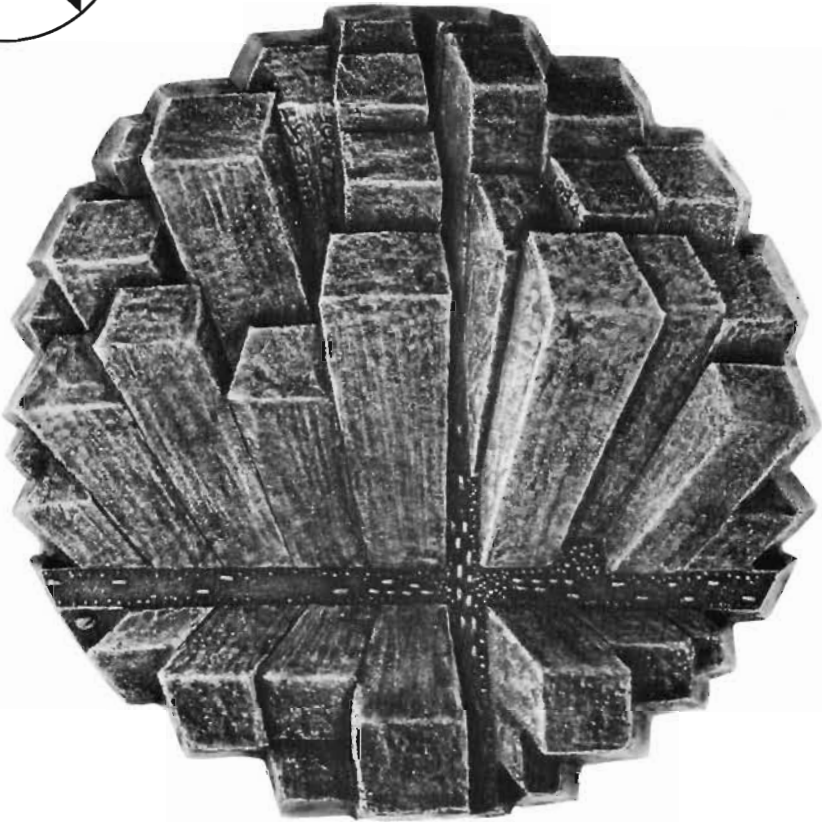


VOLUME 2



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<http://naa-online.com/>

MICHAEL MESZAROS

THE MAN AND HIS MEDALS

By Ray Jewell

The close links between the art of the sculptor and the numismatic fraternity are well known. Indeed one has only to glance at a coin catalogue and read such names as MacKenna, Richardson, Brock, Boehm and others to realise that the sculptor and sculptor/medallist are very much a part of coins and medals.

This article is written in the form of an 'appreciation' of one such Australian sculptor/medallist.

Michael Meszaros was born in Melbourne in 1945, the second son of the Hungarian born sculptor/medallist, Andor Meszaros and Elizabeth Meszaros.

The father, Andor, arrived in Australia in 1939 and from 1940 until his death in 1972, worked full time as a sculptor.

As the studio was in the family home it can be easily seen that Michael's early years would have been spent in an environment dominated by discussion and work centred around sculpture.

Graduating as Bachelor of Architecture from The University of Melbourne in 1967, Michael spent the following year working as an architect. In 1969 he was awarded a Churchill Fellowship which enabled him to attend La Scuola Dell 'Arte Della Medaglia which is attached to the Mint of Rome.

Returning to Melbourne in 1970 he commenced work as a full time sculptor, until 1972 in association with his father.

The interest in medallions and sculpture has always been dominant and he exhibited his first medallions in 1963 at the age of 18. It was at this time that one of his medallions was selected for inclusion in The Hague Museum of Medals, Holland.

Today his clients include major companies, universities, schools, professional bodies and government departments. In addition to these commissions he has also produced a considerable amount of personal work and has had a number of exhibitions of statues and medallions.

The answers to questions put to the artist are most informative:-

Why sculpture?

"Humanity has always felt the need to express itself through art and sculpture is the most permanent form of art. It is also the only form involving three dimensions and therefore aspects from all sides. Ours is a very commemorating society — centenaries, prizes, battles, royalty, birthdays, openings, honourings, etc., all need to be marked by physical objects which indicate the substance of the event. This has led to a formalised set of objects doing a conventional set of functions, that is, medallions for prizes, medals for military service and sporting prowess, plaques for commemorations, statues to honour great figures, wars, etc. These conventions have endured in principle but within the basic conventions good individuals can express new ideas in new styles. In recent times there was a move to abandon all traditional forms. This was healthy because it has now become apparent that the traditional forms have a rational basis while at the same time the old constrictions of traditional style are no longer binding and a far greater range of expression is available and permissible."

And the work that you do?

“My work falls into two distinct categories, i.e. commissioned and non-commissioned. Many artists shun commissions but I see the two areas as being necessary and interdependent. I learn from each discipline and what I learn from one I apply in various ways to the other. Non-commissioned work requires the discipline of maintaining one’s own private conception on a subject nominated by oneself. Commissioned work means that one must have a personal conception of a subject nominated by somebody else, understandable by that other person. Thus a commission properly carried out should express to a client my own understanding of what is of primary importance in this nominated subject.

Many artists see commissions as restricting and compromising. I see them simply as the solving of problems defined by certain parameters. The tighter the problem, the greater the satisfaction in finding a concise and original solution”.

And what of medallions?

“The early discipline of medallions has taught me to be concise in my thinking and my designs. In medallions there is less room for irrelevance than in any other sculptural form. This has also made me aware that good art is in many ways a subtractive process — I keep taking elements away until I cannot take any more away without the work falling apart. What is left is a kind of expressive skeleton.”

Where do the designs, the ideas originate from?

“Ideas are the basis of my work. I start with a philosophical analysis (in commissioned work) and then find a means of expressing it. In

personal work the process is similar, I think, but subconscious. I say ‘I think’ because it is much harder to be sure of the subconscious process. However, given the end result i.e. the design, I can work backwards and decide whether the design really expresses the idea I know lies behind it.”

Do you try to convey a social message in your work?

“What I feel I am doing in my commissioned work is expressing the important aspects of each subject and I am therefore making a personal comment on that subject. It has social and historic importance through its artistic expression if my perception and expression is accurate.”

Do you really believe that artists are in touch with everyday living — with what the average person is thinking?

“An artist must be practical, businesslike and understanding of people’s requirements. He must be able to quote, to administer contracts, to meet deadlines and to deal with people, who often feel nervous or uncertain. He must maintain his integrity and refuse work he considers impossibly bad. Money and business are often considered dirty words but once one puts a price on a work one is in business whether one likes it or not. It follows that one should operate in a businesslike manner.”

Exhibitions

One man shows, Melbourne, Leveson Street Gallery 1970, 1976, 1981.

Victorian Arts Society. Regular Exhibitor.

One man show and one joint show, Perth. Joint 1975. One man 1977.

One man show, Christchurch, N.Z. 1975.

Joint shows with father, Geelong 1971, Castlemaine 1971, Sydney 1971 (Villiers Gallery).

Joint show Sydney 1981, Blaxland Gallery.

One man shows, Newcastle 1979, 1983.

Exhibited at Congresses in Paris, Athens, The Hague, Cologne, Prague, Helsinki, Cracou, Budapest, Lisbon, Florence.

Exhibited Budapest 1973 small sculpture exhibition.

1982 expatriate Hungarians exhibitions.

Associations

Member Italian Association of the Friends of the Medallion (by invitation).

Member and Australian delegate of International Medallists' Federation.

Member Visual Arts Board, Australia Council 1977-80.

President Association of Sculptors of Victoria 1974-76; 1980-82; 1984-86.

Member of the Advisory Panel on coins and medals to the Australian Bicentennial Authority.

Collections

Medallions bought by the British Museum (6).

Royal Dutch Coin Collection (2)

Christchurch, N.Z. Gallery (2).

Castlemaine, Victoria, Gallery (1).

Works in private collections in Australia, New Zealand, United States of America, United Kingdom and many European countries.

Prizes

Arezzo, Italy, Uno-a-Erre international competitions for medallions, purchase prizes 1968, 1970

Ravenna, Italy, Dante Biennial competitions. Prizes 1973, 1983. Honourable mention 1975.

Several commissions won on a competition basis:

Camberwell Civic Centre — the Mayoress

Footscray Institute of Technology
Mining Export Award —
Department of Trade &
Resources

Major Commissions

Bronze Seahorse, Merimbula, N.S.W., 2 metres high.

Welded copper birds, 350 St. Kilda Road, Melbourne, 4 metres high.

Cast bronze reredos panel, St. Joseph's Church, Warragul, Victoria, 3 metres x 1.6 metres.

Bronze portrait statue of John Pascoe Fawcner, 447 Collins Street, Melbourne, 2.2 metre figure.

Life size female figure, private commission, manganese bronze Bacchus Marsh.

Bronze figure 'Mayoress' Camberwell Civic Centre, Melbourne, 2 metres.

Brass sculpture, Footscray Institute of Technology, Melbourne, 2.2 metres.

Bronze man reading book, life size, and echidna, private client.

Manganese bronze figure & welded steel structure 'The Worker', Allco Steel, Newcastle, N.S.W.

Trophies

Australian Tourist Commission Jemma Award 1975

Dept. of Trade and Resources Mining Export Award

Bowater Scott Woman of the Year Award
B.H.P. Awards for the Pursuit of Excellence

Australian Tourist Commission, National Tourism Awards

The Age Victorian Sports Star of the Year

Full Head Portraits

Ferida Ajayoglu

Maryjean Hunter

Julie Riley

Janet Taylor

Yasuko Myer

Julia Righton

Don Wicks

Miniatures of Major Works

Allco Steel 'The Worker'

Camberwell City Council 'Mayoress'
2 sizes

Footscray Institute of Technology,
scale model

Coats of Arms

Fijian-Suva Telephone Exchange
R.A.A.F.
Commonwealth of Australia, 2 sizes
Oscar Gimesy personal, 2 versions
Prince Phillip, School of Architecture,
University of Melbourne

Other Commissions

Haileybury College memorial fountain,
Springvale Road, Keysborough
Wooden crucifix, Catholic Diocesan
Centre, Albert St., East Melbourne
University College Melbourne, Dorothea
Arnott memorial
Tabernacle, Mt. Zion College Chapel,
Warragul
Memorial to Deceased Archbishops,
St. Patrick's Cathedral, Melbourne
'Crisp' hurdling horse statue, V.A.T.C.
'Ming Dynasty' 100th Caulfield Cup
Winner statue, V.A.T.C.
Decorative Cross, Blackfriars Priory
School, Prospect, Adelaide
Melbourne Zoo David Riordan memorial
Ceramic Doberman dog
Three lifesize works for Bashir Baraki
Lazarus in grave
Lazarus awakening
Lazarus risen
Wedding sculpture for David and Nancy
Parker
Pyx (Flying Dove Tabernacle) in
aluminium for St. James C. of E.,
Newcastle

Plaques and Reliefs

John Rymill Grave plaque, Penola, South
Australia
Pharmacy Board of Victoria centenary
State College of Victoria Carlton
Gryphon (with A. Meszaros)
Royal Women's Hospital, Queen's
Jubilee visit
Victorian Parliament House, Centenary
of death of Gov. Latrobe
University of Melb. Art Gallery —
McGeorge bequest
University of Melb. Art Gallery —
opening of Gallery
Burke Hall Catholic Boys Prep. School,
St. Francis Xavier

Burke Hall Catholic Boys Prep. School,
St. Ignatius
Dr. P. Bush, Casualty Services plaque
'Caritas'
Eye and Ear Hospital Melb. Cochlear
Implant (Bionic Ear)
Eye and Ear Hospital Melb.
Miniaturisation of Bionic Ear implant
and processor
Recco Round Australia Rally Placegetters
plaque
St. Mary's C. of E., North Melbourne
Archbishop Sambell memorial
Shire Warragul, Centenary of Local
Government
C. F. Burnell grave, Templestowe
Cemetery
Nicholas Dancs grave, Brighton Cemetery
G. N. Altorfer Memorial, Perth
Warragul, St. Joseph's Catholic Church,
altar plaques
St. Patrick's Cathedral, Melbourne,
Archbishop Knox memorial inscription
plate
St. Patrick's Cathedral, Melbourne,
Ecumenical conference memorial
D. L. Palmer memorial plaque (with
A. Meszaros)

Larger Reliefs

Memorial to David Kalker, 479 Bridge
Road, Richmond, Victoria
Footscray Institute of Technology, Civil
Engineering Dept.
University of Melbourne, Civil
Engineering School
University of Melbourne, Grad. School of
Business Management, Coles Brothers
Memorial plaque

Commissioned Medallions (Cast)

Mr & Mrs S. Gottlieb, 30th Wedding
Anniversary medallion
Clean Air Society Award
J. W. Dodds Award, Mech. Eng. Sch.
Monash University
Sir Donald Anderson Award, Gliding
Federation of Australia
The Age Footballer of the Year Award
(with A. Meszaros)
The Age Bowls Award
The Age Teacher of the Year Award,
now School Community Award(s)
The Age School Music Award

The Australasian Institute of Metals
 Meritorious Service Award
 The Australasian Institute of Metals
 Claude A. Stewart Award
 Fred J. Boyd Award, Society of Hospital
 Pharmacists of Australia
 The Glaxo Award for Hospital Pharmacy
 Award
 Consulting Engineers' Advancement
 Society Award (silver)
 Australian Library Promotion Council
 Alfred McMicken Award
 Australian Library Promotion Council
 Library Design Award
 Jim Smithson Award for Rubber
 Technology
 Fellowship of Australian Writers
 Christopher Brennan Award for poetry
 Shell Book Award
 Ford Australia Tractor and Farm
 equipment dealers award
 Rotary Club of Melbourne Vocational
 Service Award
 Aust. Institute of Mining and Metallurgy
 Distinguished Speaker Award
 Heather Hewitt Uganda escape medallion
 Fenwick McLean Arab Horse Breeders
 Trophy
 Heine Bros., medallion
 Chemeca Award, Chemical Engineering
 Conference
 John Jaeger Geomechanics Award
 'Paratus' Army Armoured Corps, Mascot
 medallion
 Baker Medical Research Institute, Baker
 Oration Plaque and 2nd version
 Loch Ard Centenary (abandoned
 commission done at own risk)
 Order of Australia Society, Vic. Branch,
 Victorian Citizenship Award
 George Patterson Scholarship plaque
 Victorian Association for Library
 Automation (VALA) Award
 CSIRO Research Achievement Award
 Assoc. of Sculptors of Victoria William
 Hoggan Thomas Memorial Award
 Royal Australian Institute of Architects,
 Recycled Buildings Award
 Dr. Peter Bush, family medallion
 Insurance Council of Australia
 President's medal (silver)

Insurance Council of Australia Vice
 President's medal (bronze) — same
 except inscription and metal
 Resurrection as 15th Station of Cross,
 continuing A. Meszaros series
 Commissioned by Blackfriars Priory
 School Adelaide, also available for
 sale(s)
 Sam Slater Award Wildlife artists
 (modelled to design by another)
 Royal Women's Hospital modelled
 reduction of Queen's Jubilee plaque
 Libra plaquette Mr G. Silver Sydney
 Geelong Hospital Chapel Altar medallion
 Font medallion
 B.H.P. Iron & Steel Conference
 medallion (aluminium for stainless
 steel) — rejected design
 Gould Bird Medallions (5) for Franklin
 Mint. Not issued.

Struck Medallions Commissioned
 St. John Ambulance Service, Rescue
 Champions
 Aust. Organisation for Quality Control,
 J. M. Juran Award (silver)
 Paul Simon Award for Service to
 Numismatics
 Presbyterian Ladies College Centenary
 medallion (pendant) (bronze & silver)
 Repco Round Australia Rally plaquette
 (square)
 Australian Institute of Petroleum, Highest
 Award (silver)
 Vicrail Apprentice of the Year medallion
 (also cast) (gold plated, silver-plated,
 bronze)
 University of Melbourne, Bella Guerin —
 Centenary of First Woman Graduate
 pendant (bronze & silver)
 Footscray Institute of Technology, Civil
 Engineering Dept., plaquette reduction
 of 900mm square relief
 Dominican Order, Catholic Church,
 presentation medallion
 Rex Clarke portrait, copper (also under
 portraits)
 Bill Iggulden portrait, Gliding Federation
 of Australia (also under portraits).

Portraits Cast

Andor Meszaros
John Gartner
Florence (Maisy) Stillman
Timothy Scott
John William Eggington
Mary Eggington
David Eggington
Rena Geroe
Steven Geroe
Daniel Meszaros
Oscar Gimesy
Margaret Gimesy
Elizabeth Gimesy
Douglas Gimesy
Joanne Richardson
Suzanne Richardson
Lachlan Sharp
Charles Sharp
Gabriella Orsini
Joseph Hauptmann
Colin Eggleston
Harold McGurk
Nigel Hughes
Timothy Hughes
James Hughes
Elizabeth Agar
Janet Gaden
Susan Agar
Jeremy Gaden
Timothy Gaden
Pippa Hinman
Mark Hinman
Peter Chomley
G. A. Chomley
Tony Guttmann
Gerald Richardson
Lyndy Richardson
Bill Iggulden
Peter Wetherell
Panni (Anne-Marie) Szeleczyk
Sheila Clark
Mrs A. Moran
Margaret McEvey
Thé Svedberg
Donald Britton
Max Corry
Jennesse Corry
Betty Tomlinson
Jacqueline Wallace
Elizabeth Reid
Susan Kott
'Zucchero' Parcu

Sam Riggall
Emmy Riggall
John Alderson
Marie Alderson
Frances Toumbourou
Anna Meszaros
Sue Walters
Betsy Hands
Bill Hands
Bob Hands
Melissa Bruce
Benjamin McGregor
Matthew McGregor
Fred Popper
Peta Courtney
Jacqui Courtney
Elizabeth Marshall
John Arthur
Timothy Barta
Andrew Barta
Karina Barta
Yvonne Adrian
C. F. Burnell
Elsbeth Chambers
Harry Widdup
Barbara Widdup
Archdeacon W. Leslie Sanders
Margot Sanders
Russell Stokes
Harold Stokes
Susan Connolly
Katherine Conolly
Rex Clark (struck)
Katherine Connolly
Gaye Sinclair
Fay Barson
Helen Buchanan
David Myers
Maj. Gen. T. S. Taylor
Lisa Heine
Paul Simon
Jessica Simon
Andrew Klimas
Don Wicks
Irene Mitchell
Prof. Reyn Keats
Joe Chambers
Lyn Chambers
Peter Thwaites (part of memorial)
L. R. Robinson (part of larger plaque)

Howard Florey Inst. portraits

Maria Pietzcker
Kenneth Myer
H. C. Coombs
Sir John Phillips
Sir Ian Potter
Sir Ernest Coates
Prof. R. D. Wright
Robert J. Kleberg
Dr. Evelyn de Rothschild

University of Melbourne Portraits

Marilyn Swann
Clem Christesen
Orde Poynton
Ian McLaren
Prof. Joseph Burke
Prof. Donald Thomson
F. Burnett O.M.
Ellis Stones
Ray Marginson A.M.
Prof. Charles Moorhouse

King George V Hospital Sydney**Obstetrics & Gynaecology**

Malcolm Stening
Gordon Young
Elton Holman
George Cummins
James Farrer
Frank Piggot
Margaret Mulvey
John Knox

National Book Council

Bob Cugley
Walter Stone
Cedric Pearse
Beatrice Davis
Harry & Marcie Muir (2 on 1)

Miscellaneous Portraits

Paul Kruger (from coin)
Francis Greenway (from historical sources)
Dr. R. L. Harris (with A. Meszaros)
Prince Charles (photos)

Personal Medallions

The Kill
Shakespeare statue unveiling (Ballarat)
Honey
Gontra
The Trumpeter

The Kiss I (2 sizes)
Us
Peeping Tom
The Race (Bicycle riders)
The Kiss II
The Kiss III
The Kiss IV
Sweet Nothings
Invitation I
Invitation II
Cellist
French Horn
Violinist
Flautist
Atlas
Atlas Tired
Atlas Imprisoned
Lovemakers I
Lovemakers II
Hair
See-saw
Slide
Tree I
Horse
Fish Feeding
Sunset
Hammer Thrower
Dancing Girl
Handshake
Bath
Eclipse I
Eclipse II
Twelve signs of the Zodiac,
100mm & pendant size 40mm
Tennis Ball
Pouring Bowl
Birth of Venus
Birth of Venus reverse design
World Co-operation
World Co-operation reverse design
Sunbather
Wine — The Making
Wine — The Drinking
Boxers
Spinnaker
Lady Godiva
Escape
The Mirror
Viking Longship
Adam's Apple
Leda
Nativity
Hill Town

Manhattan
Tree II
Rainbow
Rain on Water
Cheek to Cheek
Consensus
Shellfish
Don't Wreck the World
Leaping Fish
Crucifix

Dante Medallions

Crossing the Acheron
Dante in the Forest
Virgil Shows Dante the Afterworld
The Court of Saladin
Caiaphas
Dante Sees the Southern Cross
Voyage in Space
Dante Meets Carlo Martello

Personal Statues — Bronze unless otherwise stated

Apple and Grapes
Candlestick, Our Lady
Candlestick, Holy Angels
Torso — stretching forward
Torso — twisting
Pregnant Women — large
 — small

Dancer
Negative, Positive figure
Tango
Woman in Wind
Dress I
Dress II
Acrobats
Dead Bird
Caterpillar I — brass
Caterpillar II — brass
Bush Turkey
Sleeping cat
Critic — brass
Discobolos
Windblown Tree
Reclining Man — brass
Reclining Woman
Solidarity — brass
Spill — brass
Pouring — brass
Broken Bowl — bronze & brass
Rain — brass
Grow
Singing Bird

Convert — brass
King — brass
Queen — brass
Ladybird — bronze & copper
Praying man
Ballroom Dancers
Couple
Grand Entrance
Grand Dame
Pirouette
High Kick
Arabesque
Alas, Poor Yorick
Sleeping Bird — brass & copper
Fish I — brass
Fish II — brass
Rolling Dog
Wink
Cynic
Doubting Thomas
Winged Victory — large
Winged Victory — small
Sleeping Dog
Kiss
Pagliaccio
Python — wood
Rainbow — brass
Chook
Tart I — brass
Tart II — brass
Kneeling Torso — large
Kneeling Torso — small
Chorus Line
Runner — brass
Galloping Horse
Dante — spirit in the pitch
Hermes
Windblown Leaves — welded copper
Human Germination

Small Statues

Woman Awakening
Woman Thinking
Combing Hair I
Combing Hair II
Sitting Dog
Lying Dog
Dead Bird

The above listing is in the artist's own words 'fairly complete'. Apologies are made for any omissions but this is the first attempt to list the total works which cover a period in excess of twenty years.

The variation in output of Michael Meszaros is one of the fascinations of his work. Regrettably the listings above, although indicating the very large capacity for work, and extreme demand for his services, do not show the wide spectrum of his endeavours.

In illustrating a number of works an attempt has been made to cover the differing facets of the sculptor-medallist. As an insight into the development of the finished product Meszaros' own comments are given below each illustration.

AWARD MEDALS

Clean Air Society Award



Cast. First issued 1974. 150 mm. Still being awarded.

An award medal given to people who have made significant contributions to the achievement of clean air.

“The hand is sweeping rubbish out of the air. I like to minimise lettering wherever I can. If what I have done artistically is expressive and concise words should not be necessary.”

Teacher of the Year



Cast 1979. 190 mm.
Struck in Tombac. 63 mm.
Now obsolete. Changed to School Community Award.

One awarded per year in cast form, 7-10 each year in struck form.

Given to a teacher who had an influence on the whole community, not just in the classroom.

“The idea is self-explanatory in that one person is shown to be standing out from the group.”

Royal Australian Institute of Architects



President's Award for Recycled buildings.
Cast 1985. 190 mm. Placed on winning building.

Cast in Tombac. 62 mm. Awarded to architect.

“This prize is for recycling of buildings that would otherwise be demolished. The things you can do to an old building — extending sideways, upwards, down into the ground, reorganise internal spaces, chop holes in fabric of it and introduce new services, e.g. airconditioning, are shown.

Recessed image is basic building. Architectural drafting terms give suggestions of options.”

Repeco Reliability Trials



Struck (with loop) by K. R. Lowenstern. 1979 49 mm square. One year only. Presented to those that finished trial.

“The idea is that a tiny manmade machine is pitted against enormous distance, mountains, plains, tracks, etc.”

National Book Council

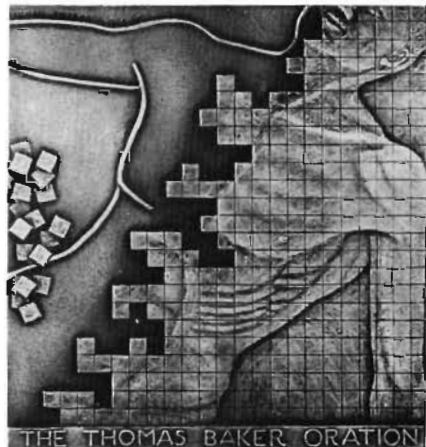


Second of a series of five. Cast 1975 150 mm. Prize is a portrait of the recipient.

Another medallist — Michael Knorr — did one when Meszaros was overseas.

Discontinued for financial reasons.

Medical Research Institute



Thomas Baker Oration. Cast 1984 150 mm square. Awarded to the person giving the annual Thomas Baker Oration.

A second version with different inscription is given to important visitors.

“They are trying to find all of the bits that make up the picture of the human

body. Half picture is shown made up. The line drawing suggests what they are aiming for. Loose unplaced pieces — the situation at present.”

Australian Library Promotion Council



Alfred McMicken Award
Cast 1978 155 mm.
Awarded most years to an outstanding librarian.

“I took as the subject the basic purpose of libraries which seemed to be that one person has an idea — it is then lodged in the library in the form of a book, tape or video — that idea is then extracted from the library by a series of other people. Line profile with an egg in the cranium . . . series of similar profiles each with their own little eggs in their own little craniums.”

Australian Institute of Petroleum



Struck, sterling silver, Royal Australian Mint.
1981 70 mm.
Highest award of the Institute for any field — Research, Marketing, Invention, etc.

“The idea was that the real benefit of petroleum, whether for combustion or lubrication, reduces muscular energy expended by humans. Two ropes are doing the same job. While a man expends all his efforts on the first, with machinery only a hand is required to control it.”

The Association of Sculptors of Victoria



The William Hoggan Thomas Memorial Award.
Cast 1985 150 mm.
Awarded annually to the sculptor whose work is considered best in show at the Associations' Exhibition. An award sponsored in memory of a stone mason with a lifetime interest in sculpture.

“I had to show the connection between sculpture, stone and carving. The hands are carving a portrait of Thomas from a block of stone. On one side stone cut style of lettering.”

Michael Meszaros considered it a compliment that he was asked to undertake a medal which was to be awarded to other sculptors.

Fellowship of Australian Writers



Christopher Brennan Award.
Cast 1979 95 mm x 140 mm.
Award given at Annual Dinner.

“This was honouring a well known poet. I was asked to make some comment on art altogether. All artists are trying to express some form of reality to their viewer. The hand is pulling aside a curtain and through the curtain you can dimly see human profiles but when it is pulled aside people are clearly defined.”

C.S.I.R.O. Medal for Research and Development

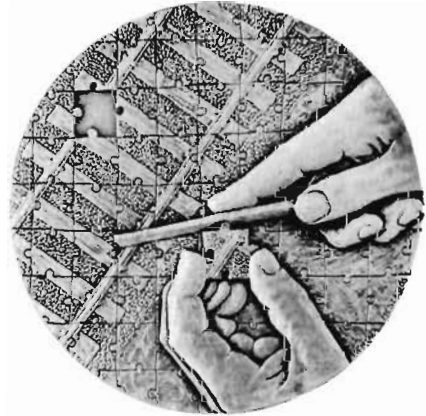


Cast 1985 150 mm.
One to the individual and one to the institution where that individual works are awarded per year.

“This was a challenge as they were unsure whether I could produce a medal to cover their organisation’s range of fields. I have shown the vast mass of unknown, the sphere covered in lines.

What an individual scientist does is to take a thread, measures, defines, organises it and uses what has been learnt to construct or contribute to some project. I have also shown overlap and interlock because that is what scientific research is all about, and different sizes of defined thread to indicate different scales of project.”

Victorian Railways Apprenticeship Award



Apprentice of the Year
Cast 1980 190 mm.

There are approximately 32 different apprenticeship courses in the Railway system. First, second and third in each course are awarded gold plated, silver plated and bronze medals. These are struck by the Royal Australian Mint. Size 63 mm.

“The system is like a giant jigsaw puzzle, one piece is missing but all are essential to complete the picture. The hands filing the missing piece give a feeling of craftsmanship.”

COMMEMORATIVE MEDALS

University of Melbourne



First woman graduate in Australia.
Struck at Royal Australian Mint in
sterling silver and tombac.
1983 40 mm 200 silver 500 tombac.

“Last century it was unthinkable that
women attend university. Bella Guerin
was the first to graduate at Melbourne.
The obverse shows a woman in 1880’s



style dress creeping through a door with
the university emblem on it. The arch
reflects the Law School buildings. Crest
had to be included. Both sides are
necessary on the medal to tell the story.

On the other side the same set of doors,
wide open with women in 1980’s dress
flocking through.”

Presbyterian Ladies College, Melbourne



Centenary Medallion, 1975 45 mm.
Sterling silver, with pendant ring, struck
by Stokes, Melbourne.

“ A Centenary is a point in time where
you look back and take stock, gather the
fruits of the past, look forward and plan
for the future and in this case plant
seedlings which will grow into more trees
which will bear more fruit. Two females
back to back. One looking to the past
and one to the future.”

PORTRAIT MEDALLIONS

Emmy — Aged 3. Cast 1975 120 mm.

“Actually Emmy was a little girl who lived next door. I also did a portrait of her brother.

“When a person commissions a portrait they want more than a mere photograph. A lot of people don’t really understand — they want a likeness. I tell them — if you want a photographic likeness you go to a photographer — the portrait is something more. A characterisation of the person.

“The process involves a certain amount of time to talk to and to look at the person. If someone is a natural joker it is sometimes necessary to lead the conversation into the serious to see what happens to their face. Each person has their own average facial condition and it is up to me to find that average condition. Everyone is close to the ‘national average’ but there are differences and it is these differences that make the portrait.”



Susan Agar
Cast 1974 150 mm.

“Wife of a doctor in Geelong. There are long family connections here. We (my father and myself) have done various portraits over four generations.”

PLAQUES AND RELIEFS

Eye and Ear Hospital, Melbourne

Department of Otolaryngology, Nerve Deafness Clinic.
Bronze 43 cm square.

“Commemorates in the first plaque the actual invention of the bionic ear. The idea is that you have sound, and the patient. There is a gap between them which the sound does not bridge. To bridge the gap is a manmade contrivance which allows the sound to continue into the patient.

“The second plaque commemorates the miniaturisation of the same invention. The same sound, the same patient, the same gap. The gap is being bridged by a steadily reducing component and the component is being reduced with the help of a number of hands which symbolised the number of different disciplines which were involved in that reduction. I kept a lot of the same elements in both plaques.”



University of Melbourne



Civil Engineering School, 1979.
137 cm off square parallelogram.

“The idea is that civil engineering is almost entirely concerned with the play of the forces of tension and compression. Frame which was originally square has been deformed. The diagonals — one goes into tension and one into compression — in the form of two human figures. The angle is the same as the angle of the wall of the building and therefore has an architectural significance as well.”

PERSONAL MEDALS

The Kill



Cast 1963 90 mm.

“First personal medal I had cast. The spider has caught a fly in its web and the spider is modelled very high and boldly to give it that superiority over the fly.”

Trumpeter



Cast 1967 102 mm unsigned.

“Perhaps of all my medals this might be my favourite. The length of tubing, the shine, the little bloke busting his cheeks and the little hand holding it.”

Spinnaker



Cast 1969 102 mm.

“An entry for a sporting medal competition in Italy. Won two purchase prizes. Level of prize below first, second, third. This was not a prize winning entry.”

“... Big shapes contrasted with a little detail around it.”

The Mirror



Cast 1970 80 mm x 75 mm.

“A reflection is a form of negative of whatever is being reflected. Woman as seen from behind and the front is expressed by reflection but it is modelled in negative. Raised part is a normal modelling, and the reflection was modelled normally but on the plaster negative.”

Escape



Cast 1970 115 mm.

“Conceived on one of the main streets of Prague when I had just heard that the borders might be sealed off and I might be trapped inside. The idea was locked in my mind in 1969.”

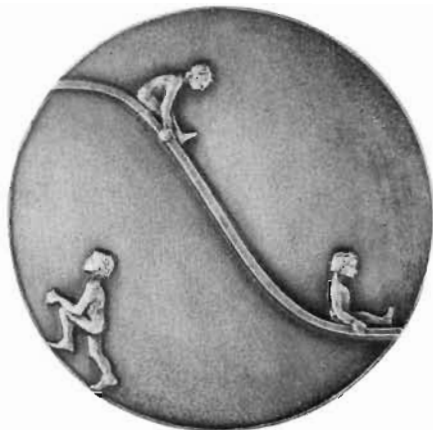
The Kiss



Cast 1975 100 mm.

“Distilled essence of kiss. Simply two angled planes which interlock at the right point.”

The Slide



Cast 1976 122 mm.

“Self-explanatory. Just an idea that had been in my brain for years.”

The Horse



Cast 1978 125 mm.

“Inspired by the classic Venetian horse. An exercise in filling the circle with a horse, the horse being an awkward shape for a medal.”

The Dancer



Cast 1981 120 mm.

“Inspired by the circularity of swirling skirt.”

Space Voyage



Cast 1982 120 mm.

“Was an entry for a Dante medal competition in Ravenna in Italy. Every two years they run a competition for medals and small sculptures based on Dante’s Divine Comedy. Won a gold medal (9th prize) for works on Dante’s Paradise and as an extension suggested space travel might be an interpretation.”

Manhattan



Cast 1984 120 mm.

“I have taken away the hard lines of the circle without losing the circle. It adds to the expression without taking away from its medallion quality. There has been a trend for people to design sculptures and submit them as medallions. Strict regulations are in force so this does not happen now.”

Rain on water



Cast 1984 122 mm.

“I am a great admirer of Paul Klee (pronounced Klay) who does enigmatic drawings and the title brings it to life, This medal has been purchased by the British Museum.”

COMMISSION SCULPTURE

The Birds



At 350 St. Kilda Road, Melbourne.
1973/74.

“They wanted a decorative piece of sculpture to occupy the plaza. It was for an investment building which had no known occupants so no subject matter was present to work towards. There was a great deal of trouble getting an idea to satisfy everybody. They wanted something more lighthearted, more decorative than what I had been suggesting.

“The birds are four metres high in brazen copper on a brass frame. In all it took eight months to produce including negotiations. In the final stages we needed the services of a structural engineer. The finished sculpture was taken on site in pieces to be fitted together. It took two days to assemble.”

John Pascoe Fawcner



At 477 Collins Street, Melbourne. 1978.
Bronze 2.2 metres figure.

“The Council wanted a traditional, naturalistic figure. This is a companion figure for Batman so is a good contrast with a standing figure.”

Ballroom Dancers



Single Sheet Sculpture.

“Formed up in principle out of a single sheet of wax it is cut bent and twisted to give the feeling of volume and movement. By taking away the volume you concentrate more attention on line and form of movement.”

The King



Brass. 1981.
Single Line Sculpture.

“I started thinking at the time of Prince Charles’ and Dianna’s wedding . . . how come they make such a big fuss about Charles and not about me. I came to the conclusion that the crown made the difference. The minimum of human presence in this. You have a profile, nose, mouth and the crown. It is the crown which makes the king. The crown gives substance to the person underneath it.

“You will see that my personal sculpture has gone from full bodied down to single sheet and now to single line.”

It would seem that the sculptor-medallist in Australia caters for a world of admirers and collectors far removed from the numismatic scene. Indeed a search of the award medals, commemorative medals, plaques, etc., listed above would seem to confirm this observation.

The lack of representation in major collections throughout Australia and the lack of documentation, or mention in numismatic publications would add further evidence to the theory that we have little appreciation of 'home grown art'.

That a Melbourne Australian has won acclaim overseas, has lectured and exhibited with distinction, has won major medallic commissions in Australia but has had only one medal purchased by a Gallery in this country (that by Castlemaine, Victoria) is really unbelievable and deplorable.

Perhaps the reason is to be found in the man. Collectors and institutions tend to buy or collect the fashion of the day and Meszaros does not follow the popular trend. Rather he has ideas and solutions to problems — his style grows from these and in this way he is distinctive.

It is hoped that the wide range of works by Michael Meszaros, the artistic quality of his portraits, the originality of his medals have been at least touched upon in sufficient detail in the above article to awaken serious students and collectors to the absorbing talents that have to date been so badly neglected by the numismatic fraternity.

In conclusion I would like to express my thanks to Michael Meszaros, his wife and his mother for their extreme patience in compiling the above listing, in particular to Michael for his forbearance with my persistent intrusion into his valuable time.

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