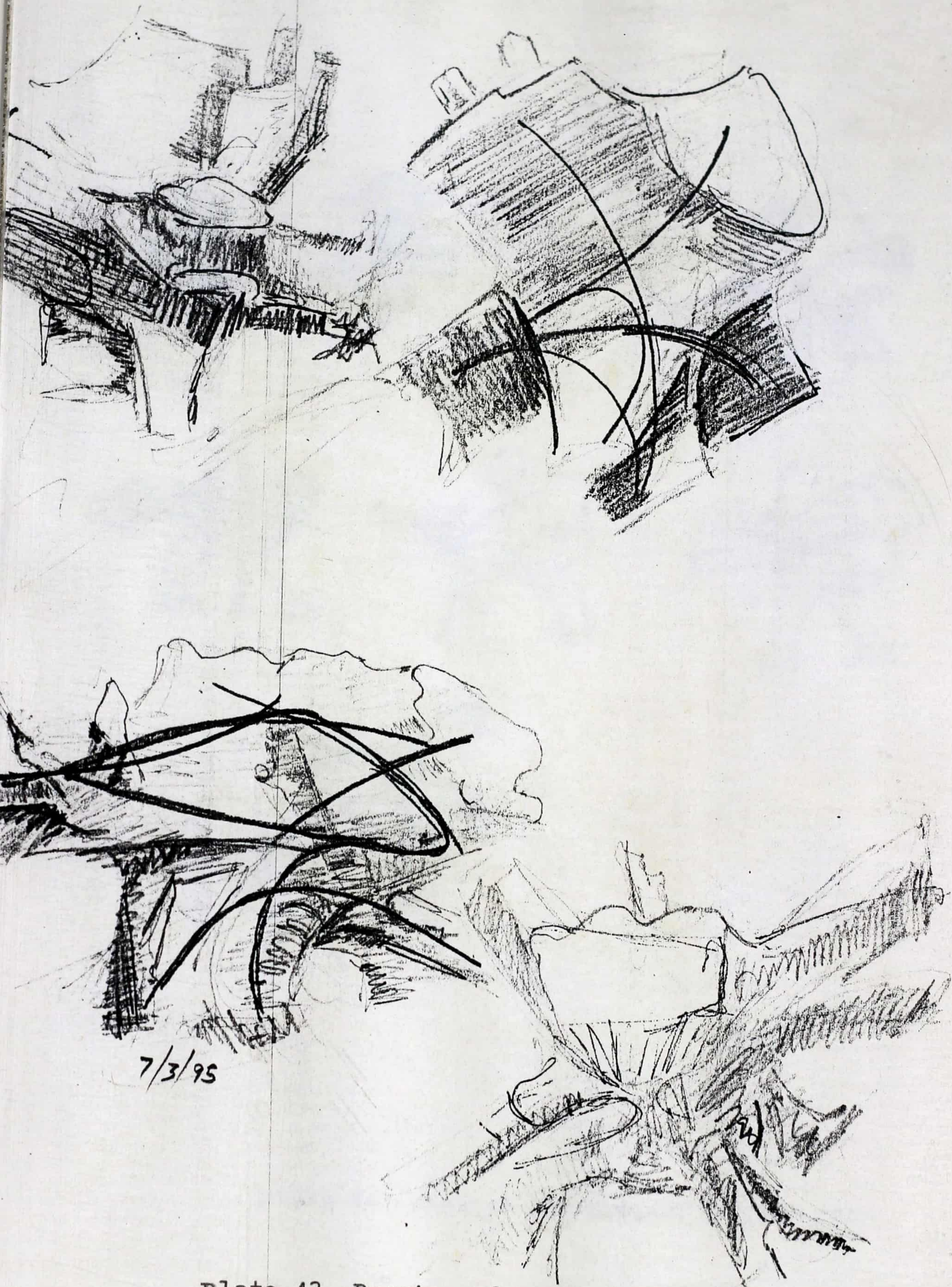
During the carving process, the researcher saw images of a bird and an aeroplane, but he stuck to his original plan and philosophy and continued with his original ideas. Even though the suggested image might have resulted in a great piece, carving it would not have been satisfying to him. Self realization through

self-satisfaction is his ultimate aim and being conscious of that inner feeling and expressing it in his art, to him is all that art is about.

The result shows that stem-root with defects can be used for self-expression in sculpture.



Plate 42 Photograph of project 11 Stem-root



7/3/95

Plate 43 Drawing of Project 11 Stem-root

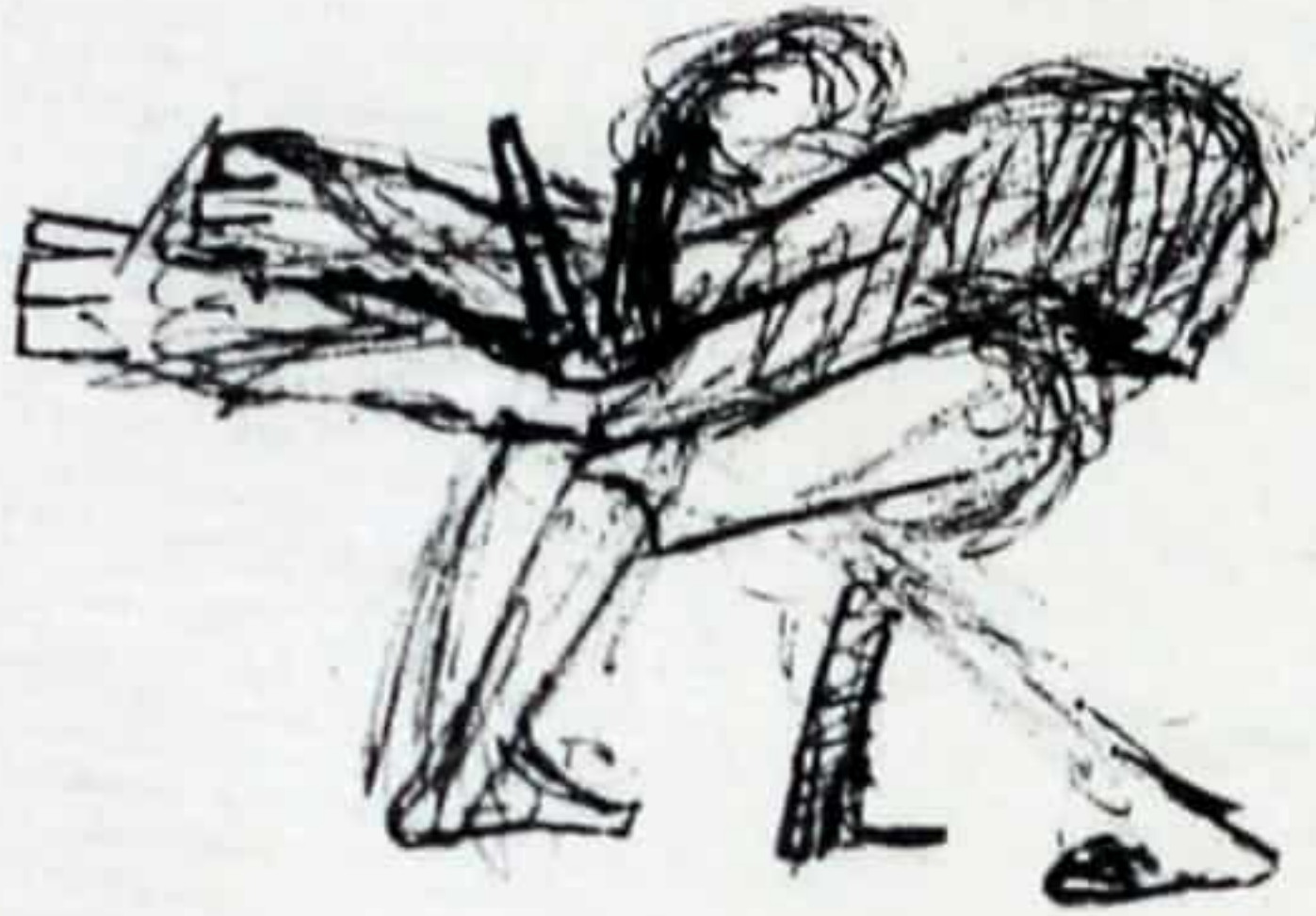
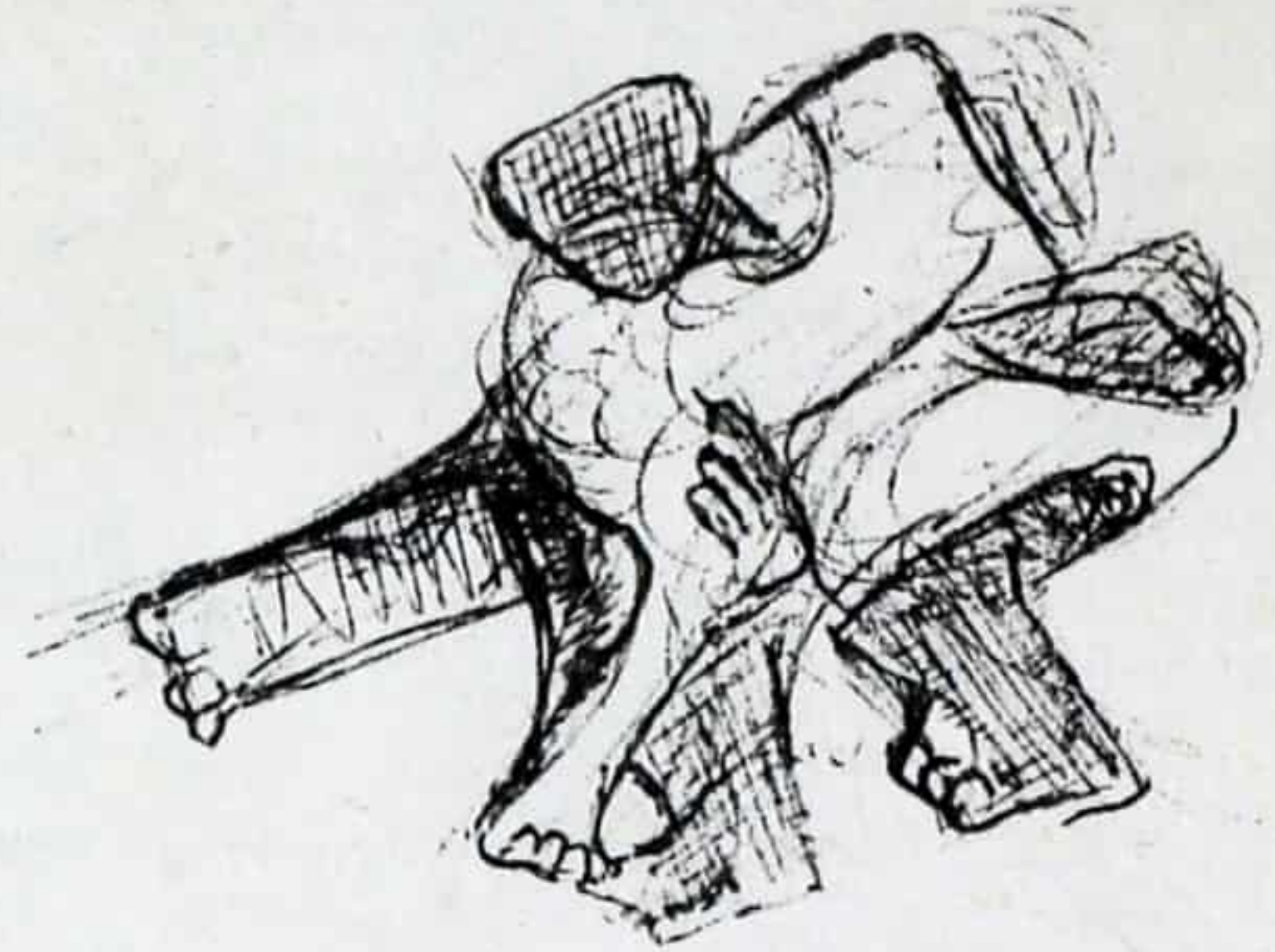


Plate 44 Designs for project 11 carving.

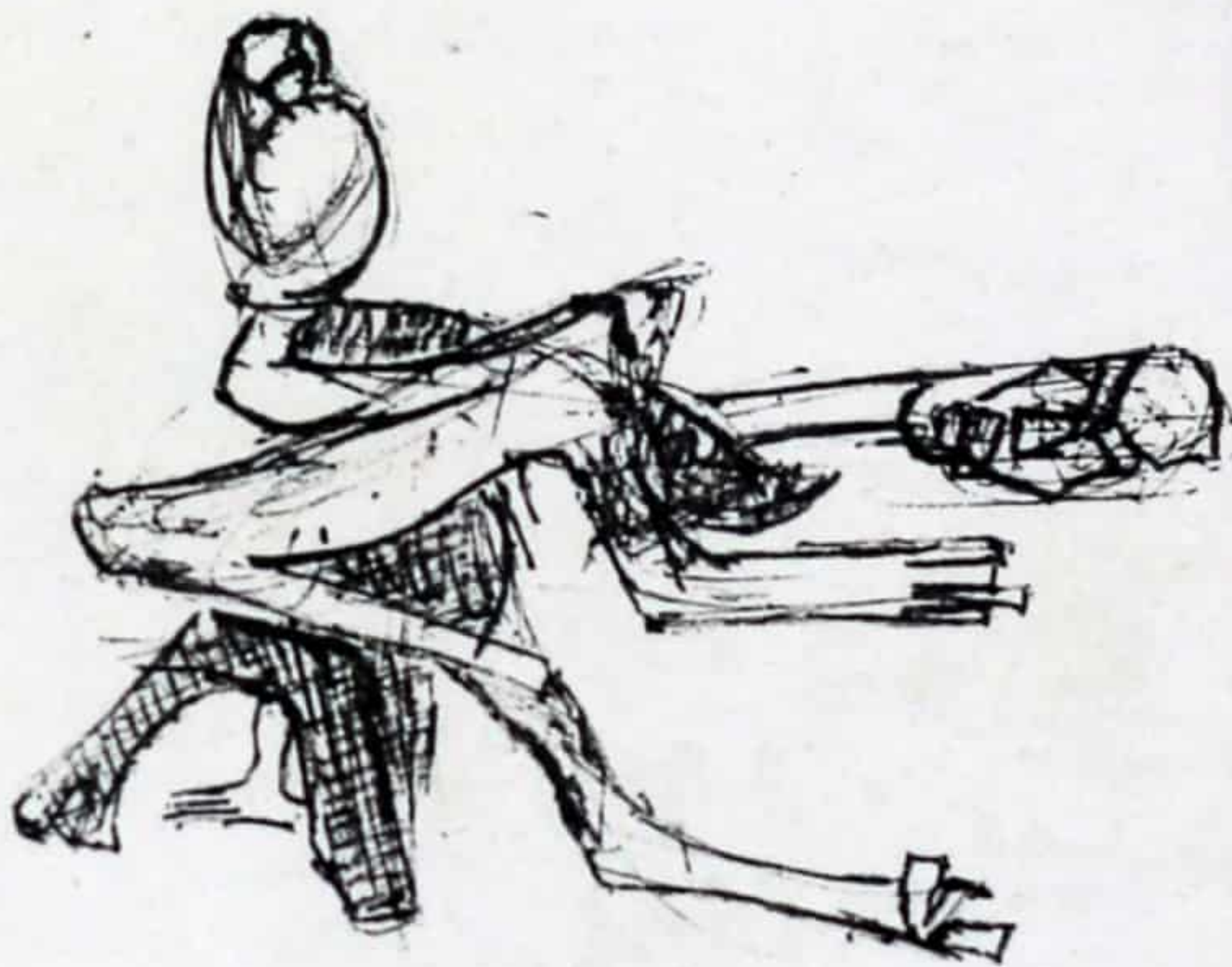
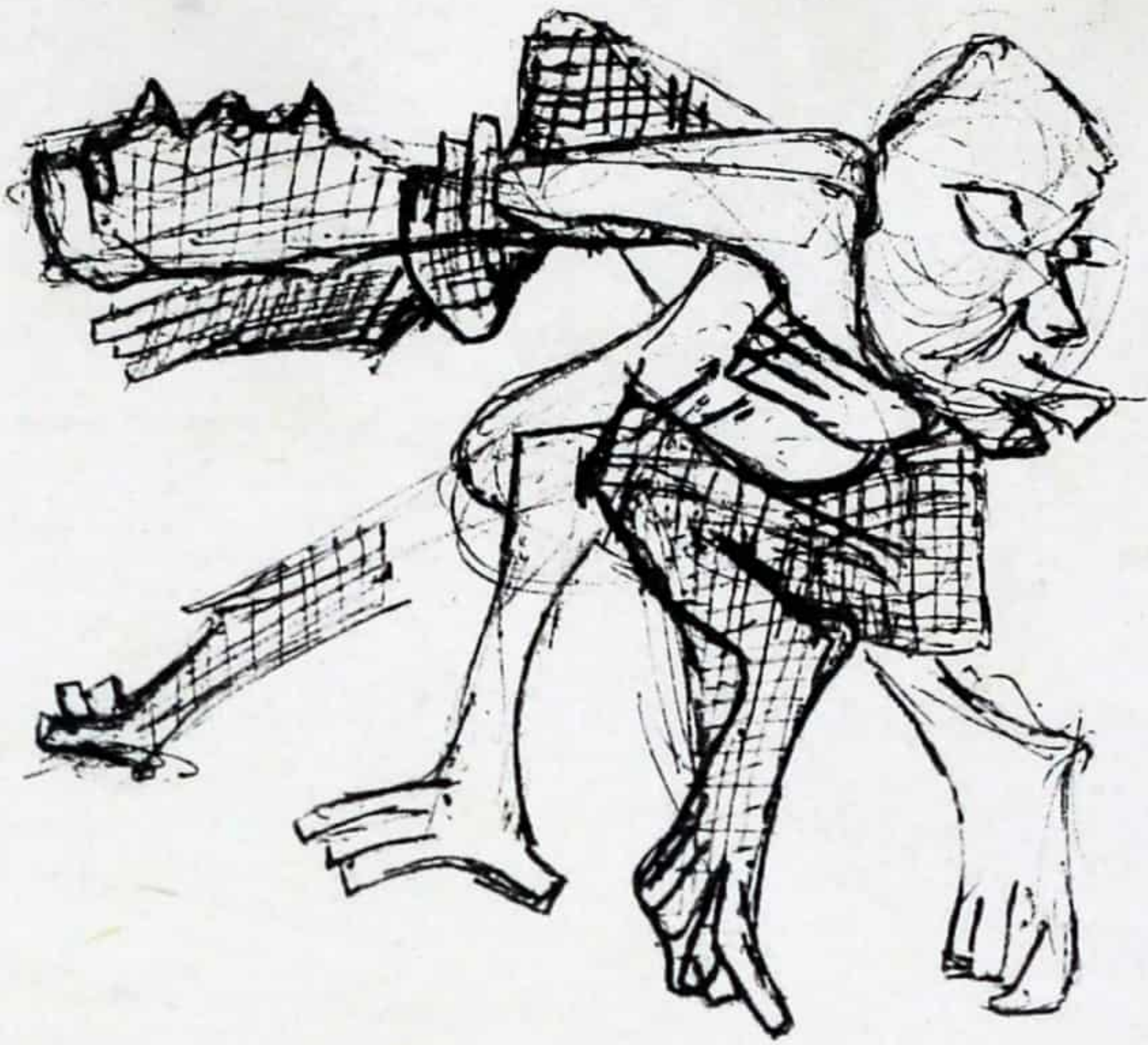


Plate 45 Designs for project 11 Carving.



Plate 46 The Struggle



Plate 47 The Struggle



Plate 48 The Struggle

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Preliminary Experiments

The results of the preliminary experiments conducted in the project are as follows:

Experiment 1A:

Clearing the weak and rotten fungus activity, added new forms and exposed the undamaged wood material for carving.

Conclusion:

Weak and damaged parts of fungus infested wood must be cleared before the design development and carving.

Experiment 1B:

The nature of wood material and its insect activity were considered in the central theme for sculpture. Therefore insect activity were left on selected areas purposely to capture the artist's feeling.

Conclusion:

For the successful wood sculpture to be achieved with the method explored by the researcher, the insect activity must feature in the central theme.

Experiment 1C:

The burnt defect in specimen enabled the artist to express forms that combines abstract and realism to portray powerful emotion. Scraping the burnt parts created irregular, distorted and suggested forms which were integrated into the sculpture as a whole.

Conclusion:

Such irregular surface effects produced from scraping the burning increased the quality of the sculpture.

Recommendation (Experiment 1A, 1B, 1C)

This method of producing wood sculpture in the round is recommended to sculptors who wish to experiment freely with stylistic representation and exaggeration, since it is easier to carve abstract forms this way.

Experiment 2A: Carving Stem-Root:

Carving stem-root with its many un-coordinated roots system can be interesting if the designing is based on the following:

- a. The dynamic feeling evoked by the specimen
- b. Just a few roots and the main stem are worked on, leaving the smaller roots intact or carved to enhance the expressive qualities of the main forms.

Conclusion:

Though carving stem-root formation can be difficult, because of its many roots, very good sculpture can be realized if the artist is able to capture the true forms or feelings evoked by the original specimen.

Recommendation:

This method of carving is recommended for expressionists who seek to express themselves in wood.

Experiment 2B: Stem-Branch Carving

It is easier to express ones emotional feeling derived from the stem-branch rather than forcing to see a suggested representational image in it. To this sculptor, this amount to imposition of ones ideas on the material. Through the material the artist experienced that personal freedom of expression which is necessary for true creative work.

Conclusion:

True art and for that matter creative sculpture is produced when an artist gives expression to the feeling the specimen evokes in him.

Recommendation:

The method is recommended for expressionist artists because the forms - defects, branches, colour, knots, grain and odd shape lead to interesting experiments.

Summary of Results, Conclusions and Recommendation

for the Main Project

The results of the main project proved very successful. The two sculptures from the stem-branch and stem-root were very expressive, capturing the researcher's inner feeling. The major contributing factor to the success of this project was the application of the experiences and discoveries made in the preliminary experiments.

The stem-branch and stem-root used in the main project had the following defects - burns, fungus and termite attack, which were exploited to enhance the expressive qualities of sculptures as in experiments 1A, 1B, 1C.

Designs developed were based on emotions evoked by forms in stem-branch and stem-root. These designs just served as guide motivating the researcher to identify forms in the wood.

The researcher realized the forms and emotions through careful distortion and exaggeration. Though most of these effects were realized through actual carving some were realized by leaving the natural wood, and defects in material through careful planning.

The resulting sculptures were very unique. Facial features and other forms reflected his perception about life. The medium thus facilitates quick and easy self-expression.

The result of the main sculptures shows that forms in stem-branch and stem-root are suitable for sculpture making. Good sculptures can be realized if carved to express the artist feelings about the wood.

Some advantages of stem-branch and stem-root.

The result of the main project has identified some remarkable advantages of the material over the log.

The advantages are as follows:

1. The stem-branch and stem-root are common, cheap with interesting forms. Logs are scarce, expensive and lacks interesting shapes.
2. The many branches allow for limbs and creation of movement without difficulty.
3. Knots and branches make wood harder and more resistant to the environment.
4. The many branches make it possible to place sculpture in different positions for studies and appreciation.
5. The branch-like nature and defects give the material more dynamic forms which intend invoke the artist feelings better than the straight log.

Test of Hypothesis

The project postulates that stem-branch and stem-root has not been utilized fully as a sculpture material. It is therefore possible to use stem-branch and stem-root extensively as carving medium for sculpture.

Main Conclusion

At the beginning of the project, it was stated that many Ghanaian sculptors rely on timber logs for carving. But this

material is scarce and expensive. There is therefore a need to find an alternative material. The project proves that it is possible to use stem-branch and stem-root as an alternative material for sculpture carving.

It was stated in the introduction also that the slow and laborious nature of following directly the suggested image in material limits or frustrates the performance of the sculptors. The researcher's expression of feelings, evoked by forms in material is simple and can be employed in the execution of sculpture of any shape or size.

The researcher's stem-branch, stem-root carving method lends itself to self-expression. It means that conventional rules of perspective, proportion and realism give way to stylistic representation where certain features of expression are exaggerated to emphasize the central theme of the subject. The method should be explored by artists who borrow from or experiment freely.

The researcher mentioned in the methodology that the stem-branch and stem-root carving method is suitable for carving odd-shaped (irregular) materials such as stone, broken bricks and cement products. These materials can be explored for their suitability as carving materials using the above method.

Main Recommendation:

1. It is recommended to anyone wishing to use this method for carving sculpture to ensure that defects in material are considered in the central theme. Experiments 1A, 1B, 1C,

demonstrates how to arrive at this technique.

2. Stem-branch and stem-root are cheap and locally available, and the proposed method for carving such sculpture is simple. The method is therefore recommended to students of higher institutions. It is recommended to other sculptors as well.

3. Since the researcher is not making a total claim on all aspects of carving stem-branch and stem-root, it is recommended that further explorations be done by other researchers and sculptors into stem-branch and stem-root as a carving material.

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