

Landmarks Guide for Older Children



Magdalena Abakanowicz

American, born in Austria, 1890–1965

Figure on a Trunk

2000

Bronze

Subject: Stage

Activity: Put on a performance without using any words or sounds

Materials: None

Vocabulary: Figure, state, symbolism, performance

Introduction

Magdalena Abakanowicz is from Poland. She was raised and lived there throughout World War II. This piece is a bronze casting of a headless figure. Abakanowicz makes many sculptures like this one. Sometimes there is just one figure, and sometimes there are many figures in a large group. This figure is standing before us on a platform that is like a stage. When someone is on a stage, they are usually there to tell the audience something, either through speaking or through their performance.

Questions

The figure stands on a stage of sorts.
What might it be telling us?

Can you think of some things that the head and face are symbolic of?

Why do you think the artist chose to make this figure without a head?

Activity

Designate an area that will be your stage. Put on a show for a friend or family. Try to act out feelings and experiences using only your body, but not your voice. Most movies and performances we see incorporate a lot of sound and music to set the mood. How can you set the mood and communicate a message without relying on sound? Can you use all the areas of your stage?



Vocabulary

Figure - A human shape

Stage - A platform used for performances

Symbolism - Representing an idea or concept through images

Performance - The act of presenting something (like a play or music) to an audience for entertainment